

ST. JOHNS COUNTY HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES ADVISORY COUNCIL (HHSAC)
MEETING MINUTES
October 2nd, 2025

MEMBERS PRESENT: Tara Haley, Chair; Howard Hitzel, Vice Chair; Deanna Jones; Leslie Barstow

MEMBERS ABSENT: Shannon Nazworth; Kathleen Patneau; Chip Cover

STAFF PRESENT: Shawna Novak, HHS Director (virtual); Joe Cone, HHS Asst. Director; Commissioner Sarah Arnold, BCC Liaison; Juliette Maronel, HHS Admin Coordinator; Katrina Tanner, HHS Contract Coordinator

VISITORS: Schuyler Siefker, Patti Greenough, Kenice Taylor, Wayne Larson
Virtual- Nangy Pulsfus, Chynequa King, Kelly Franklin, Brian Robinson, Sandra Jackson, Judy Dembrowski, Anita Daniel, Taylor Hodges, Tara Wildes, Nancy Russo, Brittney Spangler, Candance Ray, Marion Blohm, Michelle Colee, Teresa Matheny, Kelly Franklin

CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL: Tara Haley called the meeting to order at 4:01pm. Quorum was present.

MINUTES: Tara Haley opened the floor for a motion to approve the meeting minutes for September 4th and September 18th. Howard Hitzel motioned to approve the minutes, and Comm. Arnold seconded the motion. The Council unanimously approved the minutes.

PUBLIC COMMENT: Tara Haley opened the floor for public comment, but there were no remarks.

REPORT FROM COMMISSIONER ARNOLD: Commissioner Sarah Arnold yielded her allotted time.

OLD BUSINESS: Continuum of Care (CoC) Update: Anita Daniel reported that all subcontracts for the current fiscal year have been finalized, except for HHS.

1. Funding Allocations:
 - a. ESG Prevention-
 - i. Catholic Charities: \$44,842.26
 - ii. SJC HHS: \$58,500.00
 - b. ESG Rapid Rehousing (RRH)
 - i. Catholic Charities: \$16,738.01
 - ii. SJC HHS: \$16,738.01
 - c. Challenge Housing
 - i. Catholic Charities: \$93,000.00
 - ii. SJC HHS: \$75,000.00
 - iii. Betty Griffin Center: \$42,500.00
2. Staffing Update:
 - a. Katie Maggs has been appointed as the new By-Name List Case Manager.
 - b. The By-Name List (BNL) is a real-time registry of individuals experiencing homelessness, used to prioritize housing referrals through coordinated entry. It plays a central role in case conferencing and is managed by a dedicated Coordinator. Having someone focused on maintaining the list and supporting those awaiting housing is essential to the effectiveness of the system.
 - c. Recruitment efforts continue for the Housing Navigator and Patriot Place Coordinator roles.

NEW BUSINESS: Patti Greenough and Schuyler Siefker presenting on the St. Johns County Children's Alliance:

- Background & History
 - The Alliance grew out of the Behavioral Health Consortium, established in 2012 to ensure local communities could set funding priorities rather than relying solely on state decisions, and in October of that year about 50 community members gathered to identify and vote on the top priorities. The first Children's Summit was held in 2016, bringing together professionals, parents, providers, and leaders to create a strategic plan.
 - A governance work group was formed with representatives from local government, schools, law enforcement, and business. Progress was delayed by COVID but revived in recent years.
 - The Alliance has been formalized with bylaws, 501(c)(3) status, and preliminary county funding.
- Mission & Purpose
 - Collaborative effort to identify needs, resources, and partnerships to improve the lives of St. Johns County children and their families by advocating for safe, healthy, and nurturing environment.
 - Bring local government, providers, and private agencies into alignment, focusing on cooperation rather than competition for funding.
 - Apply shared data, coordinated advocacy, and unified strategies to guide planning and implement best practices.
- Key Goals & Outcomes
 - While the Alliance originated from behavioral health initiatives, its focus extends to education, social-emotional development, medical care, and overall child well-being, serving as a unified voice for families across multiple domains.
 - Expand system of care capacity and ensure resources for children's mental health.
 - Prevent youth Baker Acts, child neglect, abuse, and substance misuse.
 - Improve social-emotional health and reduce adverse childhood experiences.
 - Strengthening collaboration among agencies and align community priorities with funding opportunities.
- Community Data & Input
 - Recognizing the need for updated information, INK funded the initiative and hired a planning council to gather data through community meetings. Examples include the BRAVE Summit, consortium sessions, and interviews with parents, health providers, and community leaders.
 - Nearly 1,000 community members engaged in data collection, including 300 minors.
 - Priorities identified were youth mental health, stress, substance abuse, and hospitalizations.
 - Major barriers highlighted:
 - Shortages of healthcare professionals.
 - Limited services and treatment beds.
 - Transportation challenges.
 - Long waitlists and scheduling difficulties.
 - Lack of awareness of available services and resources.
- Governance & Structure
 - Board of Directors: 5–15 members, meeting quarterly.
 - Six individuals have already agreed to serve, with a goal of at least nine members by January.
 - Work underway to define board responsibilities, areas of expertise, and job descriptions.
 - Plan to hire an Executive Director in February/March, based on board input.
 - Updates and introduction of the CEO planned for summer.
- Closing Remarks
 - Commissioner Sarah Arnold thanked Patti Greenough, Schuyler Siefker, and Shawna Novak for organizing a high-caliber summit and noted the growing interest from community leaders, adding that she looks forward to seeing where the initiative progresses.

Health & Human Services/County Administration Update- Shawna Novak, Director, HHS

- Shawna reported that commissioners passed the FY 2026 budget with the recommended funding, and Katrina is working with agencies to develop contracts, which will go to the board on the 7th.
- HHS leadership held a kickoff meeting with the consultant (PCG) to begin updating the strategic plan, required for accreditation through the Council on Accreditation. The plan is being streamlined with the county's adopted strategic plan.
- A formal needs assessment is underway-the first since approximately 2010/2011-with a steering committee that includes Leslie Barstow, Tracy Dillon, Carl Crisco (United Way), Paige Stanton (Care Connect), and Shawna Novak. Next steps involve key informant interviews to capture current challenges and community needs, organizing focus groups with clients to discuss barriers and gaps, and developing community surveys in partnership with Public Affairs to gather resident input. A separate survey will also be conducted for nonprofit organizations, with the final report targeted for completion by April 2026.
- October was recognized as Domestic Violence Awareness Month, with a Family Integrity Program (FIP) proclamation issued on October 21st.
- November is National Adoption Month, so FIP is planning celebrations including a BBQ event at the HHS building on November 7th for families who have adopted through FIP, and a National Adoption Day ceremony at the courthouse on November 21st at 10 a.m.
 - Shawna highlighted the adoption of a 16-year-old boy, noting the team's dedication and the importance of supporting teen adoptions, which occur less frequently.

FUNDED AGENCY UPDATES: Currently there are no updates due to the blackout period.

COMMUNITY PARTNERS:

SMA Healthcare: Sandra Jackson didn't have any current updates.

Department of Health: Kenice Taylor reported that the Community Baby Shower was on September 13th at the Colhoun Center, with approximately 89 attendees. Participants received car seat check training, safe sleep safety training, and other safety education provided by 28 collaborating community partners. In September, a car seat check was conducted at HHS where parents drove up to have technicians confirm proper installation; three were served. The next car seat check is scheduled for November 6th.

UF Health St. Johns: Anita Daniel reported that the mobile outreach clinic bus has been revamped with a new nurse practitioner, new equipment and will now host regular monthly clinics at the main library every Tuesday from 1:00–4:00pm. Anita encouraged attendees to share this information with the community.

Public Safety: Director Wildes reported that as the FY26 budget begins, plans are underway to add a second co-responder position, noting that although the timeline is uncertain, the workload clearly justifies the need. She shared that progress has been made toward acquiring the software required for case management and addressed the current e-bike issue, explaining that education strategies for minors and parents, along with enforcement measures, will be implemented in the near future to help resolve the problem.

ANNOUNCEMENTS: The next General Meeting is scheduled for November 6th, 2025, at 4:00pm via Microsoft Teams and in person at the Health & Human Services Kingfisher Conference Room, 200 San Sebastian View, St. Augustine, FL 32084.

ADJOURNMENT: Meeting was adjourned at 4:36pm