

Child Care Center at Norwich
Board Meeting December 7, 2009
Minutes

In attendance: Neil Odell, Marlene McDonald, Jodi Wenger, Allison Colburn, Bristol Rayno, Julie Stevenson, Dave Stewart, Lynne Chow, Josh Manheimer, Shoshanna Hort, Rick Canning, Tricia Groff. Absent: Jennifer Letendre, Diego Mas. Quorum present? Yes

Consent Agenda: Approved, including minutes of the November meeting and Director's Report.

Public Comments & Discussion: None.

Phone System Upgrade

The Board discussed the feasibility of upgrading the Center's phone system, which is outdated, inadequate, and semi-functional at best. Allison explained that 18 months ago the Center was awarded two grants totaling \$2300.00, for the specific purpose of upgrading the phone system. These are "use it or lose it" funds, and the Center is running out of time to put them to use. The most reasonable estimate for the desired PBX upgrade is approximately \$5800.00. Even if the Center were to forego certain optional equipment, this would only reduce the price tag by \$800 to \$900.

Board members explored the Center's current financial status, the immediacy of the need for an upgrade to the phone system, and the feasibility of finding alternative, less costly options. The Board also explored other funding sources, including whether there are individuals or businesses who might be interested in donating to or sponsoring the project.

Allison, with appropriate help with the Board, agreed to further evaluate whether (a) there are less costly phone technologies available that deliver the required business functionality; (b) we could obtain a lower estimate for the desired PBX upgrade; and/or (c) additional funding sources could be found, i.e., a donor or project sponsor.

Fall Appeal Update

Board members confirmed that they had completed their cards and handwritten notes to prospective contributors. All cards have been mailed. Allison indicated that the Center has received \$2500 in contributions to date, with a goal of receiving between \$8000 and \$9000.

Committee Reports/Updates

Neil confirmed that Diego has taken on the project of examining the Center's employee benefit plans and evaluating how these compare to what is offered by other, local non-profits.

Tikes on Trikes Update

Neil re-confirmed that the event is scheduled for March 13, 2010 and will be held at the Hanover High School gymnasium. Board members reiterated their commitment to making the event a success by seeking “larger” items or services for the silent auction—emphasizing quality over quantity, so to speak. Lynne suggested that travel packages (such as a weekend getaway) could be desirable for the auction. Members agreed that we need more items of this type. At its January meeting, the Board plans to identify a member to serve as the Tikes on Trikes project leader.

Solicitation of Advertising

The Board preliminarily discussed the question of whether the Center should solicit advertising by companies or individuals as a way to raise revenue. Leading the discussion, Josh Manheimer presented UCLA’s web advertising guidelines to show how another non-profit organization developed criteria for permissible (and prohibited) advertising. Neil suggested that the Board consider the issue of advertising in two parts. First, the Board must decide as a general matter whether it is appropriate for the Center to solicit advertising. If the answer to that question “yes,” then the next step is for the Board to develop specific guidelines. These guidelines would define the kind of advertising that is permissible at the Center or in publications, and establish a review and approval process. Following some amicable debate among members about what types of advertising would or would not be appropriate to solicit, the Board “tabled” the matter for discussion at a subsequent meeting.

Employee Salaries/Bonuses

Following discussion in executive session, the Board voted unanimously to (a) award annual bonuses using the same payment formula as last year, but with payouts reduced by 1/3; and (b) revisit the question of a salary increase next March, when the Board is in a better position to evaluate the Center’s financial trajectory for the remainder of the fiscal year.

Next Month

Board meeting on January 4, 2010.