**Catastrophic Illness in Children Relief Fund Commission**

**Open Minutes**

**August 9, 2023**

The meeting was called to order by the Chairperson J. Prontnicki at 9:32 a.m.

J. Prontnicki announced that in compliance with the New Jersey Open Public Meetings Act, the specifics as to time and place of this meeting were sent to the Office of the Secretary of State and the Department of Personnel for filing and posted on the official bulletin boards provided by those offices for notice of public meetings. Also, notices were prepared for two newspapers to inform the public of this meeting.

J. Prontnicki conducted a roll call of members as follows:

**Present:**

Janice Prontnicki, Chairperson

Phyllis Shanley Hansell, Vice Chairperson

Ralph Condo

Adam Neary (for Lisa Asare)

Carl Underland

Manuel Paulino

Jeffrey Carrick

Anthony Valenzuela

Howard Weinberg

**Absent:**

Dawn Mergen

Lisa Asare

**Guest:**

Caroline Gargione, DAG

**Staff:**

Christian Heiss, Executive Director

LorieAnn Wilkerson-Leconte, Deputy Executive Director

Amy Taklif, Senior Analyst

Janet Valentin-Forte, Secretary to the Commission

**Agenda Approval:**

H. Weinberg made a motion to approve the proposed meeting agenda for the August 9, 2023 meeting. J. Carrick seconded the motion. All Commission members voted in favor.

**Public Comments:**

None.

**Approval of Minutes of June 2023 Meeting:**

P. Shanley Hansell made a motion to approve the closed meeting minutes of the June 7, 2023 meeting, which was seconded by H. Weinberg. R. Condo and A. Neary abstained from voting. All remaining Commission members voted in favor.

J. Carrick made a motion to approve the open meeting minutes of the June 7, 2023 meeting, which was seconded by P. Shanley Hansell. R. Condo and A. Neary abstained from voting. All remaining Commission members voted in favor.

**Treasurer’s Report:**

C. Heiss highlighted 27 applications to review, 25 eligibles and 2 ineligibles, with potential payments totaling $846,875.25. The projected Fund Balance (as of July 2023) is $13,576,000, sufficient to cover the payments for expenses in the applications under consideration. The State Office estimated an unobligated balance of $7,453,124.75 in the Fund, for the operations of the State Office in the last month of the fiscal year.

C. Heiss noted, as of August 4, 2023, the State Office has received 284 applications. On average analysts are processing 6-16 applications, and the fiscal analyst is working with families to verify income for 55 applications. There is 1 (one) appeal that requires a response by November 8, 2023.

**Executive Director’s Report:**

C. Heiss provided an update about the Application Portal Upgrade Project, stating that initial meetings with the State Office of Information Technology and Treasury were held to develop user identification and document storage. PruTech continues to gather business requirements and expects the initial build of the upgraded portal by the end of August.

A. Taklif added that she has been working with OIT and Treasury, to identify the best way for applicants to log in, types of auto messages to the families, and how to incorporate vital information that the analysts use. C. Heiss indicated that the project is on track for completion by December of this year.

L. Wilkerson-Leconte provided a summary of the Spring Family Appreciation Event, held on June 7, 2023. Invited families and guests praised the event and the CICRF team. Specific details were provided in a post-event report that was shared with Commission prior to the meeting. J. Prontnicki inquired about hosting a winter family event, and suggested using the State House and inviting the Governor or Lt. Governor. R. Condo added that the winter event should also be used as a press conference. L. Wilkerson-Leconte stated that the Parent Advisors are planning the 2023 winter event, and assured the Commissioned that the recommendations would be incorporated.

L. Wilkerson-Leconte provided an overview of State Office outreach activities, including multiple community and podcast presentations. State Office Staff outreach events.

Lastly, L. Wilkerson-Leconte reported that on July 16, 2023, the Fund was featured in a New York Times article as a program to help New Jersey families pay for home modifications associated with a child’s illness or injury.

**Closed Session:**

P. Shanley-Hansell made a motion to go into closed session to review applications, which was seconded by R. Condo. All Commission members voted in favor.

**Review of Applications:**

**Eligibles:**

J. Carrick made a motion to approve the eligible applications as presented, with the exception of 234222023. H. Weinberg seconded the motion. All Commission members voted in favor.

R. Condo made a motion to approve application 234222023 less the $310.50 annual medical marijuana renewal fee to be considered once the fee is clarified as an eligible expense. P. Shanley-Hansell seconded the motion. A roll call vote was held. All Commission members voted in favor. The motion carried.

**Ineligibles:**

P. Shanley-Hansell made a motion to accept the ineligible applications as presented.

A. Neary seconded the motion. All Commission members voted in favor.

**Unfinished Business:**

C. Heiss provided a summary of conversations with the Governor’s Office concerning the Commission’s intent to change policies for family responsibility, income determination, and home and vehicle modification caps.

No motions were made. The Commission members requested that the Legislative Committee return to the next Commission meeting with memos for review and a vote.

**New Business:**

No new business.

**Adjournment:**

R. Condo made a motion to adjourn the meeting, which was seconded by A. Valenzuela. All Commission members voted in favor. The meeting adjourned at 10:51 a.m.