



October Board Minutes  
October 22, 2025  
9:30 am – 11:00 am

**1. Introductions**

Marsha Oliver, Board Chair

Ms. Oliver commenced the meeting by introducing herself and extending a warm welcome to all attendees of the October Board meeting. She subsequently requested a motion to permit Board Member Carson Tranquille to join the session via Zoom.

Motion: Lawrence Dennis

Second: Cynthia Nixon

Approved: 6-0

Ms. Oliver acknowledged October as the 40th anniversary of Breast Cancer Awareness and Survivor Month. Through the partnership between United Way Full Service Schools and Kids Hope Alliance, over 3,500 students and families affected by cancer and other non-academic challenges receive vital therapeutic health and social services, which support their academic achievements. In recognition of Board Member Meredith Chartrand-Frisch's significant personal and philanthropic contributions to enhancing lives and communities, Ms. Oliver presented her with a floral arrangement.

Following a series of introductions by Board members Ms. Oliver welcomed Terri Florio, Executive Director of the MaliVai Washington organization, to the podium to share insights about their work.

**2. Nonprofit Spotlight – MaliVai Washington Youth Foundation**

Terri Florio, Executive Director

Ms. Florio presented the mission, vision, and history of the MaliVai Washington Youth Foundation, highlighting its significant influence on numerous students through its afterschool and summer initiatives. Established in 1997 by former Olympian and Wimbledon finalist MaliVai Washington, the foundation aims to offer tennis clinics and after-school programs to the most disadvantaged youth in Jacksonville. By 2000, these after-school programs were launched at the Emmett Reed Community Center in Durkeeville. They expanded to a youth center and teen center across the street from Emmett Reed.

The foundation has profoundly impacted the community, awarding nearly \$2 million in scholarships for higher education and reaching over 20,000 children through various programs. Remarkably, 100% of participants who complete the program graduate from high school on time, and only six have encountered the juvenile justice system, despite Durkeeville's high juvenile crime rates. Additionally, none of the students have become teen parents' while



enrolled in the foundation's programs.

### 3. **Public Comments**

Ms. Oliver announced that public comments will be taken during the meeting for any items that are brought forward for a vote. At this time, there were no public comments made.

### 4. **Minutes from August and October Meetings**

Marsha Oliver, Board Chair

Due to the special meeting which occurred on October 6, 2025, there were two sets of minutes which needed to be approved by the Board. Ms. Oliver asked for a motion to approve the minutes for August and October.

Motion: Kevin Gay

Second: Meredith Chartrand-Frisch

Approved: 7-0

### 5. **Board Site Visit Recap**

Board members had the chance to visit various provider sites and shared their insights with attendees during the meeting. Their visits included locations such as Communities in Schools at Rufus Payne Elementary and the St. John's Riverkeeper Boat Tour. Board Chair Oliver mentioned that members received a calendar detailing provider sites for October and November, and Ms. Sibley would be reaching out to coordinate scheduling.

### 6. **CEO Report**

Dr. Saralyn Grass, KHA Chief Executive Officer

Jessica Pitts, Finance Director

Dr. Grass conducted a review of the KHA Actions spanning from August 23, 2025, to October 17, 2025. This review encompassed various elements, including City Council legislation, the Jacksonville Procurement Awards Committee, administrative award items, as well as reports from the Inspector General and Council Auditor. She also shared updates regarding the National League of Cities, the City Council's Youth Empowerment Committee, and the forthcoming Reach Out and Read event. Additional discussions covered the recently awarded Diversion Contract to Managed Access for Child Health and ongoing efforts to develop the Request for Proposal for the Mayor's Youth at Work program.

Following this, Jessica Pitts presented a financial update, highlighting the recent approval of the budget, which includes funding from Jacksonville Journey Forward, direct contracts, and increases in salaries and benefits.



**7. KHA Staff Presentation - Understanding the Essential Services Plan**

Rodger Belcher, KHA Chief Strategy Officer

Kenneth Darity, KHA Chief Administrative Officer

Mr. Belcher and Mr. Darity provided a presentation on the KHA Essential Services plan which contained an overview of the 2022 Needs Assessment and Gap Analysis Study as well as the strategic goals which were established to address these findings.

**8. NLP Logix Update (status of Gap Analysis work/efforts)**

Katie Bakewell, Vice President, AI Strategy

Ms. Bakewell provided an update on the work currently being done to produce the 2026 Needs Assessment and Gap Analysis.

**9. CEO Expectations & Evaluation**

Marsha Oliver, Board Chair

Ms. Oliver began the discussion with the following quote, “ There is no good governance without good people,” and “Dialogue without listening is tyranny dressed in diplomacy.” She explained that in recent weeks, there had been extensive dialogue surrounding the Kids Hope Alliance, focusing on issues such as personnel and contractual matters. She also referenced KHA’s ordinance and primary responsibilities, which include managing programs and services for youth through third-party providers and city agencies.

She detailed the board's commitment over the past year to strengthen its focus and governance, which involved engaging Ripple Effect to assess priority setting and facilitate a Board Retreat. Prior to the retreat, a survey among Board members identified key values such as transparency, candor, open communication, open-mindedness, and competence. To act on the insights gained from the retreat, two working committees were established: the GUIDE (Gaining Understanding to Improve Decisions and Effectiveness) Task Force, which was tasked with creating tools and strategies to guide the Kids Hope Alliance Board's decision-making, CEO evaluation and Board evaluation and the Strategic Services Committee, responsible for developing a governance calendar that aligns with the organization's strategic objectives.

Ms. Oliver elaborated on subsequent meetings where the Board raised questions to the CEO about an ongoing IG investigation, as well as issues of truth, trust, transparency and the necessity of reporting critical matters to the Board. She mentioned a recent news report suggesting that the CEO had failed to comply with the Secondary Employment Disclosure Policy.



This prompted several Board members to voice their concerns about the essential qualities of transparency, trust, sound judgment, and integrity in a CEO, which they felt were currently lacking. They discussed individual meetings with the CEO, believing such interactions could hinder robust discussions and consistent communication. Additional issues were highlighted, including distractions from media scrutiny, public records requests, potential conflicts of interest, and the CEO's request for the individual meeting with the Chair to include the Mayor's Office or Employee Services.

Following input from all Board members, Cynthia Nixon proposed a motion to pursue new leadership for KHA. Marsha Oliver supported the motion and invited discussion from the floor, subsequently requesting public comments.

Dr. Grass asserted that the published articles contained inaccuracies and emphasized that she had not breached policies. She noted that the required Secondary Employment forms were submitted and approved two years ago, and although an LLC was established for insurance purposes, it had never been utilized. Furthermore, she stated that the Boys & Girls Clubs funding was in response to Request for Proposals and all contracts followed the procurement process. Dr. Grass also expressed her commitment to transparency with the staff and her efforts to keep the Board informed in recent weeks, leading her to believe she is well-equipped to guide the organization forward.

Commander Chuck Ford shared his experience with the Board over the past year, highlighting Dr. Grass's support during that time. He acknowledged the recent two weeks of distraction and suggested that the allegations might be baseless. While recognizing the Board's trust issues, he emphasized the importance of collaboration between the Board and the CEO to enhance communication. Additionally, he pointed out that public records requests are commonplace and recommended that the Board consider conducting further research before reaching a decision.

Paul Martines, the CEO of the Boys & Girls Club, commented that Dr. Grass was very accessible, answered emails and was the best CEO he has worked with since he has been the CEO of Boys & Girls Club.

Cheryl Wilder, the CEO of The Carpenter's Shop, praised Dr. Grass for her accessibility and the valuable guidance she provides, which has significantly benefited her organization. Mrs. Wilder indicated that Dr. Grass was the best CEO she has worked with at JCC/KHA.

Josh Martino suggested that Dr. Grass deserves another opportunity, similar to the chances extended to constituents and community members. He expressed his reluctance to vote on the CEO's dismissal due to his brief time on the board; however, Reece Wilson, from OGC, clarified that all board members were obligated to cast a vote.

Terrance Freeman, City Council Liaison commented that he had not heard of any communication issues from any members of the City Council.



Subsequently, Ms. Oliver called for a vote regarding the dismissal of Dr. Grass from her role as CEO of KHA.

Motion: Cynthia Nixon

Second: Marsha Oliver

Approved: 6-1

**10. Adjourn**

The meeting was adjourned by Ms. Oliver at 12:30 p.m.