

Lorain County Children Services

Board Meeting

Wednesday, January 17, 2024 @ 5:00 p.m.

I. Call to Order

Board Chair Jim Miller called the meeting to order at 5:04 p.m. at the Lorain County Administration Building, 226 Middle Ave., 4th Floor, Room A, Elyria, Ohio 44035.

A. Roll Call

Present: Lee Armbruster, Rania Assily, Roberto Davila, Christina Doran, Dan Gross, Martin Heberling, Andrew Lipian, Jim Miller, Tamara Newton, Mallory Santiago

Excused: Kenneth Glynn, Tawana Jackson

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

- **Swearing In Ceremony for New Board Member**

Board member Rania Assily was sworn in by Judge James T. Walther. Judge Walther invited the Board members to attend an adoption hearing. Judge Walther praised foster parents for their role in helping and guiding children. Kristen Fox-Berki will notify the Board of upcoming adoption hearings.

B. Review Agenda

Board Chair Jim Miller asked if there were any additions or changes to the Board Meeting Agenda submitted for the January 17, 2024, 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 December 20, 2023, Board meeting.

MOTION: A motion was made by Martin Heberling, seconded by Dan Gross to approve the December 20, 2023, Board Meeting Minutes. Motion carried.

Roll Call Vote

Ayes:	Lee Armbruster, Rania Assily, Roberto Davila, Christina Doran, Dan Gross, Martin Heberling, Andrew Lipian, Jim Miller, Tamara Newton, Mallory Santiago
Nays:	None- 0
Abstentions:	None- 0

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. 2025 LCCS Levy

Further discussion will be held in the fall of 2024; by then the Board should have a better idea of the needs of the agency. The Board will need to decide what type of levy, i.e., renewal vs. replacement.

2. Policy 1.2 Board Officers- Nominations and Vote

Board Chair Jim Miller requested the Board members propose a slate of officers. Dan Gross nominated Jim Miller for Board Chair.

MOTION: A motion was made by Mallory Santiago, seconded by Roberto Davila to close nominations for Board Chair. Motion carried. Nominations closed.

Roll Call Vote

Ayes:	Lee Armbruster, Rania Assily, Roberto Davila, Christina Doran, Dan Gross, Martin Heberling, Andrew Lipian, Jim Miller, Tamara Newton, Mallory Santiago
Nays:	None- 0
Abstentions:	None- 0

MOTION: A motion was made by Tamara Newton, seconded by Dan Gross to nominate Andrew Lipian for Board Vice Chair. Motion carried.

Roll Call Vote

Ayes:	Lee Armbruster, Rania Assily, Roberto Davila, Christina Doran, Dan Gross, Martin Heberling, Andrew Lipian, Jim Miller, Tamara Newton, Mallory Santiago
Nays:	None- 0
Abstentions:	None- 0

MOTION: A motion was made by Lee Armbruster, seconded by Mallory Santiago to close nominations for Board Vice Chair. Motion carried. Nominations closed.

Roll Call Vote

Ayes:	Lee Armbruster, Rania Assily, Roberto Davila, Christina Doran, Dan Gross, Martin Heberling, Andrew Lipian, Jim Miller, Tamara Newton, Mallory Santiago
Nays:	None- 0
Abstentions:	None- 0

The nominations were accepted. No additional nominations were received. Christina Doran will remain the Board Secretary for the duration of her term.

MOTION: A motion was made by Roberto Davila, seconded by Martin Heberling to elect Jim Miller Board Chair, Andrew Lipian Board Vice Chair and Christina Doran to remain Board Secretary. Motion carried.

Roll Call Vote

Ayes:	Lee Armbruster, Rania Assily, Roberto Davila, Christina Doran, Dan Gross, Martin Heberling, Andrew Lipian, Jim Miller, Tamara Newton, Mallory Santiago
Nays:	None- 0
Abstentions:	None- 0

3. LCCS Subcommittee Re: Foster Care Recruitment

Representatives from the foster care department gave a presentation to the Board at the November Board meeting. Following the presentation, the Board discussed how they could help with foster care recruitment. The Board will hold further discussion at the February Board meeting.

MOTION: A motion was made by Martin Heberling, seconded by Tamara Newton to table further discussion until the February Board meeting. Motion carried.

Roll Call Vote

Ayes:	Lee Armbruster, Rania Assily, Roberto Davila, Christina Doran, Dan Gross, Martin Heberling, Andrew Lipian, Jim Miller, Tamara Newton, Mallory Santiago
Nays:	None- 0
Abstentions:	None- 0

B. Unresolved Action Items

1. LCCS Board Subcommittee Re: Strategic Plan

The Board received a final copy of the 2024-2026 Strategic Plan, approved by the Board Subcommittee. Board Vice Chair Andrew Lipian thanked the Board members, staff and the management team that participated; it was a great effort and collaborative approach. Kristen Fox-Berki expressed her appreciation for the support, suggestions, and feedback from the Board. The 2024-2026 Strategic Plan focuses on the fundamentals of safety, permanence, and well-being. Each goal has 2-3 objectives to help improve on our current practice and achieve better outcomes for our children. Kristen Fox-Berki reviewed the Strategic Plan with the Board members; it is a clear, direct plan with very measurable objectives. The next step, once approved, is to work on the strategies internally.

MOTION: A motion was made by Andrew Lipian, seconded by Dan Gross to approve the 2024-2026 Strategic Plan. Motion carried.

Roll Call Vote

Ayes:	Lee Armbruster, Rania Assily, Roberto Davila, Christina Doran, Dan Gross, Martin Heberling, Andrew Lipian, Jim Miller, Tamara Newton, Mallory Santiago
Nays:	None- 0
Abstentions:	None- 0

IV. Executive Director's Report

A. Policy 4.6 New Hires/Leaves

New Hire for the month of December:

1. Melvin Hamilton IV, DS Caseworker, 12/18/23

There were no leaves for the month of December.

B. Visitation Center

We are getting close to finalizing the floor plan, working with the architect on the final details. He has been very responsive to sending updated drafts when requested. Kristen Fox-Berki hopes to have the plans finalized and provide to the Board at the February Board meeting. Kristen Fox-Berki met with Visitor's Bureau Director Dan Gibbs and Board Chair Jim Miller to formulate a comprehensive list of services/vendors, i.e., lawn care, heating and cooling, plumbing, utilities, alarm system, etc. An agreement was established for lawn care, and we are working to establish additional services needed. A safety audit will also be required. Arrangements will be made for an annual audit. The Board members expressed an interest in a walk-through of the building to review the plans. Kristen Fox-Berki will set up an open house for the Board members; preferably late afternoon/early evening and bring pictures of the building to the February Board meeting.

C. Policy 7.14 Client Grievance

Kristen Fox-Berki provided the Board with the Ombudsman Quarterly Report from October 1, 2023, through December 31, 2023, including the number of Grievances Filed, Public Complaints, Telephone Calls, Emails, Walk-ins, New Requests for Ombudsman Services, Pending Request Resolved from Last Quarter, and New Requests Resolved within This Quarter. Kristen Fox-Berki reviewed the New Requests.

The Board asked how the legalization of marijuana in the State of Ohio has impacted the agency. Kristen Fox-Berki shared that we are waiting on guidance from the State; there are decisions that will need to be made at the State level. For now, the agency will remain status quo.

D. Policy 8.2 Strategic Plan Update

Resolved.

V. Fiscal Reports

A. Policy 6.1 Quarterly Financial Update

Kristen Fox-Berki presented, and the Board reviewed the Lorain County Children Services Revenue, Disbursements and Cash Fund Balance as of December 31, 2023.

Revenue:

The total Revenue for October – December 2023 is \$2,712,428.69.

Expenditures:

The total Expenditures for October – December 2023 is \$7,962,804.27.

The Beginning Fund Balance for October – December 2023 is \$20,299,162.51 and the Ending Fund Balance is \$15,048,786.93.

The fund balance decreased due to the timing of the levy funds received, and the expenditures are trending much higher for Purchased Board and Care. The next levy payment is expected in March.

VI. New Business

A. New Items for Discussion and Approval

Hero for a Day Fundraiser Event

Planning has begun for the next 2025 levy fundraiser event through the Friends of Children Services. The Hero for a Day event will tentatively be held on May 19, 2024, pending venue availability. Ticket sales will begin in February.

2024 Board Meeting Schedule

The Board was provided with the 2024 Board meeting schedule. The June Board meeting scheduled for June 19, 2024, is on a Federal holiday and will be tentatively rescheduled to the week before, June 12, 2024. For the December Board meeting, the Board could consider rescheduling since December 18, 2024, is close to the holiday. The Board will discuss further at the February Board meeting.

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 Roberto Davila to adjourn the Board meeting at 5:54 p.m. Motion carried.

The next Board meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, February 21, 2024, at 5:00 p.m. 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