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Juvenile Welfare Board Meeting: 1968: 01: 11: Minutes

Juvenile Welfare Board of Pinellas County.

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Meeting in Clearwater
January 11, 1968

PRESENT: Dr. Robert E. Coleman, Jr., Chairman; Mrs. Roy M. Speer, Secretary; Mrs. Charles S. Baker; Mrs. H. W. Holland; Juvenile Court Judge Robert A. Halvorsen, who acted as Chairman until Dr. Coleman arrived; and Dr. Thomas B. Southard. Also present: Dr. George H. Finck, Director.

MOTION
Approval of Minutes

Mrs. Holland moved, and Mrs. Baker seconded a motion which carried, to approve the minutes of the December 7th meeting.

MOTION
Approval of Expenditures for December

Mrs. Baker moved, and Mrs. Speer seconded a motion which carried, to approve the expenditures for December 1967: checks #2321 through #2363 dated December 29; Checks #2364 and #2365 dated December 28; Checks #2366 through #2399 dated January 11; and Checks #2400 and #2401 dated January 31, 1968.

MOTION
Approval of Salaries for January

Mrs. Holland moved, and Mrs. Baker seconded a motion which carried, to approve the salaries for January 1968, on the condition of completion of satisfactory service.

The financial report for the month of December 1967 was reviewed by the Board.

MOTION
Transfer from Contingency to Workmen's Compensation

Mrs. Speer moved, and Mrs. Baker seconded a motion which carried, to transfer $329.38 from Contingency to Workmen's Compensation to meet the estimated cost of the program through calendar year 1968.

MOTION
Tax Refund

Mrs. Speer moved, and Mrs. Baker seconded a motion which carried, to transfer $2.17 from Contingency to Refund Prior Year's Receipts.

MOTION
Approval of Desk Chair and Second-hand Desk

Mrs. Speer moved, and Mrs. Baker seconded a motion which carried, to approve the purchase of a desk chair for an amount not to exceed $140.00, and a second-hand desk not to exceed $110.00 for desk plus refinishing.

The report on Children in Foster Care for the month of November, 1967, was reviewed by the Board. Dr. Finck explained the results of Social Security Amendments of 1967 on the various child welfare programs. He reviewed the efforts of the Board to induce the State Legislature and the United States Congress to provide greater State and Federal participation for the costs of the child welfare programs, particularly foster care. He stated that the Federal appropriation for child welfare services would be doubled, but efforts to include the cost of foster care in the Federal program had failed in this session.

Dr. Finck read a letter from Family and Children's Service, Inc. explaining that their board rates for children under six would be increased from $1.86 a day to $2.00 a day, and for children over six from $2.00 a day to $2.20 a day. In his letter, Mr. Jenkins stated that the estimated cost of this increase for the remainder of the year would be about $700,000 and that the agency would not be exceeding its annual allocation of $15,000.00.

Dr. Finck reviewed the letter from Mr. Ernest Ellison, Legislative Auditor, and the reply written to him after telephone consultation with the various members of the Board. The questions raised by Mr. Ellison were discussed, and it was agreed that formal action would be delayed until the receipt of the final report of the Legislative Auditor.
Dr. Southard moved, and Mrs. Baker seconded a motion which carried, to approve formally the letter to Mr. Ernest Ellison and to incorporate his letter and the Board's reply in the Board's minutes.

Dr. Finck reported on his participation in the project for Camp E-How-Kee, a camp for emotionally disturbed and socially maladjusted boys between the ages of seven and fourteen to be established in Hernando County by the Jack and Ruth Eckerd Foundation. Dr. Finck stated that he had been asked to serve as a member of the Advisory Committee, and he felt that since he had been instrumental in the origin of this program, he had a responsibility to participate at least in the initial stages of it.

Judge Halvorsen moved, and Mrs. Holland seconded the motion which carried, to approve Dr. Finck's participation on the Advisory Board of Camp E-How-Kee.

Dr. Finck announced that he had been selected as a Fellow in the American Orthopsychiatric Association because of his contributions to the programs of that organization.

Judge Halvorsen introduced Marvin Brinston, aged 11, who was currently in the Youth Study Center and who had run away three times from the foster home in which he had been placed. Judge Halvorsen indicated that he felt that this situation demonstrated a lack of facilities for some of the children in our County and said regretfully that the only course apparently open to him was to send the boy to the Training Schools at Marianna or Okeechobee. Judge Halvorsen also talked about the problems in regard to pregnant girls who, he said, had discovered that they could avoid going to a State Training School if they were pregnant. Judge Halvorsen also discussed the situation in regard to the Foster Care program of the State Department of Public Welfare.

The Activities Reports for the month of December 1967 were reviewed by the Board.

Since there was no further business, the meeting was adjourned. The next regular meeting of the Juvenile Welfare Board will be Thursday, February 1st, in the County Office Building, Clearwater.

Mrs. Roy M. Speer, Secretary
December 20, 1967

Director
The Board of Juvenile Welfare
Pinellas County
St. Petersburg, Florida

Dear Sir:

I am attaching hereto a list of preliminary and tentative audit findings which may be included in an audit report to be prepared on your accounts and records for the period October 1, 1958 to September 30, 1966.

If you desire to submit a written explanation to any or all items on the attached list, such letter must be received by this office within twelve days from the date of this letter in order for it to be considered in connection with our draft of the audit report.

For our files please date and sign the enclosed receipt and return it to me promptly.

Sincerely yours,

s/Ernest Ellison
Legislative Auditor

Finances of the operating fund were in good condition at the end of each fiscal year except 1964-65, when the cash balance was insufficient to meet current expenses until receipt of local tax funds. Adequate reserves for contingencies and cash carryover had been provided in the Board's original budget, but these had been deleted by the Board of County Commissioners in the exercise of its final budget review authority. An interest-free loan of $53,513 from the county commissioners in early 1965-66 enabled the Board to overcome the financial emergency.

Finances appeared to have been well managed, but some funds were expended in a manner not authorized by law.

The salaries and travel expenses of some employees of certain public and private welfare and social service agencies furnishing services to children were paid directly to the employees of these agencies pursuant to the terms of written agreements entered into with these agencies by the Board.

In July 1958 the Board of Juvenile Welfare began supporting the Pinellas County License Board for Day Nurseries and Foster Boarding Homes financially by paying employees' salaries and other expenses of operation. This was purportedly done by the authority of Section 2(h) of the law governing the Board of Juvenile Welfare, which states that it has the power to "... provide such other services for all juveniles as the Board determines are needed for the general welfare of the county."

The License Board for Children's Centers and Family Day Care Homes established and collected application fees, but instead of requesting an appropriation from the Board of County Commissioners it accepted the financial assistance of the Board of Juvenile Welfare. From the date of establishment through the end of the audit period
all fees collected were remitted to and all salaries and other expenses were budgeted, approved, and paid by the Board of Juvenile Welfare, which also kept all financial records except a daily record of license fee collections. The Board of Juvenile Welfare purportedly offered financial assistance by the authority of Section 2(b) of its governing law which states that it has the power to "... provide such other services for all juveniles as the Board determines are needed for the general welfare of the county." However, the License Board did not appear to possess the authority to accept this assistance since its governing law established it as an independent board and specified the sources of operating funds. Also, there was no apparent authority for the License Board to remit fees collected to the Board of Juvenile Welfare.

A written agreement was entered into with the State Department of Public Welfare, District No. 4 Welfare Board, for the purpose of providing services to children in Pinellas County, particularly in the area of care for dependent children in need of placement away from their own homes. Under the terms of the agreement the Board of Juvenile Welfare furnished a specified amount of funds monthly to the District No. 4 Welfare Board to be spent by it for the specified purpose. Determination of eligibility was made by the District No. 4 Welfare Board pursuant to its own policies. Although not mentioned in the agreement, the Board of Juvenile Welfare also approved the use of some foster care funds for administrative purposes. The agreement also provided that the allocation would be subject to review and to the necessary return of any unexpended funds and that the District No. 4 Welfare Board would present a monthly statement of expenditures from the sum allocated by the Board of Juvenile Welfare. However, the funds were not kept separate from other funds by the District No. 4 Welfare Board, either in the bank or on the records, and monthly reports of expenditures included other funds. It was therefore impossible to determine the unexpended balance of funds advanced by the Board of Juvenile Welfare.

Payment of expenses other than direct salaries for the Child Guidance Clinic of Pinellas County, Inc., was stated to be on a reimbursement basis but was supported by itemized statements of expenses paid by the Clinic rather than paid bills.

Payments to Family and Children's Service, Inc., for foster care were for the purpose of providing adoption services to children in Pinellas County who had special needs making adoption difficult. Disbursement of funds to the agency was on a reimbursement basis but was supported by itemized statements of expenses paid by the agency rather than paid bills. This service was provided during the last five years of the audit period and was pursuant to a written agreement between the Board and the agency.

During the last three years of the audit period homemaker services were provided to children of Pinellas County who were in need of such service by the Visiting Nurse and Homemaker Association of Greater St. Petersburg under the terms of a written agreement between the Board and the Association. The determination of need was apparently made by the Visiting Nurse and Homemaker Association. As provided in the agreement the Board advanced funds to the Association with which to operate this program and the Association accounted to the Board for the expenditure of the funds. This accounting was in the form of itemized statements of amounts spent and was not supported by paid bills. The Attorney General, in an opinion dated July 21, 1964 (page 399, Biennial Report 1963-64), ruled that the Board of Juvenile Welfare could not legally contribute public funds in a lump sum to private agencies.

Day care for retarded children was provided during the last three years of the audit period through the Peter Pan School for Retarded Children, with which a written agreement was executed. The agreement provided for payment, on a reimbursement basis, of the actual expense of maintenance which the parents of the children were
unable to pay and further provided that determination of need be made by the school.

Payments were made monthly on the basis of itemized bills from the school.

* * *

Trust fund revenue was exclusively from individual contributions and interest earned. Activity was very light. The use of contributions received during the audit period, with one minor exception, was not restricted by the donors, but the Director stated that all contributions were solicited for the purpose of paying unusual expenses and therefore were deposited in this fund. These funds were placed in a savings account in 1961 and all interest earned was credited to the general account. Some expenditures were for items not authorized by law. All expenditures were specifically authorized by the Board.

* * *

No budgets were prepared for the trust fund. No authority was found in law to expend public funds in the absence of budgets.

* * *

Documents and evidence supporting expenditures for office supplies and expenses were not conveniently filed nor easily accessible for audit purposes; thus, it could not readily be determined whether such expenditures were adequately supported. Salaries paid, both to board employees and employees of other agencies, were not supported by certified payrolls. Claims for travel expenses for out-of-county travel lacked sufficient support in a number of instances.

Records of tangible personal property were kept but property was not marked and some items of information required by Chapter 274, Florida Statutes, were omitted from the records.

* * *

Internal control of cash was inadequate. Receipts were not written for all collections by the Board of Juvenile Welfare and prenumbered receipt blanks were not used by either Board.

Depository collateral was inadequate during much of the period audited. Unsecured bank balances exceeded $200,000 at times.

* * *

January 4, 1968

Dear Mr. Ellison:

The Juvenile Welfare Board has authorized me to reply to your letter of preliminary and tentative audit findings, dated December 20, 1967 and delivered to me on December 27, 1967. This audit covers the period from October 1, 1958 to September 30, 1966. The Board wishes to explain and discuss the points listed in your letter.

In regard to the payments this agency makes to Family and Children's Service, Inc., for the foster care of children hard to place for adoption and to the Visiting Nurse Association for Homemaker service to families with children, we understand that itemized statements are not sufficient and that paid bills for each individual
child and family by the person directly giving the service are necessary. If our understanding concerning this is incorrect, please notify us. We wish to state that no lump sum payments have been made to the Visiting Nurse Association since May 4, 1967. In the current fiscal year no payments other than direct salaries have been made to the Child Guidance Clinic of Pinellas County, Inc.

We wish to state that we have taken steps to support sufficiently claims for expenses for out of county travel; to secure certified payrolls from other agencies; to secure and use prenumbered receipts; to voucher and file all documents for office supplies; and to establish adequate depository collateral. We have arranged with the State Department of Public Welfare to append to the CW3 forms a statement of unexpended balance which will properly segregate funds advanced by the Juvenile Welfare Board. It is our understanding that this arrangement is satisfactory to the State Department of Public Welfare auditor and to your representative in Pinellas County. We have taken steps to mark tangible personal property, and we shall institute a system of physical inventories each year with the dates properly entered. We shall budget Trust Funds in the regular budget and hope this will satisfy the question raised about the "lack of budgeting."

We note that the auditor agrees with the opinion of the Juvenile Welfare Board counselor, Mr. Leonard W. Cooperman, that the expenditure of Juvenile Welfare Board funds to finance the License Board for Children's Centers and Family Day Care Homes is a proper expenditure of the Board which has the power to "... provide such other services for all juveniles as the Board determines are needed for the general welfare of the county."

In regard to the question raised about the License Board for Children's Centers and Family Day Care Homes, we wish to point out that budgets for this Board were included in the Juvenile Welfare Board budgets submitted annually to the Board of County Commissioners. The Board of County Commissioners did not change or disapprove the inclusion of expenditures of the License Board for Children's Centers and Family Day Care Homes in the Juvenile Welfare Board budgets. We note that the Vice chairman of the Board of County Commissioners is a member of the Juvenile Welfare Board, and that a member of the Board of County Commissioners is a member of the License Board. In discussions it has been agreed to continue the practice for the Juvenile Welfare Board to meet the budgeted needs of the License Board for Children's Centers and Family Day Care Homes. In view of these circumstances, the Board of County Commissioners has in effect acquiesced in appropriations for the License Board for Children's Centers and Family Day Care Homes in the manner indicated.

We note the auditor's opinion that the License Board for Children's Centers and Family Day Care Homes did not appear to possess the authority to accept this assistance from the Juvenile Welfare Board. The Juvenile Welfare Board disagrees with this opinion for otherwise the License Board for Children's Centers and Family Day Care Homes could not even receive gifts.

The statements in this letter have been discussed with all the members of the Juvenile Welfare Board and represent their opinions.

Very truly yours,

s/George H. Finck, Ph.D.
Director