



Minutes of the Meeting of the  
**Board of Directors**  
 Eckerd Community Alternatives  
 Eckerd 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor Conference Room  
 Clearwater, Florida  
 Tuesday, June 23, 2015

	BOARD MEMBERS	OTHER ATTENDEES
Attendees:	Nancy Nichols	Tony Moore
	Daniel Boon	Melanie Owens
	Ray Ferrara	Ron Zychowski
	Glenn Waters	Lorita Shirley
		Pam Griffith
Excused:		David Dennis
		Randy Luecke
		Ellyn Evans
		Brian Bostick
		Dani Brewer, DCF
		Robert Larsen
Recorder:		Laura Hunt, Secretary

The Board meeting was called to order at 4:00 p.m. by Mr. Ray Ferrara

**Approval of Minutes**

Mr. Ferrara presented the minutes of the February 25, 2015 Eckerd Community Alternatives Pasco/Pinellas (ECA6) Board meeting for approval. Mr. Ferrara asked for a motion to approve the minutes. Mrs. Nancy Nichols gave the motion and Mr. Daniel Boon seconded the motion.

Mr. Ferrara asked if there were any comments from the public.

With no comments from members of the public Mr. Ferrara asked Mr. Brian Bostick to give the operations update.

**Operations Report**

Mr. Bostick updated the Board on the operating report saying that we are proud to report that Circuit 6 is currently ranked number 1 out of 20 judicial circuits for the number of youth achieving permanency through adoptions. ECA 6 finalized the most adoptions in the state of Florida for the year. It has been an amazing year of continued improved performance and we are very appreciative of our staff, stakeholders, providers, and community-at-large, who helped contribute towards the accomplishment of this goal.

During the last Board Meeting it was requested that ECA 6 provide more detail on the Parent and Peers program and a copy of the Casey Family Programs Final Report. The Casey Family Programs Final Report was forwarded to all Board Members by Mr. Ron Zychowski on June 10, 2015.

ECA C6 performance for FY 14/15 was the best performance we have had since obtaining the contract in July 2008. Mr. Bostick addressed where ECA 6 is as of the end of April 2015. Under Contract Measures we do not have any red measures and gave updates on the yellow measures. Measure #1 is the percent of children in out of home care who are not maltreated by their out of home caregiver. Performance has been impacted by a small number of children and we anticipate meeting the target by the end of the FY15. Measure #3 is the number of children with finalized adoptions. As of June 22 ECA C6 has finalized 315 adoptions and we are projecting to finalize 26 more adoptions by June 30, 2015 to end the year at 341 finalized adoptions, exceeding the FY target of 318 adoptions. Last year ECA C6 finalized 371 adoptions the most in the state of Florida.

The next measures Mr. Bostick discussed were the Eckerd Self Imposed Measures. These measures were established by Eckerd to help ensure positive outcomes for children and families that we serve. As reflected on the chart, we are in the green for all measure except for those impacting the number of youth served in OHC. Eckerd invested additional resources in reunification support services designed to assist case managers in the safe and timely exit of children from care. Currently, we have 2 of our 3 providers meeting targets for safe reduction and one provider who continues to struggle. Eckerd will continue working with this provider on the execution of countermeasures to address performance and believe we will see forward progress being made within the next 90 days in all three areas. Counter measures to improve performance includes reviewing all children that have not obtained permanency timely, reviewing if services were initiated with the family timely, weekly performance calls, weekly Data Call and Monthly Performance Meetings. The final chart is in reference to Independent Living that was included at the request of the board. All of these measures are in the green and are trending in the right direction.

Mr. Bostick asked the Board if they had any questions about the performance measures.

With no more questions from the Board or the public, Mr. Bostick concluded his Operations report.

## **ECA Finance Report**

Mr. Ferrara asked Mrs. Pam Griffith to give the Board the ECA6 Finance report.

Mrs. Griffith gave the Board an overview of the April financials. Mrs. Griffith indicated that ECA6 is expecting a projected surplus of \$1.9M which will be carried over to FY16. The projected surplus is predominantly linked to Independent Living/Extended Foster Care and Out-of-Home Care as delineated below.

Out-of-Home (OHC) Services expenses are expected to realize a positive variance of \$1.3M. This variance can be attributed to multiple new strategies implemented by the Lead Agency to effectively manage the utilization of placement services; such as, removing barriers to find relatives, including exits from licensed care a topic of the performance calls, etc. Independent Living (IL) expenses are estimated to have a positive variance to plan of \$264K. Extended Foster Care (EFC) is a relatively new approach allowing youth to elect to stay in foster care after age 18. Due to the lack of trend data, the budget was more aggressive than actual participation. Maintenance Adoption Subsidy (MAS) expenses are expected to be fully funded by the State. Based on current funding, the projected deficit in Maintenance Adoption Subsidies (MAS) is \$681K. This shortfall is after the statewide-distribution of \$5.8M in MAS funding held back by DCF. An additional appropriation of MAS funding by the legislature is being requested by DCF to sufficiently fund all Florida Lead Agencies.

Mr. Ferrara then presented the FY16 budget for approval. The board approved the FY16 budget for ECA 6. Mrs. Griffith explained that the FY2016's budget is balanced and ECA6 will monitor financial performance and implement cost efficiencies with the intent to carry funds forward.

Mrs. Lorita Shirley provided the Board the following update regarding to the legislative session. She stated that the Florida legislative session came to a close on Friday and provided a brief summary of the outcome as related to Eckerd's work in the state. Governor Scott had until July 6<sup>th</sup> to approve the budget. Given that Eckerd had secured line item appropriations the last several fiscal years for ECA6, there was consensus from the Board and Eckerd leadership that we needed to work towards a long term solution to equity. Eckerd, as a member of the Florida Coalition for Children (FCC), voted in support of a statewide equity formula that would hold harmless any CBC determined to have adequate funding and allocate new legislative appropriations to under-funded CBCs. When the allocation methodology was introduced by the Senate however, there were slight tweaks to the model as follows:

The weight for Child Population remained at 5% in the Senate's model; the weight for Child protective Investigations went from 35% in the FCC model to 15% in the Senate model; the weight for Children in Care went from 60% in the FCC model to 80% in the Senate's model. The language also changed from "entering care" to "in care".

Unfortunately, these changes in the wording and weights of the factors had a great deal more impact on the funding for ECA6 than staff anticipated and Eckerd was relying on

incorrect data from DCF. Eckerd realized these issues but not until the last 48 hours of session and by that point, we were unable to get the language changed or get official updated numbers to support our case. This will impact the ECA6 budget by approximately \$1.5M compared to our projection. Eckerd has worked out a contingency plan that will have minimal impact on the system of care and allow for us to reinvest any potential surplus in the current year back into the system.

Ms. Grutza indicated that the session begins early in FY16, starting in September. Eckerd will work to have language changed and perhaps request a line item in the budget.

Mr. Ferrara asked for a motion to approve the FY16 budget. Mr. Glenn Waters approved the motion and Mrs. Nichols seconded the motion.

Mr. Ferrara moved to accept the finance report. The Board unanimously accepted the ECA 6 finance report.

With no more questions from the Board or the public Mr. Ferrara concluded his report.

### **External Relations Report**

Mr. Ferrara asked Ms. Jody Grutza to give the report. Below are a few of the events highlighted during Ms. Grutza's report.

6TH Annual Pasco and Pinellas County Reunification Celebration: Eckerd Community Alternatives hosted a celebration at the East Pasco County Courthouse in Dade City to honor those parents who were successfully reunified with their children, despite adversity and other difficult circumstances. State Senator Wilton Simpson was in attendance as families were treated to a morning of rewards for all of their perseverance. In Pinellas County, Eckerd, Directions for Living, Lutheran Services of Florida and other partner agencies took time to celebrate those families who had overcome adversity and triumph to be reunified with their children. Frank, a 24 year old father, participated in Directions for Living Parent and Peers Program that is funded through Eckerd to develop the skills necessary to be safely reunified with his daughter.

PricewaterhouseCoopers Foster Parent Presentation: Eckerd participated in a lunch and learn session at PricewaterhouseCoopers to inform employees about the rewards and benefits of being a foster parent in the Tampa Bay area. Ashley Tominus, a former foster youth and member of Ready for Life, shared her foster care story and the various ways that employees could assist.

The Junior League of Clearwater/Dunedin: hosted a group of foster youth from Pasco and Pinellas County to #expressthemselves in an artistic forum that allowed youth to tell their story and develop their talents through a variety of artistic mediums. The Junior League has been an outstanding partner to Eckerd and tremendous supporter of foster youth this fiscal year.

Ray's Home Run Club Field Day: On April 1, the Ray's hosted members of the Home Run Club to enjoy a field day. Children were treated to an afternoon of fun activities

including dancing, fast pitch contest, and running the bases. DJ Kitty was a favorite and even joined some of the children for lunch. The Ray's continue to provide a suite for 32 foster children at no cost for every home game. In addition, Centerplate donate food for each game so that the children can enjoy the game and traditional baseball food.

With no questions from the Board or the public Ms. Grutza concluded her report.

Ray Ferrara stated that he had asked Daniel Boone to Chair the ECA6 Finance Committee.

With no more questions from the public or the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 5:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by:

Laura Hunt  
Secretary