

AGENDA

Youth Services Committee
Thursday, April 14, 2016
11:00 a.m.

Room 100

Members and Alternates: Council Members Amy Foster, Charlie Gerdes, Karl Nurse, Lisa Wheeler-Brown; Alternate—Darden Rice

Support Staff: Mike Jefferis, Parks and Recreation Director

- A. Call to Order and Roll Call
- B. Approval of Minutes from Youth Services Committee—March 10, 2016
- C. Agenda Items
 - 1. Circles® St. Petersburg—Michael Audino
- D. New Business
 - 1. Next Meeting Date—Thursday, May 12, 2016
- E. Adjournment

**CITY OF ST. PETERSBURG
YOUTH SERVICES COMMITTEE**
March 10, 2016 @ 10:30 a.m.

PRESENT: Committee Chair Amy Foster, Vice-Chair Steve Kornell, Lisa Wheeler-Brown, Darden Rice, Karl Nurse (Alternate)

ALSO PRESENT: Assistant City Attorney Jordan Wolfgram, Parks and Recreation Director Michael Jefferis, Assistant to the City Clerk Cortney Phillips.

ABSENT: None.

Chair Foster opened the meeting at 10:30 a.m. and began with a roll call. Councilmember Nurse moved for approval of the February 11, 2016 minutes. All were in favor of the motion.

In connection with the new business, Lindsay Carson, Chief Executive Officer from the Early Learning Coalition (ELC), and Karen Boggess, Performance & Evaluation Manager from the Juvenile Welfare Board (JWB), presented preschool and kindergarten readiness information from their respective agencies.

Ms. Carson began the discussion with statistical data from the Department of Education and the Pinellas County Schools district, concentrating on the Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK) program—a free preschool program for four-year-old children largely administered by private providers but also public schools. VPK has proven to be productive. Statistics indicate that children who entered into and completed VPK were 89% ready for kindergarten; children who completed only part of VPK were 74% ready; and those who did not participate in VPK were 59% ready. The focus of ELC is to balance access and quality in VPK programs in order to achieve kindergarten readiness success.

Similarly, Ms. Boggess provided VPK components, such as licensed facilities, accredited providers, staff qualifications, low ratios and group size, family engagement, evidence-based curriculum, quality environments, and cultural competence, as fundamental JWB goals.

Topics of concern to both agencies included the following:

- child care subsidization for low income families and at-risk children;
- waiting list for VPK enrollment;
- barriers that impede families from participating in VPK;
- low number of accredited child care homes in St. Petersburg;
- high rate of staff turnover due to an inadequate living wage;
- need for suitably trained staff to address social, emotional, and behavioral issues; and
- limited funding.

Committee members posed questions and requested additional information. Their desire is for all children to benefit from VPK now in order to reduce the need for specialized social services in the future.

The next Youth Services meeting is scheduled for April 14, 2016.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 11:36 a.m.