

Lorain County Children Services

Board Meeting

Wednesday, January 18, 2023 @ 5:00 p.m.

I. Call to Order

Board Chair Jim Miller called the meeting to order at 5:02 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, Dan Gross, Martin Heberling, Andrew Lipian, Jim Miller, Tamara Newton, Mallory Santiago

Excused: Tawana Jackson

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 January 18, 2023, 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 14, 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

Vice Chair Andrew Lipian will be meeting with Christina Doran and Mallory Santiago. Tabled until the February Board meeting.

2. Policy 5.12 Executive Director Performance

Tabled.

B. Unresolved Action Items

1. Visitation Center

Board Chair Jim Miller and Kristen Fox-Berki participated in a conference call last week with APA Leigh Prugh to discuss next steps. More information is being gathered regarding the bidding process.

IV. Executive Director's Report

A. Policy 4.6 New Hires/Leaves

New Hires for the month of December:

1. Katie Drawl, Fiscal Account Clerk, 12/5/22
2. Carmen Toro-Wooten, Direct Services Caseworker, 12/19/22

Leaves for the month of December:

1. Amber Nickell, Direct Services Caseworker, 12/2/22
2. Mercedes Benn, Direct Services Caseworker, 12/8/22

Since the Board's approval to include bachelor's in social work (BSW) degrees for caseworker positions and the recruitment changes to the Indeed account, we are receiving more applicants. The campaign on 12/14/22 – 12/19/22 generated 1,900 impressions, 354 interested applicants clicked on the job posting and 34 applied. There are four (4) caseworkers starting on January 30, 2023, and the Human Resources Manager continues to interview applicants. In addition to Indeed, we are also working on a campaign through LinkedIn, and receiving some interest, though the majority of the applicants are a result of the Indeed campaign.

B. Policy 6.1 Quarterly Financial Update

Kristen Fox-Berki presented, and the Board reviewed the Lorain County Children Services Revenue, Disbursements and Case Fund Balance as of 12/31/22.

Revenue:

The total Revenue for October – December 2022 is \$2,285,285.35.

Expenditures:

The total Expenditures for October – December 2022 is \$7,199,250.30.

The Beginning Fund Balance for October – December 2022 is \$24,568,733.13 and the Ending Fund Balance is \$19,654,768.18. There were 3 pay-periods for the month of December, the payment for the APA contract, funds to CFFC, and indirect costs were paid in December, all lending to the increase in expenditures for the quarter.

Kristen Fox-Berki received a letter from the Budget Commission asking that she or a fiscal representative to attend the March 13, 2023, Budget Commission meeting at 11:00 a.m. to discuss the plan for the carry over. The levy one-time reduction of \$900,000.00 will be paid this year in either April or August. Kristen Fox-Berki plans to hold an internal meeting w/ the Fiscal Director to look at the projected expenses, based on anticipated projects, for the remainder of the levy cycle. The costs for the children in LCCS custody is increasing drastically, with more than 20% increase in direct services to children. The projections will include the visitation center costs to build, lease, provide staff, purchase equipment, maintenance costs etc., adding a substantial annual increase to the budget. Additional expenses that may increase our annual costs include the subsidy for kinship caregivers, anticipated expansion of contracts with mental health professionals, costs encumbered as the administrative agent for CFFC, CAC funding assistance, and concrete services provided to our clients. Andrew Lipian thanked Kristen Fox Berki for identifying a music therapist and facilitating the implementation of an MOU to utilize their services on an ongoing basis.

C. Policy 7.14 Client Grievance

Kristen Fox-Berki provided the Board with the Ombudsman Quarterly Report from October 1, 2022, through December 31, 2022, including the number of Grievances Filed, Public Complaints, Telephone Calls, Emails, Walk-ins, New Requests for Ombudsman Services this Quarter, Requests Resolved that were pending from the last Quarter and New Requests Resolved within this Quarter. Some of the common themes for needing Ombudsman services are basic communication, mental health concerns, substance abuse, parenting practices, and the frequency/time span of visits and the parents' behavior during visits.

D. Policy 8.2 Strategic Plan Update

This has been a challenge with the current workforce issues, but we continue to make progress. Continuing to build the workforce will improve the initiatives.

1. Family First Act Implementation and Innovation

Family First was implemented by the State to prevent children from entering foster care. Some of the completed work includes: **1)** staff training, **2)** draft procedures to help guide staff on legislation requirements, **3)** the Children and Adolescent Needs Assessment (CANS) is the level of care tool being used by Family First and Ohio RISE and a few members of our CQI staff attended the CANS training and received the certification to complete the assessment, **4)** OhioRISE, a specialized managed care program that focuses on children and youth who have complex behavioral health and multisystem needs, began on July 1, 2022 and the management team meet with our OhioRISE contact on a regular basis to ensure we are on the same page regarding the appropriate case management of the children enrolled in the program and continue to provide ongoing education to staff about OhioRISE.

2. Responding to Trauma/Advance Trauma-Informed and Resilient Professionalism

Progress on this initiative: **1)** the group is working to define Resilient Professionalism. Once defined, this will be presented to staff through flyers throughout the agency to encourage coworkers to build upon their professional resiliency **2)** implemented a personal safety device system through Guardian MPS, **3)** hired a full-time Sheriff Deputy in November to serve as a resource to all staff for office security and assist with hostile clients and clients that are exhibiting difficult behavior during visitation with their children, **4)** ongoing safety committee meetings and safety threat meetings.

3. Diversity, Inclusion, Family and Individual Rights (DIFIR)

Throughout 2022 we were able to participate in two PCSAO workgroups that closely parallel two strategic plan initiatives: *Diversity, Inclusion, Family & Individual Rights and Responding to Trauma/Advanced Trauma-Informed and Empathetic Professionalism*. The work being done through these two committees focused on diversity and inclusion and safety culture in the workplace. This work will continue in 2023. During the past year, we have **1)** focused more time on diversity and inclusion, **2)** we are in the process of reviewing procedures to ensure they are inclusive, and **3)** scheduling to attend unit meetings to bring an awareness to what we are seeing in our own data regarding racial disparity and disproportionality involving the children we

serve. The PCSAO workgroup was centered on race. Internally we are also looking at how we can be a more inclusive workplace.

Additional Discussion Topics:

Kinship Guardianship Assistance Program (KGAP)

Effective January 1, 2023, KGAP will provide kinship caregivers the opportunity to receive financial assistance for the children in their care until the child reaches age 18, similar to adoption assistance. For the caregiver to be eligible, the child(ren) must be in the temporary custody of children services and the relative caregivers must be licensed as foster parents. Once licensed, the child(ren) must be in their care for a period of 6 months. During this time frame the caregivers will receive 100% of the foster care per diem. After the 6-month period the agency can request the Court to terminate LCCS custody and transfer legal custody to the relative. Once the caregivers have legal custody, they will receive 80% of their per diem until age 18 as long as the child(ren) remain with the caregiver. They will also receive Medicaid. To help with the licensing process the State is allowing some of the non-safety related requirements to be waived. We are working internally to make the necessary changes. This is also a change for the kinship caregivers. The agency does not provide the funding for KGAP, rather it is partially IV-E funded, and if the child is not IV-E eligible the funds will come from the State. Implementing KGAP will likely result in an increase in the number of children in the agency's custody. Kristen Fox-Berki will keep the Board updated as this develops. We are meeting internally, meeting with external groups, the State of Ohio, and the prosecutor's office. Kristen Fox-Berki is also planning to meet with the Lorain County Juvenile Court Judges.

EPIC Awards

Kristen Fox-Berki provided the Board members with handouts introducing the EPIC Award. This is a new award, similar to the PRIDE Award presented to staff several years ago, to highlight exceptional work being done for our families and children. We currently have the Make a Difference Award that staff can give to recognize each other for helping with daily work tasks. The EPIC award is meant to recognize staff on a higher level for going above and beyond, and accomplishments that directly support the safety and well-being of a child. Kristen Fox-Berki asked the Board how they would like to be involved with the EPIC Award process. Board member Roberto Davila suggests that the EPIC Awards are presented at the Board meetings.

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 Mallory Santiago, seconded by Kenneth Glynn to adjourn the Board meeting at 5:48 p.m. Motion carried.

The next Board meeting is scheduled for February 15, 2023, 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