

# Lorain County Children Services

## Board Meeting

Wednesday, March 17, 2021 @ 5:00 p.m. via Microsoft Teams

### **I. Call to Order**

Board Chair Melissa Fischer called the meeting to order at 5:05 p.m. via Microsoft Teams. Public can participate by joining with a Video Conferencing Device: [682042763@t.plcm.vc](mailto:682042763@t.plcm.vc), Video Conference ID: 118 315 698 7, or Call In (Audio Only) by Dialing (614) 721-2972, Phone Conference ID: 449 785 740#.

#### **A. Roll Call**

Present: Melissa Fischer, Lee Armbruster, Tim Carrion, Christina Doran, Kenneth Glynn, Dan Gross, Tracy Green, Martin Heberling, Andrew Lipian, Jim Miller, Mallory Santiago, Rob Weber  
Also Present: Kristen Fox-Berki, Executive Director

Three additional Board members were appointed to the Board today- Christina Doran, Andrew Lipian and Dan Gross. Melissa Fischer provided each new Board member the opportunity to introduce themselves to the Board.

#### **B. Review and Approve Agenda**

Board Chair Melissa Fischer asked if there were any additions or changes to the Agenda submitted for the March 17, 2021 Board Meeting. No additions or changes made.

**MOTION:** It was moved by Kenneth Glynn, seconded by Martin Heberling to approve the Agenda. Motion carried.

#### **C. Review and Approve Minutes**

Board Chair Melissa Fischer asked if there were any additions or changes to the Minutes submitted for the February 17, 2021 Board. No additions or changes made.

**MOTION:** It was moved by Martin Heberling, seconded by Mallory Santiago to approve the minutes. Motion carried.

### **II. Public Comment**

Board Chair Melissa Fischer noted that there was no one from the public participating via phone conference wishing to address the Board.

### **III. Executive Session (to discuss litigation, personnel matters and other matters required to be kept confidential by law)**

**MOTION:** It was moved by Martin Heberling, seconded by Kenneth Glynn to move into Executive Session to discuss litigation, personnel matters and other matters required to be kept confidential by law. Motion carried.

A Roll Call was taken prior to Executive Session. Melissa Fischer, Lee Armbruster, Tim Carrion, Christina Doran, Kenneth Glynn, Tracy Green, Dan Gross, Martin Heberling, Andrew Lipian, Jim Miller, Mallory Santiago and Rob Weber were present.

## **IV. Old Business**

### **A. Tabled Items**

#### **• Board Officers**

Melissa Fischer submitted her resignation letter to the County Commissioners, effective today, 3/17/21. Considering Ms. Fischer's resignation, a new Board Chair must be appointed. Per Policy 1.2 The Board will elect a member to serve in the role of chairperson, vice chairperson and secretary annually in December with these positions fulfilling a two-year term of service beginning January 1 – December 31. As the Board did not elect new officers in December 2019, Melissa Fischer continued to serve as the Board Chair and Mallory Santiago continued as the Board Secretary. With only 5 Board members, the Board elected not to appoint a Board Vice Chair in 2017 at the time of Ms. Fischer and Ms. Santiago's appointments. Now that the County Commissioners have assigned 11 Board members, the Board feels that it is beneficial to consider nominating and electing a Vice Chair, in addition to nominations and elections of a new Board Chair and Board Secretary.

Tracy Green commended Ms. Fischer on doing a phenomenal job and expressed her gratitude for Melissa Fischer regarding her length of service on the LCCS Board, her willingness to continue with the Board Chair position and leading the Board through the development process of new Board policies and the passage of the most recent levy, ensuring Lorain County residents and taxpayers had great value in the agency. All the Board members thanked Ms. Fischer for her service and recognized her efforts and contributions to the Board; Ms. Fischer expressed her gratitude.

During Mallory Santiago's term serving as the Board Secretary, she was responsible for assuming the duties of the Board Chair in the Chair's absence, attending meetings, cosigning resolutions and leading Board meetings. The Board discussed the benefits of electing a Vice Chair. Given schedule complications and in accordance with the Board policies, a Vice Chair should be added. One consideration is the limited terms of several of the new Board members, expiring December 31, 2021, given the role of the officers is a two-year term. The Board could ask the Commissioners to consider extending those terms; staggering them to avoid terms expiring all at once.

**MOTION:** It was moved by Rob Weber, seconded by Tracy Green to nominate and elect a Vice Chair, in addition to the Board Chair and Board Secretary, pursuant to Board Policy 1.2. Motion carried.

Board Chair Melissa Fischer requested the Board members to express their interest in serving as a Board officer prior to nominations.

- Board Chair: Mallory Santiago and Rob Weber
- Board Vice Chair: Jim Miller

### Nominations

Nomination for Board Vice Chair: Kenneth Glynn, nominated by Mallory Santiago.

Nominations for Board Secretary: Kenneth Glynn, nominated by Mallory Santiago; Christina Doran, nominated by Rob Weber.

Kenneth Glynn accepted the nominations for Board Vice Chair and Board Secretary, then rescinded prior to the election. Christina Doran accepted the nomination for Board Secretary.

The Board discussed tabling the elections until the April Board meeting to allow time to make an informed decision and have an opportunity to review the Board policies. Tim Carrion agreed to chair the April Board meeting if needed until a Board Chair was elected. Following this discussion, the Board agreed to move forward with the election of Board officers today.

As there are two candidates for Board Chair, an open vote was cast by the Board. 3 votes in favor of Mallory Santiago; 6 votes in favor of Rob Weber; 2 abstain. By majority vote, Rob Weber is elected as the Board Chair.

Jim Miller is unopposed for Board Vice Chair and Christina Doran is unopposed for Board Secretary.

**MOTION:** It was moved by Tim Carrion, seconded by Dan Gross to elect Jim Miller as the Board Vice Chair and Christina Doran as the Board Secretary. 3 opposed, 8 in favor; the ayes have it and the motion is carried.

The Board will hold a Swearing in Ceremony at the April Board meeting for the newly appointed Board members.

### **B. Unresolved Action Items**

#### **• Integrated Services Partnership (ISP)/Family & Children First Council (FCFC)**

Kristen Fox-Berki was requested by the County Commissioners to consider LCCS becoming the administrative agent for FCFC; a role currently held by the Commissioners. Kristen Fox-Berki provided the Board members with a visual presentation outlining side by side comparisons and differences of the major components for ISP and FCFC. Summary of highlights:

- The history and development of FCFC and ISP.
- FCFC is governed by ORC 121.37; ISP is not governed by guiding principles.
- Components that must be addressed by FCFC vs. the goals of ISP.
- Funding for FCFC and ISP. FCFC is funded through State (reimbursable) funding and grant funding. ISP is supported by pooled funding by multi-systems, including Lorain County Juvenile Court, Lorain County Board of Developmental Disabilities, Lorain County Mental Health Addiction & Recovery Services (MHARS) Board, and Lorain County Children

Services, as well as grant funding. The funding for ISP currently far exceeds the funding for FCFC.

- Populations served. The purpose of the county council is to streamline and coordinate existing government services for families seeking services for their children. ISP serves multi-system youth (MSY) through an array of services including intensive case management for youth with multiple placements, involved in the juvenile justice system, significant mental health issues (4C); mentoring and family stability.
- Appeals process. FCFC includes a parent voice/choice. For ISP, only the member agencies may request that services by 4C be reconsidered. A parent cannot request a reconsideration.
- A list of services provided by FCFC and ISP.
- Decision making. For FCFC, decisions are made by the full council; they meet regarding the county shared plan. Children's Continuum of Care Committee (4C) makes decision through a group decision-making process for individual children.
- The governing bodies for FCFC and ISP.

Due to the complexity of ISP and FCFC, the Board is limited regarding tonight's discussion and time constraints. The Board will review the materials provided by Ms. Fox-Berki before the April Board meeting and continue with discussions regarding LCCS becoming the administrative agent for FCFC, and the role of ISP. The Board could consider a subcommittee or special session to discuss this issue at length, in more detail. Discussion held regarding FCFC funding and annual administrative costs owed to the County. Most of the administrative costs is associated with personnel, including salaries and benefits as well as supplies, training, advertising, records storage and other expenses. Lorain County FCFC currently has a full-time fiscal employee, a part-time Director, up to 30 hours per week and two service coordinators; one is intermittent part-time. Melissa Fischer urges the Board to request an itemized fiscal report.

The Board will review a summary of materials and research on their own if desired regarding ISP and FCFC before the April Board meeting and vote on whether LCCS should be the administrative agent for FCFC. However, the Board did agree that LCCS has the structure to support FCFC and pending no further cons discovered before then, the Board is willing to agree. Melissa Fischer requested a document with all materials to date for ISP and FCFC be made available to the Board before April 1, 2021 for the Board to have the time to prepare for the April Board meeting. The document should also include summaries from FCFC and minutes from the March 31, 2021 meeting if possible. Further discussion regarding ISP and FCFC is tabled until the April Board meeting.

## **V. Executive Director's Report**

### **A. Policy 6.1 Monthly Financial Update**

Kristen Fox-Berki presented, and the Board reviewed the Lorain County Children Services Revenue, Disbursements and Cash Fund Balance as of 02/28/2021.

Discussion topics:

- Revenue:
  - The largest contributors to the revenue for February were FCM/IVE Waiver (monthly) and IVE Admin/Training.
- Expenditures:
  - Salaries, and Services to Clients & their Families are the largest contributors to the expenditures for February. A line item was added to the February fiscal report for Kinship Subsidy. The total amount for kinship subsidy for the month of February was \$54,300.00.
- The beginning fund balance for February was \$19,687,801.38 and the ending fund balance for February is \$18,437,195.60. We have not received a levy payment for 2021. It is anticipated that we will receive this payment within the next month or two.

Melissa Fischer requested an update regarding the 90-Day agreement for travel management services the Board approved in February. Kristen Fox-Berki informed the Board that the RFP is currently being developed.

#### **B. Policy 4.6 New Hires/Leaves**

New Hires for the month of February:

- Michelle Sas, Direct Services Administrative Assistant 2/1/21
- Denise Lindak, FBC Administrative Assistant 2/1/21
- Ashley McMahan, Direct Services Caseworker 2/22/21
- Rainelle Henry, Direct Services Caseworker 2/22/21
- Zugeily Gonzalez Travieso, Direct Services Caseworker 2/22/21

Leaves:

No leaves for the month of February.

#### **C. Policy 7.14 Client Grievance**

Kristen Fox-Berki provided the new Board members with an overview of the role of the Ombudsman, services provided by the Ombudsman and discussed the changes to the process due to the pandemic.

Kristen Fox Berki provided and reviewed the Ombudsman Quarterly Board Report for 12/1/20 – 2/28/21, including the number of Grievances Filed, Public Complaints, Telephone Calls, Emails, New Requests for Ombudsman Services, Resolved Requests Pending from Last Quarter and Total Resolved Requests. Discussion held.

#### **D. Policy 2.2 Annual Policy Review**

Tabled until the April Board meeting to allow the new Board members time to review the Board policies. Melissa Fischer advised that the Board policies can be revised by majority vote at any time, but the Board holds an annual review in March to formalize the policies and assess revisions.

### **Additional Discussion Topics:**

#### **Cubicle Addition**

During the January Board meeting the Board approved funding to add cubicles to the office to accommodate staff. The quote we received is \$3,332.79 above the \$30,000.00 approved by the Board. Bids were not required as the company is listed as a vendor on the State's Procurement Contract.

**MOTION:** It was moved by Melissa Fischer, seconded by Martin Heberling to accept the quote, and purchase the new cubicles. Motion carried.

#### **Easter Baskets**

We are expecting 150-180 Easter baskets, donated by three groups from within our community. The Agency receives a lot of support through donations from the community, from faith-based and other community partners. Most of the donations are received during the Christmas holiday but we also receive donations throughout the year.

#### **Public Comment**

The Guidelines for Providing Public Comment form was added to the LCCS public site and include the changes requested by the Board.

#### **Budget Commission**

Kristen Fox-Berki met with the Budget Commission on March 8, 2021 to discuss the ending fund balance for 2020. Some of the talking point included:

- LCCS received over \$2,000,000.00 in unplanned revenue. FY20-21 was the first-year unplanned revenue was received from the State.
- New legislation was passed and the Family First Preventative Services Act (FFPSA) goes into effect in October 2021, creating a shift in federal funding. FFPSA will provide preventative services to families who are at risk of entering the foster care system. We are still assessing how the reimbursable funds will impact our budget.
- The levy passed in November 2020. The Board considered several budget scenarios for FY2022-2025 and agreed the 1.8 mil levy would be best.

Following Ms. Fox-Berki's presentation, the County Auditor voiced displeasure with the Agency's continued high carryover and requested that we consider a one-time reduction in the levy to give back to the community due to the community's struggle amidst the pandemic. This decision is not required to be immediate but would require consent from the County Auditor to reverse the decision following the agreed reduction timeframe. Kristen Fox-Berki offered the Board members fiscal reports outlining various scenarios upon their request. The Board must also consider the impact on the agency's budget should they choose to become the administrative agent for FCFC.

The Board discussed their decision-making process regarding the 1.8 mil levy in November 2020 and the uncertainty of new legislation and how it would impact operations. The Board could consider alternative ways to help the families that are struggling aside from a reduction in levy funding. Kristen Fox-Berki and Tim

Carrion will coordinate a meeting with their fiscal directors to discuss the Title XX JFS-TANF allocation.

#### Agency Location

The County Administrator Tom Williams extended the invitation to the Board members that he previously offered to Kristen Fox-Berki to tour the building on North Ridge Rd. in consideration for the agency to move. Mr. Williams previously indicated that the suggestion was based on additional security measures that could be offered at the other building, as well as additional parking. However, LCCS has made upgrades to its current location and is within walking distance to the Justice Center, where staff are required to attend court hearings. The move could potentially impact costs and productivity. Kristen Fox-Berki shared with the Board that although a security guard would be offered at the building on North Ridge Rd., the agency currently has a safety protocol in place and would be willing to improve upon it. In addition, one of the focus areas of the 2021-2023 Strategic Plan is safety. Rob Weber suggests giving time to allow the Board to adjust/acclimate to new membership and work in conjunction with Ms. Fox-Berki to provide support.

#### Social Worker Month

March is Social Worker Appreciation Month and Kristen Fox-Berki would like to take this opportunity to thank and recognize the caseworkers for their hard work and dedication to the agency and to the children and families we serve. They continue to work in the community daily and meet with the public amidst the pandemic.

### **VI. New Business**

#### **A. New Items for Discussion and Approval**

None.

### **VII. Announcements**

Mallory Santiago thanked Melissa Fischer for her service on the LCCS Board and offered assistance and collaboration to the new Board members. Kenneth Glynn commended Melissa Fischer on a job well done. Melissa Fischer expressed her gratitude for the kind words.

### **VIII. Adjourn**

**MOTION:** It was moved by Martin Heberling, seconded by Kenneth Glynn to adjourn the Board meeting at 7:16 p.m. Motion carried.

The next Board meeting will be held on Wednesday, April 21, 2021 at 5:00 p.m. via Microsoft Teams.

Minutes Prepared by:  
Kimberly Kassam, Administrative Supervisor

Approved by:  
Christina Doran, Board Secretary