

Lorain County Children Services

Board Meeting

Wednesday, April 21, 2021 @ 5:00 p.m. via Microsoft Teams

I. Call to Order

Board Chair Rob Weber called the meeting to order at 5:04 p.m. via Microsoft Teams. Public can participate by joining with a Video Conferencing Device: 682042763@t.plcm.vc, Video Conference ID: 116 195 749 8, or Call In (Audio Only) by Dialing (614) 721-2972, Phone Conference ID: 946 922 59#.

A. Roll Call

Present: Lee Armbruster, Tim Carrion, Christina Doran, Kenneth Glynn, Dan Gross, Tracy Green, Martin Heberling, Jim Miller, Rob Weber

Excused: Andrew Lipian, Mallory Santiago

Also Present: Kristen Fox-Berki, Executive Director and Judge James T. Walther

- **Swearing in Newly Appointed Board Members**

Oath of Office: Judge James T. Walther swore in Board members Christina Doran and Dan Gross, appointed as Board members effective March 17, 2021. Andrew Lipian, also appointed as a Board member effective March 17, 2021, will be sworn in when he returns from military duty.

Judge Walther extended an invitation to the Board members to attend an adoption hearing, pending clearance from the family and parties involved.

B. Review and Approve Agenda

Board Chair Rob Weber asked if there were any additions or changes to the Agenda submitted for the April 21, 2021 Board Meeting. No additions or changes made.

C. Review and Approve Minutes

Board Chair Rob Weber asked if there were any additions or changes to the Minutes submitted for the March 17, 2021 Board. Hearing none, the minutes are approved as distributed.

D. New Chairman's Comments

Board Chair Rob Weber recognized the accomplishments of, and shared his appreciation for, the former Board and the former Board Chair Melissa Fischer, and commended Executive Director Kristen Fox-Berki and the entire LCCS staff for a job well done. Mr. Weber shared his intent to streamline Board meetings, moving from an operational Board to an advisory Board, and will work with Kristen Fox-Berki to reduce the level of detail at the Board meetings. Mr. Weber reassured the Board of his level of commitment as Board Chair, with the goal of empowering the Executive Director and giving Ms. Fox-Berki the authority and autonomy necessary to provide oversight to the agency.

II. Public Comment

Board Chair Rob Weber provided an opportunity for members of the public participating via phone conference to address the Board. No public comment made.

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

MOTION: A motion was made by Tracy Green, seconded by Martin Heberling to move into Executive Session to discuss a personnel matter. Motion carried.

Roll Call Vote:

Ayes:	Lee Armbruster, Tim Carrion, Christina Doran, Kenneth Glynn, Dan Gross, Tracy Green, Martin Heberling, Jim Miller, Rob Weber
Nays:	None- 0
Abstentions:	None- 0

IV. Old Business

A. **Tabled Items**

- **Policy 2.2 Annual Policy Review**

Per Policy 2.2, Board policies will be reviewed and updated by April 1st every odd year. Rob Weber and Kristen Fox-Berki will work collaboratively to review and recommend changes to the Board at the July 21, 2021 Board meeting.

B. **Unresolved Action Items**

- **Family & Children First Council (FCFC) Roll Call Vote**

Currently the administrative agent for FCFC is the Board of Commissioners. The LCCS Board will vote tonight to determine whether they support becoming the administrative agent for FCFC. Following tonight's LCCS Board vote, the FCFC Board will make the final decision. The next FCFC Board meeting is scheduled for April 29, 2021. The current FCFC Interim Director resigned effective June 4, 2021. Should the FCFC Board vote LCCS to become the administrative agent for FCFC, LCCS would be responsible to interview and hire the new FCFC Director. The full council and current Interim Director believe the new FCFC Director position should be a full-time position. Kristen Fox-Berki provided the Board with a copy of a draft position description for the new FCFC Director.

Before deciding, the Board inquired about pros and cons of becoming the administrative agent for FCFC. Considerations:

1. The administrative agent is a neutral position and there is no gain or drawback.
2. The council is small, with an Interim Director. With LCCS as the administrative agent, there would be means to strengthen FCFC.
3. There is work to be done with the council, with the assistance of the administrative agent.
4. The FCFC Director would report to Kristen Fox-Berki and the LCCS Board.

5. FCFC employees would become employees of LCCS, but FCFC has a separate Board that oversees the council with a Chair, Co-Chair and Secretary. The Council is responsible to its own Board. The administrative agent controls the budget and the LCCS Board would be involved indirectly as a result.

As the LCCS Executive Director, Kristen Fox-Berki is a member of the FCFC Board. LCCS is one of several possibilities to become the administrative agent, but with subject matter overlap it makes sense for LCCS to take on this role.

MOTION: A motion was made by Tim Carrion, seconded by Lee Armbruster to accept LCCS becoming the administrative agent for FCFC. Motion carried.

Roll Call Vote:

Ayes:	Lee Armbruster, Tim Carrion, Christina Doran, Kenneth Glynn, Dan Gross, Tracy Green, Martin Heberling, Jim Miller, Rob Weber
Nays:	None- 0
Abstentions:	None- 0

- **Site Visitation and Walk Through of JFS Facility with Kristen Fox-Berki, Rob Weber, Tim Carrion and Dan Gross**

There is ongoing discussion regarding the possibility of a physical co-location with JFS with our agency. These discussions are a preliminary investigation to determine compatibility. Tim Carrion, Dan Gross, Rob Weber and Kristen Fox-Berki will schedule a walk-through following their effort to compose information such as layout and spacing requirements. Mr. Weber invited Ms. Fox-Berki to include a few staff members to join.

Tim Carrion requested Kristen Fox-Berki provide him with a copy of the current LCCS floor plan and extended an invitation to Ms. Fox-Berki for an informal walk-through.

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 03/31/2021.

Discussion topics:

- Revenue:
 - The total revenue for March is \$7,215,333.97. The largest contributors to the revenue for March were the first levy payment and IVE Admin/Training.
- Expenditures:
 - The total Expenditures for March is \$1,513,724.83. The largest contributors to the expenditures were Salaries and Services to Clients and their Families.
- The beginning fund balance for March is \$18,437,195.60 and the ending fund balance is \$24,138,804.74. The increase is due to the levy payment.

B. Policy 4.6 New Hires/Leaves

No new hires for the month of March.

Leaves:

- Elizabeth Dowdell, Direct Services Caseworker, 3/1/21.

C. Policy 6.2 Annual Budget

Kristen Fox-Berki provided the Board with the proposed 2022 budget, including all the positions mentioned in the Personnel Plan as well as projections through 2025. See further discussion regarding the annual budget under Policy 6.3b Personnel Plan below.

D. Policies for Review and Approval

- **Policy 6.3a Contracts**

Kristen Fox-Berki provided the Board with a list of current LCCS contracts. Some are contracts for specialized services to benefit the children in our care so that they can access services quickly with minimal waiting list. Some of the more costly contracts include:

- The Lorain County Prosecutor's Office which includes salaries for 2 APA's and one APA assistant to prepare court filings and represent us in court.
- Office on Aging contract benefits kinship caregivers within the community.
- Forensic Fluids for drug testing/oral swab. Substance abuse is an overarching issue and the drug screens are used to ensure families receive needed treatment.
- Bureau of Criminal Investigation (BCI) for fingerprinting new hires as well as kinship caregivers and foster parents.
- ISP; pooled funding for specialized multi-need services and a contribution to the Director of ISP's salary. Our contribution decreased for 2021 and Kristen Fox-Berki continues to hold discussions regarding our annual contribution.

- **Policy 6.3b Personnel Plan**

Kristen Fox-Berki provided the Board with the Personnel Plan for the remainder of 2021-2022, proposing an additional 6 positions: Five (5) bargaining and one (1) non-bargaining. The bargaining positions consist of four (4) caseworkers and one (1) Direct Services administrative assistant. The non-bargaining position is one (1) Direct Services supervisor. These additional six (6) positions will have an impact on reducing caseloads for all caseworkers and provide them with more quality time to spend with children and families, more time in the community and working with service providers, better-quality services and higher staff retention.

The 2022 Annual Budget includes the proposed additional positions outlined in the Personnel Plan. Including these positions, the carryover at

the end of 2025 is estimated to be approximately \$4.1 million. Kristen Fox-Berki highlighted areas in the 2022 budget, including:

- Travel expenses- decreased in 2020 due to the pandemic, less of a decrease for 2021, then staff should resume normal travel practices for 2022.
- Indirect costs- increased beginning in 2020 based on operational and personnel costs of the agency.
- Furniture and vehicles were separated for the 2022 budget rather than both in one line item. The agency continues to utilize the fleet vehicles for home visits and transporting children. The vehicle retention schedule expired in 2020 as the last of the older fleet vehicles were traded in for newer ones. We do not plan to purchase vehicles in 2021 or 2022, then assess in 2023.
- Salaries will increase with adding positions. The 2022 reflects a 2.5% salary increase for all staff, but this will be determined during negotiations when the current union contract ends in March 2022.

The Board requests a report with the ratio of caseworker to child for informational purposes when assessing caseloads. Kristen Fox-Berki will provide the Board with a report and noted that the average will fluctuate and is always changing.

- **Policy 4.1 Non-Bargaining Pay Scale**

Per the LCCS Employee Operational Policy and Personnel Manual, Page 10, Article 1.15, "... The Collective Bargaining Agreement will also apply to non-bargaining unit staff unless otherwise stated elsewhere. For bargaining unit employees, the Bargaining Agreement supersedes any conflict with this Manual." Annual salary increases are negotiated each 3-year contract cycle and salary increases, when applicable are effective in April each year in accordance with the Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA). For 2021, all staff will receive a 3% salary increase, including all non-bargaining staff.

- **Policy 4.1 Position Class Specs.**

All positions listed in the Class Specs provided to the Board are incorporated in the CBA and recognized by the union.

- **Policy 4.1 Staffing Table**

Kristen Fox-Berki provided the Board with a copy of the LCCS Staffing Table, effective April 15, 2021.

MOTION: A motion was made by Dan Gross, seconded by Christina Doran to approve the 2022 Annual Budget and the Personnel Plan. Motion carried.

Roll Call Vote:

Ayes:	Lee Armbruster, Tim Carrion, Christina Doran, Kenneth Glynn, Dan Gross, Tracy Green, Martin Heberling, Jim Miller, Rob Weber
Nays:	None- 0
Abstentions:	None- 0

VI. New Business

A. New Items for Discussion and Approval

• **SFY 2020 State of Ohio Single Audit Findings**

Per Policy 6.7, “The Executive Director will be required to present any Federal, State or Local fiscal audit performed on the agency for review by the Board within 30 days of completion of the audit report.” Kristen Fox-Berki provided the Board with a letter from the Ohio Auditor of State Keith Faber regarding a fiscal audit for LCCS and Lorain County Job and Family Services (LCJFS) and reviewed the findings with the Board. No issues were noted as a result of this audit. Kristen Fox-Berki congratulated the LCCS fiscal staff and Tim Carrion and his staff at LCJFS. Board Chair Rob Weber also congratulated LCCS and LCJFS.

VII. Announcements

Rob Weber announced that Governor DeWine’s order regarding remote meetings expires July 1, 2021 and may not be renewed. As a result, the Board will plan to hold the July 21, 2021 Board meeting in person. The Board will continue to assess this as the meeting date approaches to determine if additional precautions should be taken.

Kristen Fox-Berki announced that today is Administrative Professionals Day and thanked the agency’s support staff for all that they do.

VIII. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 6:11 p.m.

The next Board meeting will be held on Wednesday, May 19, 2021 at 5:00 p.m. via Microsoft Teams.

Minutes Prepared by:
Kimberly Kassam, Administrative Supervisor

Approved by:
Christina Doran, Board Secretary