
MEETING MINUTES

January 8, 2026

Council Members Present: Julianne Pérez, Harold M. Paxton Jr., Fidel Johnson, Caterina Tassara, Christine Britt, Jessica Conway, Deputy Anthony Borbonio, Carol Weidman

Council Members Absent: Cheko Carter, Brenda Carvalho, Richard Rock, Carlos Mercado, Jeanne Lafler, Keith Sabiel, Angel Addison, Fred Green

Guests: Audrey Ables

JWB Staff: Yaridis L. Garcia

I. Call to Order- Julianne Pérez, Chair

- Welcome- Members & Guests. Julianne Pérez, Chair called the meeting to order at 6:03 pm.
- The October minutes could not be approved because there was no quorum.

II. Open Agenda-Community Partners Updates

- Lealman and Asian Neighborhood Family Center received a generous grant from the Pinellas Community Foundation and the Senior Citizens Fund to help grandparents and older adults with utility assistance. Contact LANFC at (727) 528-7891 for more information.
- Pinellas County currently has 5 People First Hurricane Recovery programs. The Homebuyers' Assistance program will help get funds into homebuyers' hands. Financial aid and other programs are on the www.Recover.Pinellas.Gov website. There will also be additional rounds of funding focused on businesses and non-profit organizations in the future. Historically, Pinellas Co. has had a grant of up to \$20K for capital expenses like kitchen equipment and vehicles, and that program will be updated to increase the amount to \$25K.
- Largo's Youth Mental Health Festival is on Saturday Feb 21st at Largo Central Park. Looking for vendors who want to have a booth. Email Specialevents@Largo.com for more information. You can also find the event on the City's Facebook page.
- Upcoming MLK events - The Friends of Ridgecrest will host a day of service on Saturday, January 17th at 8 am at the Tasco Center in honor of MLK. There will also be an MLK breakfast at Shylo Baptist Church the following Saturday. On Saturday, January 17th, there will be an MLK Tarpon Springs Breakfast. In South County,

there will be an MLK breakfast at the Coliseum in St. Petersburg. There will also be a parade in St. Petersburg, and JWB will participate in the parade representing Turbo Babies. On the 19th in Clearwater, there will be another breakfast to commemorate the MLK holiday. Deputy Anthony Borbonio will participate in the St. Petersburg Parade and suggested handing out beads. Yaridis will distribute more information in an email to council members and if others want to volunteer, please let her know.

III. Council Business

- Parent ProTech – All parents / caregivers of children in Pinellas County schools are eligible to receive a free membership to Parent ProTech – an App with practical, expert-backed tools and guidance to keep kids safe and thriving in a digital-first world. JWB wants to ensure that every parent in Pinellas County signs up. At all of the Grand Families events, JWB will be registering families. The North County event will be coming up on January 24th. Council members suggested that families receive support by signing up using their own phones on the day of any of the Grand Families' events.
- Carol Bumiller's Adopt-A-Family Feedback: Christine noted transportation as a barrier for some families; possible solutions include Lyft/Uber credits and an RSVP form allowing families to self-identify needs (transportation, developmental, language, etc.). A brief team call or meeting prior to the event may help with coordination. It was emphasized that success should be measured by families receiving gifts—not event attendance—as some parents were unable to attend due to work or school conflicts but still participated by receiving gifts. It was appreciated that JWB provided books and additional resources. Suggestions included setting guardrails on number and types of gifts, establishing categories (toys, clothing, educational items), and defining a per-child budget. Councils vary in approach: North County adopts one family; South County adopted 12 foster youth.
- JWB Strategic Planning –JWB would like to have various focus groups with the Community Councils to gather information and feedback. Our February meeting will be a regular meeting and then we will incorporate the Strategic Planning Focus Group. The meeting will be held on February 19th instead of the 5th of February.
- Combined Bylaws are still being worked on. These will be reviewed at the February meeting.
- Grand Families Event-Saturday, May 30th – Will be at the Pinellas Performing Arts Center. The focus will no longer be on hurricane preparedness. Perhaps Parent ProTech can be the theme. Yaridis will also send out a summary of family-identified needs to help guide the planning process. Planning members who volunteered include Fidel, Jessica, Deputy Borbonio, and Yaridis.
- Members shared that they are hearing that the rising costs of health insurance is a growing concern for many families. There are free services available at the Clearwater Free Clinic, St. Pete Free Clinic, and Willa Carson Health and Wellness

Center. Consider inviting Barbra from Care About Me to speak at a future meeting and attend the Grand Families event.

IV. JWB Updates

- Board meeting – All members are always invited in person. Meetings are broadcast and available on JWB’s YouTube channel.
- JWB’s CEO search continues with today being the deadline for applications.
- JWB will be coordinating a health fair on January 28th at their campus. All community council members and staff of funded organizations are invited to stop by.
- Community Council Meeting surveys will be distributed quarterly for guests and members to complete. Members took time at this meeting to complete the survey.
- Community Events Funding – Funding continues in the new year. Applications are up on the JWB website. Funding is available from \$500 up to \$3,000 per event. This project has been a great success and has made a significant contribution to the efforts throughout Pinellas County to serve the community. Events that are fundraisers, which sell or offer alcohol or are religious in nature do not meet funding requirements.
- The American Heart Association training was well attended. Partners appreciated learning about how to better manage cholesterol and heart health.
- This year’s Embracing our Changing Community Conference is happening on February 27th in Clearwater. The focus is on leadership. Yaridis handed out flyers and will share more information via email.

Future Meetings/Notices

- JWB Board Meeting: Thursday January 22nd, 9-11:00 AM
JWB 14155 58th Street N, Clearwater, FL 33760 & YouTube
- Mid-County Council Meeting: Thursday February 19th, 6:00-7:30 PM
Public Works Building 6250 82nd Avenue N, Pinellas Park, FL 33781

A motion to adjourn the meeting was called at 7:21 pm by Chair Julianne Pérez.

Meeting minutes respectfully submitted by Council Secretary, Caterina Tassara