



**Finance & Operations Committee Meeting
Transcript**

January 6, 2022

THE CHILDREN'S TRUST FINANCE AND OPERATIONS
COMMITTEE MEETING

“IN PERSON QUORUM WITH SOME VIRTUAL ATTENDANTS”

The Children's Trust Finance and Operations
Committee Meeting was held in teleconference via
Zoom Webinar on January 6, 2022, commencing at 9:30
p.m., at 3250 Southwest 3rd Avenue, United Way,
Ryder Conference Room, Miami, Florida 33129. The
meeting was called to order by Mark Trowbridge,
Chair.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

Mark A. Trowbridge, Vice-Chair

Gilda Ferradaz, Vice-Chair

Dr. Magaly C. Abrahante (Zoom)

Matthew Arsenault

Constance Collins

Morris Copeland (Zoom)

Nelson Hincapie (Zoom)

Hon. Isaac Salver (Zoom)

Kenneth Hoffman (ex-officio)(Zoom)

ATTORNEY:

Leigh Kobrinski

1 STAFF:
2 Bevone Ritchie
3 Dane Minott
4 Diana Beltre
5 Felix Becerra
6 Imran Ali
7 James Haj
8 Jacques Bentolila
9 Joanna Revelo
10 Juana Leon
11 Juliette Fabien
12 Lisete Yero
13 Lori (Katherine) Hanson
14 Muriel Jeanty
15 Natalia Zea
16 Sheryl Borg
17 Wendy Duncombe
18 William Kirtland
19 Ximena Nunez
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21 GUESTS:
22 Da-Venya Armstrong
23 Claudia Sarabia
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PROCEEDINGS

MR. TROWBRIDGE: Good morning, everybody. It is right at 9:30 this morning here on Thursday, January 6. And without objection, I'll go ahead and call our Finance and Operations Committee Meeting together --.

(Thereupon, off record due to technical difficulties; after which the following proceedings were not heard on record.)

PER MURIEL JEANTY:("MR. TROWBRIDGE: Muriel, do we have any public comments?"

MS. JEANTY: No, Chair, we don't have any public comments.

MR. TROWBRIDGE: Thank you very much, Muriel, We need the approval of the October 7, 2021, Finance & Operations committee minutes. We also have a summary of those minutes in your package. Do we have a motion to approve those minutes as presented?

MS. COLLINS: Moved, Collins

MR. TROWBRIDGE: Do we have a second?

MS. FERRADAZ: Second, Ferradaz

MR. TROWBRIDGE: Thank you. Any other comments, corrections, additions, deletions")

(Thereupon, the following proceedings were heard on record)

MR. TROWBRIDGE: Seeing none, all in favor please

1 signify by saying aye.

2 (WHEREUPON, the committee members all responded
3 with "aye.")

4 MR. TROWBRIDGE: Any opposed nay.

5 (No verbal response.)

6 MR. TROWBRIDGE: Motion carries. Thank you all
7 very much. We have a number of resolutions, as I
8 mentioned before. I'm really happy that I had a
9 chance to chat with staff yesterday and get really
10 good insight into these resolutions, which have come
11 before the board, the full board later in the month.

12 The resolution that we'll start with is
13 Resolution 2022-A: Authorization for a procurement
14 waiver from a formal competitive solicitation for
15 catering services at the 2022 Champions for Children
16 event and to expend a total amount not to exceed
17 \$45,000.00 of the already approved \$150,000 budget
18 with DoubleTree by Hilton Miami Airport Convention
19 Center to host and cater the 2022 Champions for
20 Children event.

21 Do I have a motion to approve Resolution 2022-A?

22 MR. ARSENAULT: Arsenault.

23 MR. TROWBRIDGE: Thank you, Matthew.

24 Is there a second?

25 MS. COLLINS: Second, Collins.

1 MR. TROWBRIDGE: Thank you, Constance.

2 Any discussion regarding this resolution?

3 (No verbal response.)

4 MR. TROWBRIDGE: I want to thank staff for the
5 good work they have done getting a number of kids for
6 this program. It'll be the first time in a number of
7 years now that we're able to do this live and in
8 person. As you might imagine, it has been challenging
9 for our hospitality industry to host events like this.

10 So I'm really thrilled that Natalia and the team found
11 a great venue and location and looking forward to
12 being together for the Champions For Children event in
13 person in a few months.

14 So seeing no additional discussion, we'll go
15 ahead and move to a vote.

16 All in favor, please signify by saying aye.

17 (WHEREUPON, the committee members all responded
18 with "aye.")

19 MR. TROWBRIDGE: Any opposed nay.

20 (No verbal response.)

21 MR. TROWBRIDGE: Thank you all very much and
22 godspeed on putting this event.

23 Next we have Resolution 2022-B: Authorization to
24 negotiate and execute a contract renewal with
25 Armstrong Creative Consulting, Inc., for event

1 planning services, in a total amount not to exceed
2 \$290,000.00, for a term of nine months, commencing
3 retroactively on January 1, 2022, ending on September
4 30, 2022, with three remaining 12-month renewals.

5 Is there a motion to approve this resolution?

6 MS. FERRADAZ: So moved, Ferradaz.

7 MR. TROWBRIDGE: Thank you, Gilda.

8 Is there a second?

9 MR. ARSENAULT: Second, Arsenault.

10 MR. TROWBRIDGE: Thank you, Matthew.

11 We'll move into discussion. And I'll remind you
12 that Armstrong Creative Consulting Inc. will provide
13 the event planning and execution services for our 2022
14 Children's Trust Family Expo events, which
15 collectively amount to the largest community resource
16 events in Miami-Dade County, with as many as 200 total
17 exhibitors attracting thousands of families and
18 children annually. Services to be provided include
19 but are not limited to, and you can see this in the
20 package on page 7, managing all of our exhibitors and
21 all aspects of the event. As you recall last year, we
22 had to continue to pivot and hosted at four different
23 locations. I believe the goal this year is to do
24 something very similar. We'll be hearing more about
25 that as the planning comes together, but great success

1 last year with doing this in four different parts of
2 our community and pivoting to drive-thru and making it
3 very creative for our children and families to
4 participate in the family expo. And we have worked
5 with Armstrong's team for a number of years to put
6 this together, so.

7 Any other discussion about this resolution?

8 (No verbal response.)

9 MR. TROWBRIDGE: All right. We'll head to a vote
10 then. All in favor signify by saying aye.

11 (WHEREUPON, the committee members all responded
12 with "aye.")

13 MR. TROWBRIDGE: Any opposed?

14 (No verbal response.)

15 MR. TROWBRIDGE: The motion carries. Thank you
16 all very much. Resolution 2022-B is approved and will
17 come to the board later this month. If you refer to
18 pages 9 and 10, we'll talk about Resolution 2022-C:
19 Authorization to negotiate and execute contract
20 renewals for advertising creative, media buying, and
21 community outreach services, in a combined total
22 amount not to exceed \$2,015,000.00, for a term of 12
23 months, commencing October 1, 2022, and ending on
24 September 30, 2023, with one remaining 12-month
25 renewal.

1 Do we have a motion to approve this resolution?

2 MR. ARSENAULT: Arsenault.

3 MR. TROWBRIDGE: Thank you, Matthew.

4 Is there a second?

5 MS. COLLINS: Second, Collins.

6 MR. TROWBRIDGE: Thank you, Constance.

7 Moving to discussion. I will remind you that the

8 three agencies listed below, which include Armstrong

9 Creative, WOW Factor Marketing Group, Agencia Central,

10 they provide creative services, media buys and work

11 with us in various communities that we served through

12 the Trust. And they provide, as you know, marketing

13 campaigns related to The Children's Trust branding,

14 our signature events, promotion of funded programs in

15 areas such as literacy, early childhood development,

16 children's health, afterschool summer learning, youth

17 enrichment, quality childcare, parenting and adoption.

18 So really covers many of the services that we provide.

19 Any further discussion or comments? I know

20 Ximena is here, so if you have any questions, you can

21 certainly ask her to opine.

22 (No verbal response.)

23 MR. TROWBRIDGE: Seeing none, we'll move into a

24 vote. Resolution 2022-C. All in favor signify by

25 saying aye.

1 (WHEREUPON, the committee members all responded
2 with "aye.")

3 MR. TROWBRIDGE: Any opposed nay.

4 (No verbal response.)

5 MR. TROWBRIDGE: The motion carries.

6 Next we'll move into Resolution 2022-D:

7 Authorization to enter into a purchase agreement with
8 Edward Delatorre LLC dba Monsters Ink for Trust-
9 branded promotional items in a total amount not to
10 exceed \$37,334.08 for a term of nine months commencing
11 retroactively on January 1, 2022, and ending on
12 September 30, 2022.

13 Do we have a motion to approve this resolution?

14 MR. ARSENAULT: Arsenault.

15 MR. TROWBRIDGE: Thank you, Matthew.

16 MR. TROWBRIDGE: Do we have a second?

17 MS. COLLINS: Collins.

18 MR. TROWBRIDGE: Thank you very much Constance.

19 We'll move into discussion. My understanding is this
20 allows us to purchase things like backpacks, which is
21 part of a program that we're very well known for and
22 work with other agencies in terms of distribution.
23 And we're getting a head start on this. So good work.

24 Any further discussion on this resolution?

25 MR. HINCAPIE: Mark?

1 MR. TROWBRIDGE: Yes, sir?

2 MR. HINCAPIE: I have a suggestion in terms of
3 the backpacks and I know that they are -- obviously I
4 speak from it from the foster care world and there are
5 a lot of agencies that do a lot of backpack drives,
6 especially going back to school. I know we do one and
7 a bunch of other people. It'd be great if maybe the
8 Trust, and I know, Jim, this will be more work for
9 you, so I'd hate to do this, but I think it benefits
10 the children, is that if we can coordinate and somehow
11 we can all come together and have one agency do the
12 backpacks, the other do the supplies that go in there.
13 So instead of giving just a backpack with supplies in
14 there, if we coordinate, and I think, Jim, if you
15 bring everybody to the table, you will be able to
16 maximize on what we do, instead of having kids have
17 three, four, five backpacks. So that's my two cents.

18 MR. TROWBRIDGE: Anyone want to comment on that
19 from staff?

20 MR. HAJ: Nelson, I appreciate it. I think we
21 approached this, and Ximena, correct me if I'm wrong,
22 a couple of years ago, we do coordinate with the
23 backpack distributions throughout the community to
24 make sure what everybody is doing. I think there was
25 like 50 backpack distributions or a large quantity. I

1 think, Nelson, you may have brought this up last year,
2 about the supplies and having -- the headsets I think
3 came from you and that's why the headsets were added a
4 while back, but we can also -- I'm pretty sure we look
5 to supplies, but we can continue looking at supplies
6 and working with our partners. As you know, there's
7 just a lot of people out there. We know the scope,
8 the people who we know are doing backpack
9 distributions, we can easily reach out to them and see
10 if there will be a coordinated effort of how to do
11 that.

12 MR. TROWBRIDGE: Terrific. Thank you, Jim.

13 And we'll definatley take that feedback. Thank
14 you very much, Nelson.

15 Any other discussion, any other thoughts?

16 (No verbal response.)

17 MR. TROWBRIDGE: All right, seeing none, we'll
18 move into a vote on Resolution 2022-D. All in favor
19 signify by saying aye.

20 (WHEREUPON, the committee members all responded
21 with "aye.")

22 MR. TROWBRIDGE: Any opposed nay?

23 (No verbal response.)

24 MR. TROWBRIDGE: The motion carries. Thank you
25 all very much.

1 Next we'll move on to Resolution 2022-E:
2 Authorization to accept a three year \$215,000.00 grant
3 award from the Florida Children's Council, funded by
4 the Helios Education Foundation, to support Trust
5 staff and consultant support for data, program
6 evaluation, and dissemination of results as part of
7 The Trust's innovative partnership approach to enhance
8 summer learning, and authorization to execute any
9 required agreements and documents in support thereof,
10 commencing retroactively on October 1, 2021, and
11 ending September 30, 2024.

12 Is there a motion to approve this resolution?

13 MS. COLLINS: Collins.

14 MR. TROWBRIDGE: Thank you, Constance.

15 Is there a second?

16 MS. FERRADAZ: Second.

17 MR. TROWBRIDGE: Thank you, Madam Vice Chair.

18 We'll move into discussion. Some of you know
19 that this past summer The Children's Trust and Miami-
20 Dade County Public Schools partnered to combine fun
21 and learning and joint summer camps. After more than
22 a year of virtual schooling and many throughout the
23 COVID-19 pandemic. There was a great need to support
24 student readiness for a successful return to in person
25 classes this past fall. So this is a partnership.

1 It's a three year grant award in a total of
2 \$215,000.00.

3 Any further discussion about accepting this?

4 (No verbal response.)

5 MR. TROWBRIDGE: Seeing none, we'll move into a
6 vote. All in favor of Resolution 2022-E, please
7 signify by saying aye.

8 (WHEREUPON, the committee members all responded
9 with "aye.")

10 MR. TROWBRIDGE: Any opposed nay.

11 (No verbal response.)

12 MR. TROWBRIDGE: Motion carries and the
13 resolution will be approved and forwarded to the board
14 for full consideration. I'm now going to turn it over
15 to our CEO Jim Haj for his quarterly CEO report.

16 MR. HAJ: Mr. Chair, thank you. I just want to
17 start off, I'm going to kick it over to Bill in a
18 minute. I want to start off with some great news. We
19 have a press release ready to go out, everything to go
20 out in social media, but we wanted to wait until we
21 met with the Finance Committee. To let this group --
22 because you have led the effort in this success. So,
23 Bill, do you want to let the committee know the great
24 success we've had?

25 MR. KIRTLAND: Yes, thank you, Jim.

1 Good morning, everybody. This announcement has
2 come, I guess I can say many years in a row now and
3 we're very proud as The Children's Trust organization,
4 specifically within our finance department, to yet
5 again announce this is our ninth straight year that
6 we've been awarded the -- I have to read it every time
7 because it's a bit lengthy. A Certificate of
8 Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting. So
9 essentially we submit our annual comprehensive
10 financial report every year to the governing body of
11 the Government Finance Officers Association. It
12 almost takes about a year to have your report
13 reviewed, embedded through that committee. And we
14 just recently heard just after the holiday break that
15 we have yet again been awarded. But it was for last
16 years audited financials, September 30, 2020. We're
17 currently underway our audit for September 30, 2021,
18 which is, from what has been indicated by our
19 auditors, going very well and we haven't learned of
20 any deficiencies or write-ups or anything of that sort
21 yet, so we hope to apply and have this award achieved
22 again next year and then we can make it nice round
23 even decade, hopefully, of receiving this award. But
24 essentially, it's a monumental type of achievement, I
25 think, for the organization, as a government

1 organization, to both produce a robust report that has
2 a very strong financial indicators included within it.
3 Some market analysis, where we go above the minimal
4 standards of what's reported in this annual report so
5 that this award can be considered by the committee.
6 So I'd like to thank staff that are involved in
7 producing that report. Everybody essentially has
8 involvement from the ground up. I use a lot of
9 reports produced by other departments within the
10 Trust, so it certainly is a team effort generating
11 something of this quality, but really it starts with
12 just the operation on day one to day 365 of an annual,
13 of a fiscal year. Essentially, the operational
14 practices that have been developed with it by staff
15 and this committee has influenced things like
16 procurement policy and other financial operations and
17 procedures that created a sound foundation for this
18 organization many, many years in a row, where this is
19 become the expectation. And I think it should be the
20 expectation, but it's an achievement each year. So I
21 want to congratulate the committee as well as all the
22 Trust that has been involved in these procedures. As
23 well as, she's not maybe physically here, but I know
24 she's just across the street, Wendy Duncombe, our
25 controller, certainly spearheads the audit effort

1 every year, making sure that each thing that our
2 auditors need to complete is done on time, that the
3 audit goes as smoothly for them as possible because we
4 want to keep our auditors happy each year. So that's
5 -- I certainly just want to thank her for her
6 involvement each and every year of making this
7 process, the application and the audit go smoothly. I
8 think with that, I'll just kick it back over to you,
9 Jim.

10 MR. HAJ: No. Thank you very much. Thank you to
11 you, your team, to Wendy. But as we stated yesterday
12 at the all staff meeting, it really is our entire
13 organization that's led by this committee. I
14 appreciate each and every one of you here. To have it
15 -- what I told the team yesterday is it seems almost
16 commonplace, but it really is not. It is a lot of
17 work to get this. And as Dave Lawrence, Dave spoke to
18 our staff during the holiday party, there has never
19 been a cloud over the Trust and the Trust has always
20 been out in the community and we go the extra mile to
21 make sure that we dot our eyes, cross our t's. For
22 nine years in a row to have this is truly an amazing
23 honor. And as Bill says, this is expectation. We
24 look forward to getting it next year, 10 in a row. I
25 appreciate, Bill, appreciate you, and to the

1 committee, thank you very much.

2 MR. TROWBRIDGE: Thank you, Jim.

3 Congratulations, Bill, the entire team. We should
4 never take this for granted by the way. Not only the
5 good work, but obviously having every year when the
6 auditors come and present to our board. Such an
7 outstanding review. It doesn't happen in every
8 organization, it doesn't happen easily, so
9 congratulations to you, the team, and to our board for
10 their good stewardship.

11 MR. HAJ: Mr. Chair, sorry, there was one more
12 item. The CEO report, there was one more item, it was
13 on there, it was at the back of your package.

14 MR. TROWBRIDGE: Okay.

15 MR. HAJ: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

16 MR. TROWBRIDGE: Fantastic. Thank you very much.

17 We have come to the end of our agenda. Is there
18 anything else for the good of the order? I know Bill
19 mentioned a little bit about the audit, he shared with
20 me that most of the field work has been completed and
21 we should expect to hear from our auditors probably in
22 March with a full review and report to the board.

23 MR. HINCAPIE: Mark?

24 MR. TROWBRIDGE: Yes?

25 MR. HINCAPIE: Mr. Copeland has his hand raised

1 on my --

2 MR. TROWBRIDGE: My apologies. Morris?

3 MR. COPELAND: Thank you. Happy New Year to
4 everyone. Good morning. I just wanted to formally
5 say congratulations Mr. Haj and the team at The
6 Children's Trust and the board members on this
7 extraordinary accomplishment in terms of the
8 financials and in the accolades associated with it. I
9 think it speaks volumes to the work that you all have
10 been doing for so very long in this community and
11 doing it in a way that people trust and know that at
12 the end of the day that you're going to be good
13 stewards of the tax payers dollars. So I just want to
14 say congratulations and thank you all. It's truly an
15 honor to be a member of this board. Thank you.

16 MR. TROWBRIDGE: Thank you for your great
17 service.

18 MR. HOFFMAN: Mark, if I may?

19 MR. TROWBRIDGE: Mr. Chairman?

20 MR. HOFFMAN: Thank you. First of all, I was a
21 little late from technical issues, but I just wanted
22 to welcome everybody to the first meeting of the year.
23 I did spend a few hours with the staff at the end of
24 last year at the holiday party celebrating all the
25 successes of last year. And I think its -- Morris,

1 thank you for the compliment on that. But I think in
2 all areas, finance in particular, but all areas the
3 staff has performed just amazingly under the
4 circumstances that our community has faced and the
5 Trust and its providers have faced.

6 So looking forward to hopefully a less disrupted
7 year, but it's hard to tell. It's kind of early in
8 the year to make any predictions of what this year
9 will be like. But again, I just wanted to welcome
10 everybody to the first meeting of the year. Thank the
11 staff. Thank Bill and his staff, in particular, for
12 bringing those accolades to us. And look forward to
13 the coming year. Thank you.

14 MR. TROWBRIDGE: Thank you, Ken. You left a
15 little bit early because you missed my karaoke star
16 turn with the operations team here at the Trust. They
17 carried me through, I will tell you that.

18 MR. HOFFMAN: I saw the outfit, though. I missed
19 a lot, you're right.

20 MR. TROWBRIDGE: Thank you, Ken.

21 MR. ARSENAULT: I just wanted to go on record to
22 congratulate Jim and the team. As somebody with
23 firsthand experience with a large nonprofit, I mean,
24 it is a huge effort to do that, so to be recognized is
25 really great. Congratulations to the team on that.

1 And the key to that is really transparency. And
2 that's what we seek and it's so important. And also
3 much related to the approvals for today, you've done
4 this all while managing and keeping expenses very low
5 so that trust in you all to manage that well. Just
6 wanted to thank you for that and congratulations.

7 MR. TROWBRIDGE: Thank you, Matthew.

8 Constance?

9 MS. COLLINS: Yes. Also chiming in, amazing,
10 Bill, Jim, Ken, Mark, the entire team at The
11 Children's Trust. From the perspective of a provider,
12 I would say it's very comforting to understand clearly
13 what the requirements are for invoicing and payment.
14 And to work with your team has been really a sense of
15 partnership, and so its deeply appreciated, I think on
16 the providers side as much as it is for the general
17 public to have that kind of consistency. I also
18 wanted to raise an issue and just to put it on the
19 table so to speak, we're seeing increased numbers of
20 COVID positive cases. I know that we're not alone. I
21 know that many provider agencies are really struggling
22 right now with retention of their teams because it's a
23 scary time to be working. And children are not
24 vaccinated, so many of the providers, team members or
25 staff who may be vulnerable, who may have vulnerable

1 family members are facing a great deal of challenge or
2 difficult issues in terms of the decision to keep
3 working in the circumstances. I know that we at Lotus
4 House had almost 10 percent of our staff out from
5 positive cases and everyone is vaccinated. So it
6 wasn't an issue of that. Fortunately, folks are
7 starting to come back in, but we're just seeing this
8 as a constant issue.

9 And so I would just say as we think about this
10 year and it unfolds, the same level of care and
11 attention that you gave the providers when the
12 pandemic first hit as it has progressed is one I hope
13 will be forthcoming and that we recognize that the
14 frontline staff of our providers really need a level
15 of compensation, a living wage that is commensurate
16 with the way in which we value their services and the
17 value of our children that they're caring for. I know
18 we have a lot of our FPs coming. I'm hopeful that
19 we're taking into account these issues, the challenges
20 that the providers are facing in terms of being able
21 to continue to operate the escalating costs that
22 they're all facing. I know we've seen it, I've been
23 in conversations with other providers, I know they're
24 facing it, and so I'm just bringing this to the
25 forefront because I would love to say we're through

1 it, but we're definitely not. And this is going to be
2 a very challenging year for all of us. And so of
3 course I'm embracing the fact that it is a new year,
4 we've made it through two years, but we have a lot
5 ahead of us this year. And I appreciate the
6 leadership of the Trust. And thinking about that as
7 our FPs come out, where we have providers that are
8 delivering free services across our community and
9 facing unprecedented loss and unprecedented challenges
10 just retaining their teams intact. So thank you.

11 MR. TROWBRIDGE: Thank you, Constance. It's
12 always great to have your perspective, a providers
13 perspective. Thank you.

14 Any other comments? I know it's on Zoom, any of
15 our folks on Zoom? Thank you for joining us.

16 (No verbal response.)

17 MR. TROWBRIDGE: All right, seeing none, we have
18 a board meeting in about two weeks and we'll see you
19 all there. A motion to adjourn?

20 MR. HINCAPIE: Motion to adjourn.

21 MR. TROWBRIDGE: Thank you, Nelson.

22 Is there a second?

23 (No verbal response.)

24 MR. TROWBRIDGE: All in favor say aye.

25 (WHEREUPON, the committee members all responded

1 with "aye.")

2 MR. TROWBRIDGE: We will stand adjourned. Thank
3 you. Have a great Thursday, everybody.

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6 (Whereupon, at 10:00 a.m., the meeting was adjourned.)

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20 CERTIFICATE OF TRANSCRIPTION

21 The above and foregoing transcript is a true and
22 correct typed copy of the contents of the file, which
23 was digitally recorded in the proceeding identified at
24 the beginning of the transcript, to the best of my

1 ability, knowledge and belief.

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Christy Caldera, Transcriber

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February 9, 2022

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