

Corrections Foundation

Board of Director's Meeting

Marion Correctional Institution, Training Building

Ocala, FL

April 23, 2019

Attendees:

Mr. Tom Rush
Mr. Dave Mecusker
Mr. Jim Williams
Mr. Brian Riedl
Ms. Justine Patterson
Mr. Brian Wynns

Absent:

Mr. Louie Wainwright
Ms. Lisa Miller
Mr. Mark Redd
Mr. Erich Hummel
Mr. Sam Culpepper

Staff:

Mr. Chris Akins
Ms. Sheri Logue

Call to Order

Mr. Rush called the meeting to order at 11 a.m. and established a quorum. Mr. Mecusker gave the invocation. Ms. Miller gave her proxy vote to Mr. Rush and Mr. Redd gave his proxy to Mr. Williams and Mr. Culpepper gave his proxy to Mr. Riedl.

Officer Elections

Mr. Williams made a motion to retain existing officers, Mr. Rush as Vice-President and Mr. Mecusker as Treasurer. Seconded by Mr. Riedl, motion was unanimously approved.

Minutes Approval

Mr. Rush asked for approval of the June 12, 2018 minutes. There being no discussion, Mr. Riedl made a motion to approve the minutes. Mr. Williams seconded the motion and they were unanimously approved.

Budget Review

Mr. Mecusker gave an overview of the 2018-19 budget. He indicated that the increase in the minimum membership donation from \$1.00 to \$2.00 has made a positive impact on the Employee Assistance Program. The Finance Report shows funds available and is a very detailed report. It includes revenue and expenses that are expected into the next fiscal year and how funds are allocated across programs. These figures are provided to show the impact of raising membership and the availability of funds for a disaster relief reserve to be established. We are remaining in our budget for expenses and we are developing a surplus in the budget at this time.

The Profit and Loss statement shows our fiscal year income and expenses and we are in very good shape. We had to dip into reserves to cover Hurricane Michael and are working to

replenish the Disaster Relief Fund. Mr. Williams noted that we didn't have to cash out our CD's but recurring membership allowed for us to replenish this account and we should break even by the end of the fiscal year.

Mr. Mecusker commended Foundation staff for their hard work under time constraints to assist FDC staff impacted by Hurricane Michael. Their hard work does not go unnoticed and allowed us to assist those impacted as quickly as possible.

The annual budget was reviewed and year to date income and expenses were discussed. We are expecting a surplus at year end. The board will meet again prior to the end of the fiscal year to approve the year end budget. Mr. Williams made a motion to accept the finance report and approve the budget. Seconded by Mr. Mecusker and unanimously approved.

Membership Campaign Review

Mr. Williams gave an overview of the membership campaign, which runs March 1-April 30th. Appreciation luncheons have been held in Region I at Liberty CI and Region IV at Martin CI. Foundation board and staff members were able to speak directly to institution staff during these luncheons and explain what the Foundation does and why we exist. We'll plan another luncheon to recognize those with the highest membership at the end of the campaign and we may go to South FL again soon to present at Dade CI/Homestead CI. Region IV membership is very low at 33% and we can improve by making membership front and center year round. Mr. Wynns commented that Community Corrections membership remains near 69% year round and that they would be willing to host a luncheon for the Corrections Foundation to come and speak to staff any time. Mr. Williams mentioned that he'd like for these visits to be an every other month occurrence, alternating between Community Corrections and Institutions. It's been a good year, the more members who join the more we are able to assist staff in need.

Ms. Sheri Logue indicated that she would receive the membership numbers from Payroll/Research by the end of May and that final stats will be ready by mid-June. Our current membership is around 15,000 and we expect 2,000 new members by the end of the campaign.

Mr. Wynns noted that every two weeks Community Corrections has New Employee Orientation and that the Corrections Foundation is presented to all new employees. CF Staff added that they are available to speak at events. Mr. Riedl challenged wardens to make sure every employee hears about the Corrections Foundation and has an opportunity to join if they wish. This is done through New Employee Orientation, FTO program, in-service trainings.

Mr. Mecusker mentioned that it would be interesting to see what percentage of staff have received assistance in each Region. He noted that we could share this information with staff, # of members and amount of support given by the Foundation and show them exactly what their membership funds do for their fellow officers and staff. We recognize that turnover is high, 70% of staff have less than 2 years experience on the job and this is an issue for FDC statewide so it is important to have Corrections Foundation front and center at orientation and every training.

Mr. Wynns asked if we can offer new hires something when they sign up, a T-shirt, a challenge coin, something representing their membership. Mr. Akins said we can certainly look at offering something. It has been recommended membership cards. Ms. Patterson agreed with Mr. Wynns that providing something at sign up would be nice. Right now new members receive a welcome letter and membership pin. Mr. Williams noted that our specialty tag was a bust because staff didn't want to identify with FDC off the job to avoid being targeted so he's not sure members would wear a hat or shirt due to this same concern.

Mr. Akins shared that we have Leadership and Protector Level members who donate \$25 and \$15 a pay period. They receive a padfolio, jacket and polo shirt once they have made 6 payments. These items are very well received.

Mr. Riedl recommended that we re-evaluate how we market the Corrections Foundation and really make an effort to educate all staff year round. He recommended that we get out into the community more. Hats and items are great but will not have a lasting impact. Having a luncheon and inviting staff would have a larger impact than a token to join. Personal interaction has a lasting impact.

We will look into promo items that new employee orientation can distribute on our behalf and opportunities to speak to staff. Recommended that the item be a different item than the membership pin they will receive with their welcome letter.

It was recommended that we make our membership materials available in Spanish. Ms. Patterson offered that her staff could translate for us in to Spanish and/or Creole.

We will work more closely with the Field Office Managers in Community Corrections and HR Services Personnel Offices for Institutions. Ask Regional Offices for contact list.

We will also make sure we invite Community Corrections to events or host separate events to recognize them. Ms. Patterson recommended the 17-B Circuit Office in Broward County would be good for Region IV CC. Attending an institution's event isn't as convenient because of the long drive, especially in Region IV.

Mr. Rush also recommended that membership recruiting trips be expanded to multiple days so that each shift may attend.

Mr. Wynns asked what our target membership % should be. 100% isn't attainable because of turnover. Traditionally we average between 65% - 70% for statewide membership. A goal of 75% statewide year round would be optimistic.

Mr. Williams mentioned that we may recognize the area in Region I impacted by Hurricane Michael at the end of the membership campaign. Once results are available we will see who in the hurricane Micheal impacted region recognize highest membership.

Mr. Akins asked if it would be beneficial to compare like size institutions statewide instead of membership winners by Region. Mr. Wynns said this could be a good way to group them in

theory but given the differences among the regions Mr. Riedl said it really isn't an equal comparison because of specific challenges among the regions. Region I and II may know about the Foundation, even grown up in a Corrections Family, Region III and IV not as much. Size isn't really the common denominator among institutions.

Ms. Logue asked what categories we want to provide awards for. Mr. Rush noted we should award for the % of increase. Mr. Mecusker noted that this offers Region IV a great opportunity because of the room to grow in membership. In the past we have awarded highest # increase in membership, highest % of membership and highest # of members for the region. Ms. Logue will follow up with board members to determine awards this year, we may decide to keep them the same as years past.

Employee Assistance Program Review

Income for the Employee Assistance Program this fiscal year has been nearly \$500,000 and expenses of \$358,000 to 301 employees, requests are a little slower – seems the field may be holding back because of the hurricanes' impact. We need to get the word out that we fine financially and they don't need to hold off sending EAP to us. We are receiving 5 requests a week and a typical week is 15 requests. Mr. Williams commented that this slow down has allowed us to catch up a little due to hurricane.

We have provided \$8.3 million to officers and staff since program inception in 1999.

Proposed changes to EAP Criteria

Loss of Home – Natural Disaster vs Fire

Currently we provide a maximum of \$500 for a fire and \$1,000 natural disaster where a home is a total loss. It was proposed that we raise the fire maximum to be the same as the maximum for home loss due to a natural disaster.

Mr. Mecusker asked for clarification and how home insurance factors in. Mr. Wynns mentioned that the Foundation provides immediate assistance for hotel, basic needs, etc. much faster than the insurance company payment. He recommended that we increase the maximum payout for these situations and noted that we raised membership dues and have the ability now to increase benefits to members.

Mr. Mecusker asked for clarification, the proposed language mentions total loss of vehicle and house. He noted that houses are worth far more than a vehicle. Mr. Akins clarified that vehicles are included in the Disaster Relief section however we are just changing the Employee Assistance Program portion in regards to house fires. He noted that language can be adjusted as the board determines. Mr. Mecusker recapped we are increasing the maximum amount for fire damage to \$1,000.

Mr. Wynns made a motion to raise the maximum for a house fire and total loss, Mr. Rush seconded. Motion approved unanimously.

We will be celebrating our 23rd year as an organization soon. Mr. Williams noted that our criteria currently limits assistance to extreme cases of cancer, critical health, we currently have 3 times in a lifetime in our criteria. We are proposing that we increase the times you can request to 5 in a lifetime, 18 months apart. This allows us to continue providing benefits to long term members even if they have requested assistance in the past.

Mr. Akins asked when this change will go into effect. Mr. Mecusker asked if we make this retroactive. The board discussed and said that we would move forward from this date on. There are a couple of requests from the last month that we will ask staff to resubmit that are critical health situations.

A motion was unanimously approved to increase to 5 times in a lifetime effective April 23, 2019.

Ms. Logue referred to the Employee Assistance document to show how many staff we have assisted statewide and noted that we remind wardens and circuit administrators that we are available to assist their staff and explain the process. We receive fewer requests from Region III and IV, however their employees are likely in just as much need as Regions I and II.

Mr. Williams noted that we also assist non-members with a minimum amount and that Wardens and Circuits may be unaware of this and since those regions have fewer members warden's and circuit administrators may think the Corrections Foundation is not a resource for non-members, thus we receive fewer requests.

Mr. Wynns noted that there has been a lot of turn over throughout the state, many leave for higher paying law enforcement positions, 65% have less than 2 years of service or less. It makes it tough to recruit and retain members.

Upcoming 23rd Anniversary

Mr. Mecusker suggested that we promote our 23rd anniversary July 1st and the impact the Corrections Foundation has had.

The Corrections Foundation was recently recognized in the FL Times Union in an article on assistance we provided to FDC following Hurricane Michael. It would be good to see more articles about the good work of the Foundation. Mr. Akins noted that we coordinate our press through the FDC's Public Affairs Office so that they know what is being promoted. We can do a press release and run it through Public Affairs to promote our anniversary.

Mr. Rush mentioned that the Gainesville Sun has typically been supportive, looking for positive news stories. The more we send their way the more often they are willing to run articles about us.

Mr. Akins noted that Facebook posts and social media tend to lead to newspaper stories as well.

Mr. Riedl noted that Secretary Inch is writing a weekly letter to staff. If we can have a message included all staff receive his weekly update. We could request that Secretary Inch congratulate the Foundation on our 23 year anniversary, and include the membership form links in the Quick Read.

Hurricane Michael Disaster Relief Update

Mr. Akins gave a report on our Hurricane Relief effort and changes made in preparation for another disaster. Assisting staff following Hurricane Michael was a massive undertaking but the infrastructure was in place, we knew where to begin but the magnitude of the damage made it difficult to get information from institutions. There was a discrepancy in how institutions were collecting data so we fine-tuned the attached spreadsheet and created a new form asking specific questions so that when information comes to us we don't have to follow up for details. Hopefully this will make data collection easier on institutional staff and also eliminate requests that do not fit the criteria. Photos will also be required.

The Board suggested that we add a signature line for Warden or Circuit Administrator approval. This will add a level of accountability that what staff are providing is true and that their administration will see it. This will prevent fraud and false allegations which were rare but still disruptive.

Mr. Riedl noted that the form is good and will help frontline staff in determining damage. The form is useful and will help staff know what to include, gives them a road map and guide.

The form will not come directly to us but will be completed by the employee, returned to their warden or circuit and their office will complete the spreadsheet with all employees and submit to the Corrections Foundation. The spreadsheet is very helpful and used to upload employees to the Quickbooks accounting software.

The staff assistants were wonderful following the storm and compiled and submitted information and photos to us.

Implementation of the new Disaster Relief form was unanimously approved.

Challenge Coin

Mr. Akins presented an idea proposed by Mr. Culpepper to create a challenge coin to provide to those who go above and beyond the call of duty to assist the Foundation. Those working to make sure their staff were taken care of. One example of this would be Chris Urquart in Region I Community Corrections who was great following the hurricane and really worked hard to assist those impacted in Region I CC by the storm. Every staff assistant also gave beyond their current jobs to assist.

Mr. Wynns noted that Community Corrections aided the relief effort and received the Secretary's Hurricane Relief Challenge Coin for providing supplies donated by Region III and IV to the impacted region. They drove a 28 ft. U-Haul full of supplies to provide immediate relief. It was asked if we would offer the challenge coin for sale, because people do collect them.

Mr. Rush suggested that we create two, one for sale and 1 for special recognition and accommodation. Hopefully we won't go through multiple major disasters and have the opportunity to provide a coin so we wouldn't need as many of the special recognition coins. Mr. Wynns mentioned that a generic coin will likely be more useful and desired by staff. He recommended two different designs the accommodation one would not be available for purchase.

Ms. Logue asked how the expense of the coin would be funded. It was noted that through product sales they should pay for themselves.

Mr. Riedl likes the idea of having only one for above and beyond accommodation, makes it more special.

How would we determine who to recognize? There are FDC staff who stand out to Foundation staff. Ms. Logue noted that she would nominate every staff assistant that help to process Employee Assistance Requests. Mr. Akins commended Mr. Chris Urquhart, Region I Community Corrections, on his assistance following Hurricane Michael. It was recommended that we explore design and creation of the coin and establish criteria for the presentation of the coins for meritorious recognition and determine whether to have 1 or 2 versions.

Paintball Tournament

The tournament was cancelled due to lack of interest. Last year 65 players were involved this year only 24 signed up and it was not cost effective to move forward.

Staffing

Mr. Williams mentioned he is incredibly proud of our small staff and their performance when faced with a heavy work load. We started in 1996 as a small organization, asking .50 cents a pay period for membership and now membership has grown to allow us to provide over \$500,000 to FDC staff through the Employee Assistance Program each year. Over the last 23 years we have come a long way providing assistance to FDC officers and staff with more than \$8.3 million provided.

Established in 1996, the Corrections Foundation has worked on a shoe string budget for many years. In 2001 Mr. Wainwright came on board as our President and we have grown. For the last 16 years we have worked with a part-time staff, the most we have ever had is 4 staff. Mr. Akins has been a half-time Department of Corrections employee. We are now operating a million dollar budget and after speaking to Mr. Wainwright, Mr. Williams proposed that we move forward and make Mr. Akins and Ms. Sheri Logue full-time employees and continue Ms. Sheila Logue's part-time employment. We will also seek an OPS position to reinstate our staff assistant that used to be provided by the Department of Corrections. Retirement contributions will remain the same at 3%. Mr. Mecusker asked about other benefits such as health insurance. Mr. Williams noted that he has spoken to staff and at this time it benefits them to be responsible for their own health insurance, however we can reevaluate the need next year

when family needs change and other health insurance options will be needed. He proposed that the board provide salary increases and full-time status as benefits to maintain staff and keep them from taking positions elsewhere where they could make more. The attached proposal will become effective the first of July.

Mr. Mecusker asked if this caps salary's for this year and asked if there would be a Christmas bonus as in past years. Mr. Williams noted that this proposal only addresses salaries and other items could be discussed. Mr. Mecusker added that he believes an increase of pay is definitely warranted but he wanted to discuss all benefits. Mr. Akins added that circumstances could change in January and we can also explore utilizing a Human Resource company such as Paychex in order to offer benefits that are competitive. A stipend for insurance in the future is an option as well.

Mr. Akins will now work full-time for the Foundation and this offers us the ability to expand his duties, to be in the community more, to seek grants, build relationships, etc.

Mr. Wynns asked if there are benefits that Mr. Akins will lose that he currently has through the State. Yes, he will lose life insurance, health insurance, access to deferred comp but the raise in pay would provide the ability to purchase similar insurance and invest on the open market.

Mr. Mecusker asked about annual and sick leave. Currently we provide the equivalent to the State's half-time benefits and these do not roll over each year, time is lost if not used. It was discussed that we match what the State offers for SES employees which is 176 hours annual leave and 104 hours of sick leave. These hours are allowed to accrue for a total of 480 hours annual leave and unlimited for SL with a maximum payout of 1920 for sick leave upon separation. Staff agreements will be prepared and will include leave, benefits, termination and separation from the organization.

It was recommended that we finalize staff agreements between now and the next board meeting. Mr. Rush made a motion to accept the proposal with discussed edits and prepare staff agreements including sick and annual leave to go into effect July 1st. Benefits could be adjusted annually.

Seconded by Mr. Mecusker. Unanimously approved.

Next Board Meeting

Our next Board meeting is scheduled for June 25th in person in Ocala. We will also host a membership recognition luncheon at FWRC and invite membership winners that are within driving distance from Reg. II and III. Mr. Wynns recommended that the next board meeting in June also be a membership thank you for Region III staff. Mr. Riedl noted that this could be held at FWRC in the training building. Invite all locations that are close enough to come and recognize the winners of the membership campaign.

Ms. Sheri Logue indicated that our annual audit was coming up in mid-July and that a final year end budget would need to be approved by the Board prior to that time.

New Business

Vocational Education and Grant Opportunities

Mr. Rush noted that there are opportunities that become available by elevating Mr. Akins' position and having him as a full-time Executive Director such as grants and vocational training programs. In a recent report on criminal justice reform the need for skilled labor in many areas such as road construction, electrical, housing, welding and more was discussed. The Corrections Foundation can work with FDC in their goal to release offenders with a new skill set. Mr. Williams agreed and noted that Baker CI has been successful with a 4 year Electrical Journeyman program. Mr. Rush noted that we could speak with Ms. Lisa Miller about opportunities she is aware of. Ms. Logue recommended that the Board and Chris will meet with FDC and explore how we can serve FDC as a non-profit for grant resources to support programs. Mr. Mahoney and Ms. Brock are the current contacts in Programs.

The meeting adjourned at 2 p.m.

Minutes submitted on June 18, 2019 by Sheri Logue.