

**Kids Hope Alliance – February Board Meeting Minutes
February 5, 2025**

1. Introductions and Instructions

Marsha Oliver, Board Chair

Ms. Oliver called the meeting to order at 9:30 a.m. She asked for a motion to allow Board Member, Cynthia Nixon, to participate in the meeting via Zoom.

Motion: Lawrence Dennis

Second: Kevin Gay

Approved: 6-0

Ms. Oliver then provided KHA updates including work anniversaries, recognition of Black History Month and the rollout of the city's Bookmobile.

Members Present: Marsha Oliver, Kevin Gay, Cynthia Nixon, Meredith Chartrand-Frisch, Lawrence Dennis, Carson Tranquille, Connie Hodges

Members Absent: None

2. Public Comments

Ms. Oliver explained that public comments will be taken now for all items that will be voted on at the meeting. These comments should only be in reference to those action items below. A separate public comment time will be open at the end of the meeting for any general comments to be made by the public. There were no public comments.

3. Approval of November Minutes

Marsha Oliver, Board Chair

Ms. Oliver asked for a motion to approve the minutes from November's Board meeting.

Motion: Marsha Oliver

Second: Carson Tranquille

Approved: 6-0

4. Governance Committee Recap

Meredith Chartrand-Frisch, Governance Chair

Ms. Chartrand-Frisch provided an overview of the Governance meeting held on January 15th which included a review of the Bylaws and policies. Dr. Grass explained the change to the Bylaws which added that the Secretary will approve the minutes and sign each Board Action Item.

Motion: Kevin Gay

Second: Lawrence Dennis

Approved: 6-0

Dr. Grass then provided an overview of each of the Board Approved policies including:

Delegation of CEO Authority to the CAO – This policy provides the CAO with the authority to sign and execute contracts and other documents on the Board’s behalf in the absence of the CEO. There are no changes to this policy.

Delegation of Execution of Authority to the CEO – This policy delegates authority from the Board to the CEO to execute certain contracts and documents. This policy was strengthened by adding that any changes which take place between Board meetings will be added to the Board packet and reported in the minutes.

Small Provider Criteria – This policy is a requirement of the Ordinance and refers to Emerging Providers. The Board is responsible for establishing the criteria for determining which providers meet the criteria and in reviewing the policy it was determined that the current criteria is accurate, no changes are recommended at this time.

Approval of Grant Applications – This policy is working and there are no changes at this time.

Motion: Marsha Oliver

Second: Carson Tranquille

Approved: 6-0

5. Finance Committee Recap

Carson Tranquille, Finance Vice Chair

Mr. Tranquille reviewed the topics covered during the Finance meeting held on January 15th which included a review of the Mayor’s Book Club RFP, Financial Reports and finance activities. Finance Activities included a Mid-Year Review of financials with projections and a preliminary discussion on budget priorities.

Dr. Grass then provided some crucial budget dates which include the Budget Kickoff on March 28th and the deadline to submit the budget, which is April 18th. The budget will be approved by the Board and may require scheduling an interim Board meeting.

6. Action Item

Dr. Saralyn Grass, Chief Executive Officer

a. Mayor's Book Club RFP

The primary goals of the Mayor's Book Club are to:

1. Foster a love of reading and literacy in children from birth to 4 years old;
2. Provide access to age-appropriate books for early learners;
3. Support parents, caregivers, and educators in creating literacy-rich environments

Funding is intended to provide monthly book distribution to young children in Duval County from birth to age 4, quarterly community outreach events, and accompanying activities for young children (i.e. celebrity readers, accompanying activities, take-home supplement/extended learning, and professional development for staff and parents/guardians). It is expected that 4,500-5,000 children will be served on an annual basis.

Books will be distributed through the libraries, doctors' offices and schools. Commander Charles Ford, JSO Community Engagement, added that JSO could include the Bookmobile in some of their upcoming community engagement activities. The Bookmobile will be at the Preschool Palooza, Highlands Library, on February 15th at 2pm. Mr. Darity thanked the staff for their support of all the literacy efforts. Dr. Grass thanked Mari Ganues for her participation in events which promote KHA's literacy focus.

Motion: Connie Hodges

Second: Meredith Chartrand-Frisch

Approved: 6-0

7. Review of KHA Actions

Dr. Saralyn Grass, Chief Executive Officer

Mr. Kenneth Darity, Chief Administrative Officer

Dr. Grass provided a summary of recent City Council Legislation for the following providers: JAMS, All of Us Together Foundation, Isaiah 117 House, and Knots 4 Kids. She also provided an update on recent contract amendments approved by the Jacksonville Procurement Awards Committee for Goodwill, NLP Logix and Various Out of school Time providers.

8. Board Retreat Next Steps

Deirdre Conner, Principal & Founder Ripple Effect Storytelling & Insights

Mrs. Conner summarized the Board Discussion and priorities discussed during the December 2024 Board Retreat. She also reviewed four key action areas from the retreat including:

Action Area 1 - Better engaged and understand the needs of children, providers, and the community

Action Area 2 - Develop a framework for data-driven decision making and program evaluation

Action Area 3 - Drive the strategic direction of the Kids Hope Alliance through board governance process improvements

Action Area 4 - Update and improve the CEO evaluation process

9. Board Discussion

Marsha Oliver, Board Chair

Ms. Oliver recommended that Board members digest the Board Retreat report and establish an Ad hoc committee that would further discuss opportunities for input from providers and staff on the delivery of KHA services and goal setting. Further discussion of this report will take place at the upcoming Board Workshop on February 26th.

10. CAO/CSO Updates

Kenneth Darity, Chief Administrative Officer

Rodger Belcher, Chief Strategic Officer

Mr. Darity shared the number of children served during December 2024, which was 8,458. KHA is also ramping up the field trip enhancement program and are now up to 21 vendors and a budget of \$300,000. This includes the addition of Temika's Cooking, Jacksonville Equestrian, Jumbo Shrimp and Tree Hill Nature. In terms of contracts, we are working on the renewal process which includes compiling data from providers and Contract Managers. Staff recommendations for renewals will be provided to the Board in March. He also explained that the Contract Managers are working with providers for whom we have not received reimbursements, some providers are seeing a decrease in attendance based on executive orders in Washington D.C. and they are concerned about potential funding cuts. Mr. Darity congratulated Communities in Schools on their recent celebration of 35 years of service.

Dr. Grass shared that Rodger Belcher is working on automating the student attendance process, artificial intelligence updates and LEAN certification.

11. CEO Updates

Dr. Saralyn Grass, Chief Executive Officer

Ten KHA employees attended the Annual FACCT Conference and were able to meet their counterparts across the state and share learnings. We are in the process of developing a report of key takeaways from the conference.

KHA is also developing a Transparency Dashboard for contracts which will appear on the website upon completion. We've also been approached by the Jax Civic Council to potentially apply for a grant which will be presented to the Board for approval.

We are also hosting a Staff Town Hall to discuss some of the updates on federal grants and how staff can be prepared to address questions from providers. Providers are concerned about maintaining staff to service students despite decreases in attendance. If this becomes an issue, it will be discussed with the Board in future meetings.

Mr. Tranquille asked if we'd had any conversations with the city regarding future budget cuts and Dr. Grass replied that the city is committed to funding contracts through the end of their respective contract year but if it's a four-year contract, we could potentially need an offramp or transition.

Mr. Dennis shared that DCPS will have a \$100 million deficit, and difficult decisions will need to be made and some offerings like arts, music, and physical education may be affected. He recommended that we have an aligned discussion with DCPS and identify those KHA-funded providers who are offering similar services and utilize them to close the gap.

12. General Public Comments

Ms. Oliver asked if there were any public comments.

Mr. John Nooney is seeking a KHA resolution of support for a future public park on Pottsburg Creek. Mr. Leon Baxton thanked the Board for their support of case management services (homelessness, hunger). Ms. Heather Corey, Developmental Learning Center, inquired about the status of the First Readers Program with the implementation of the Mayor's Book Club. Dr. Grass explained that KHA is building on that model, and it will go out for a competitive bid. She also provided an update on the Bookmobile Press Conference which the Mayor conducted on January 27th. Commander Charles Ford, JSO, introduced himself as the new Community Engagement Officer, and Board Liaison.

13. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned by Ms. Oliver at 10:50 am.