

Lorain County Children Services

Board Meeting

Wednesday, December 14, 2022 @ 5:00 p.m.

I. Call to Order

Board Chair Jim Miller called the meeting to order at 5:09 p.m. at the Lorain County Administration Building, 226 Middle Ave., 4th Floor, Room A, Elyria, Ohio 44035.

A. Roll Call

Present: Lee Armbruster, Roberto Davila, Christina Doran, Kenneth Glynn, Martin Heberling, Tawana Jackson, Andrew Lipian, Jim Miller, Mallory Santiago

Excused: Tamara Newton, Dan Gross

Also Present: Kristen Fox-Berki, Executive Director

B. Review Agenda

Board Chair Jim Miller asked if there were any additions or changes to the Board Meeting Agenda submitted for the December 14, 2022, Board meeting. No additions or changes made.

C. Review and Approve Minutes

Board Chair Jim Miller asked if there were any additions or changes to the Board Meeting Minutes submitted for the November 16, 2022, Board meeting. Hearing none, the minutes are approved as distributed.

II. Public Comment

Board Chair Jim Miller noted that there was no one from the public present and wishing to address the Board.

III. Old Business

A. Tabled Items

1. Policy 5.6 Executive Director Contract

Tabled. Jim Miller will contact Andrew Lipian and Mallory Santiago next week to review the performance indicators for Kristen Fox-Berki.

2. Policy 5.12 Executive Director Performance

Tabled.

B. Unresolved Action Items

1. Visitation Center

APA Leigh Prugh received information that there may be property available on Murray Ridge Road in Elyria, which is centrally located to the agency, within the community and other facilities/resources utilized by LCCS clientele. Board Chair Jim Miller will continue to keep the Board updated as he receives more information.

IV. Executive Director's Report

A. Policy 4.6 New Hires/Leaves

New Hires for the month of November:

1. Damaris Seijo, Direct Services Caseworker, 11/7/22
2. Ashley Curry, Direct Services Caseworker, 11/7/22

Leaves for the month of November:

1. Monique Payne, Direct Services Caseworker, 11/4/22
2. Dean Horn, Fiscal Account Clerk, 11/18/22

Additional Discussion Topics:

Staffing

The agency continues to experience a significant decline of applicants for caseworker positions. The State of Ohio is experiencing workforce issues, particularly in child welfare. It has become more difficult to recruit candidates, especially with a master's degree requirement. The expansion to master's degrees in related fields did provide an improvement, but that is no longer the case, and there are several caseworker vacancies in the Direct Services department. To increase the number of applicants, fill the current vacancies and alleviate some of the pressures caseworkers are currently experiencing, Kristen Fox-Berki has decided to expand the caseworker requirements to include candidates with a Bachelor's in Social Work (BSW). At this time, we will not accept applicants with bachelor's degrees in related fields, only BSW's. We will not mandate them to pursue a master's degree. This will open the candidate pool to include applicants that have several years' experience in the field, with a BSW. Kristen Fox-Berki met with the management team and union representatives for feedback. Most of the feedback was positive. There are some staff that have expressed concerns, and we are working through that.

Drive-Thru Holiday Event for Foster, Adoptive and Kinship Families

The annual Holiday Drive-Thru event was held on Sunday, December 4, 2022, at Lorain County Solid Waste Management District. It was successful and everyone had a great time, with appearances by Santa, Mrs. Claus and the Grinch, and entertainment provided by Church of the Open Door cheerleaders.

Best Practice Funding

For the second time, the agency received the Best Practice Award for timely completion of intakes and face to face visits with children and adults, with a threshold of 95% or higher for a 6-month period. The agency also received an award for most improved, in the large county category, for face-to-face visits. The total received was approximately \$92,000, to fund initiatives that support and promote best practice.

LCCS 2022 Holiday Drive

Kristen Fox-Berki provided the Board with a list of donor organizations for the annual holiday drive, to support our children and families and ensure the children have a nice Christmas. Between the specific child sponsorships and the general gift donations, our children and families were likely gifted over 5,000 items this holiday season. Kristen Fox-Berki thanked the community for their generosity.

2022 Statistical Review (January-November)

Kristen Fox-Berki shared some of the highlights and staff accomplishments for 2022.

- The Direct Services department received more than 4,500 referrals and met the threshold of 95% for face-to-face visits for children and adults.
- Kinship caseworkers completed 267 home studies and continue to follow up with those families. There were 35 post-assistance to kin referrals during the last year, providing access to about \$80,000 to help meet the needs of the children.
- The Independent Living staff are working with 40 youth in custody and 12 emancipated youth, providing them with opportunities to volunteer in the community. The youth also participated in Leadership Lorain County.
- We currently have 82 licensed foster homes. In 2022, 17 foster families were licensed and approximately 11 more are pending.
- This year we were successful in connecting 17 children with their forever family through adoption.
- In CQI, staff facilitated 712 Family Team Meetings, reviewed records, wrote reports for ASAP cases, CRTs, administrative reviews and CANS assessments.
- Human Resources hired and onboarded 33 new staff, 4 staff were promoted, 7 moved into new positions, 9 positions were added and 4 staff retired. A Sheriff Deputy was hired, and the safety system Guardian MPS was implemented.
- Paper records are being scanned into an electronic system, and all records closed in 2019 to present, as well as half of the 2018 closed records have been scanned and uploaded to the new system.
- Fiscal successfully passed the Lorain County Single Audit covering 1/1/21 – 12/31/21. LCCS became the administrative agent for LCCFFC effective 7/1/22 and the fiscal and HR departments worked collaboratively during this transition.
- The Administrative Assistants (AA's) have provided ongoing support to the caseworkers, navigating a new rotation schedule and providing training assistance to the new AA's.

V. Fiscal Reports

None.

VI. New Business

A. New Items for Discussion and Approval

None.

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

None.

VIII. Announcements

None.

IX. Adjourn

MOTION: It was moved by Martin Heberling, seconded by Andrew Lipian to adjourn the Board meeting at 5:27 p.m. Motion carried.

The next Board meeting is scheduled for January 18, 2023, at the Lorain County Administration Building, 226 Middle Ave., 4th Floor, Room A, Elyria, Ohio 44035.

Minutes Prepared by:
Kimberly Kassam, Administrative Supervisor

Approved by:
Christina Doran, Board Secretary