

# Lorain County Children Services

## Board Meeting

Wednesday, March 16, 2022 @ 5:00 p.m.

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

Board Chair Jim Miller called the meeting to order at 5:03 p.m. at the Lorain County Administration Building, 226 Middle Ave., 4<sup>th</sup> Floor, Room A, Elyria, Ohio 44035.

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

**Present:** Lee Armbruster, Tamika Bonilla, Christina Doran, Kenneth Glynn, Dan Gross, Martin Heberling, Andrew Lipian, Jim Miller, Mallory Santiago

**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 March 16, 2022, Board meeting. There were 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 February 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**

None.

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

None.

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

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

New Hires for the month of February:

- Erik Gebhardt, Direct Services Caseworker, 2/14/22
- Brittany Cobb, Scan Clerk, 2/22/22
- Miranda Jones, Direct Services Administrative Assistant, 2/28/22
- Rufus Cooke, Direct Services Caseworker, 2/28/22

Leaves for the month of February:

- Heather Bell, Direct Services Caseworker, 2/11/22
- Matthew Ketterick, CQI Coordinator, 2/18/22

## **B. Policy 4.1 Non-Bargaining Pay Scale**

Per Board Policy 4.1, “The Board will approve applicable pay-scale policies for all non-bargaining staff as developed and presented by the Executive Director in March annually for the new budget year. All revisions and amendments must be approved by the Board prior to enacting any of the revised or amended policies.” Kristen Fox-Berki provided the Board with the non-bargaining pay scale for 2022. The current Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) ends on March 31, 2022. The 2023 non-bargaining pay scale cannot be completed until negotiations are finished and the next union contract is developed. Kristen Fox-Berki will provide the 2023 non-bargaining pay scale to the Board at that time.

## **V. Fiscal Reports**

### **A. Policy 6.3 Annual Budget (Presentation)**

Kristen Fox-Berki provided the Board with a draft annual budget, subject to comment and revision before finalizing at the April Board meeting, and includes the proposed and revised budget for 2022, and the proposed budget for 2023-2025. Jessica Basinski, Director of Fiscal Affairs provided the Board with a summary. As 2021 was finalized and projections were updated, the 2022 budget was also updated to reflect those changes. The document is ever-changing based on actual revenue and expenses over time. Highlights:

- Social Security and Child Support increased based on changes in 2021.
- Best Practices and Foster Care Recruitment funds were removed and are now handled through the State. We may receive some of the Best Practice funds, depending on how they are measured.
- TANF was removed as we are no longer receiving those funds from LCDJFS.
- Salaries were adjusted to factor payouts for a few staff expected to retire in 2022. Salary and PERS may need to be adjusted again once salary increases are determined for the next CBA cycle.
- FCFC increased from \$100,000 to \$200,000 beginning in 2023.
- Records Center was revised in 2022 to reflect a rate increase.
- Equipment increased to purchase an additional 8-10 Surface Pros.
- One vehicle will be replaced in 2023 and again in 2025.
- Staff training budget decreased based on actual figures for the last few years.
- Gas mileage decreased due to an increase of staff utilization of the agency vehicles.
- Purchased Board and Care increased due to the increase of children in care in residential placements.
- Monthly Board and Care was reduced in 2022 based on spending in 2021.
- Kinship subsidy and Kinship (non-subsidy) were reduced.
- Direct Services to Children increased.
- Contracts-Services increased.
- The agency was not charged in 2021 for Indirect Costs. We are anticipating that we will be charged double in 2022.
- Board training has a \$5,000 annual budget. The Board is open to exploring training opportunities.

Board Chair Jim Miller requests the Board to familiarize themselves with the annual budget before voting at the April Board meeting.

- **Policy 6.3a Contracts**

Kristen Fox-Berki provided the Board with, and reviewed, a list of operational contracts. In addition, the Board was provided with a list of individual clinicians and a summary of each of their specialized services; provided to children and families within their own home, as well as kinship and foster families.

- **Policy 6.3b Personnel Plan**

Tabled until the April Board meeting.

- **Policy 6.3c Major Purchases**

The annual budget factored in one (1) new vehicle purchase for 2023.

**VI. New Business**

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

Kristen Fox-Berki and Board Chair Jim Miller attended the Budget Commission meeting earlier this week to discuss the increasing fund balance. The agency has a responsibility to find ways to reduce the tax burden for the citizens of Lorain County, as well as assessing additional services that can be provided to the community. Three areas to consider:

- 1) Increase funding for the Lorain County Children and Family Council (LCCFC) and request the Commissioners to match LCCS's contribution. The increase would provide LCCFC with the ability to provide, and increase, preventative services for the community, hire an additional Wrap Around Services Coordinator, and provide monetary assistance for utilities, etc. Chelsea Freeman was hired as the LCCFC Director, currently providing direct services and administrative duties for the council but is unable to meet the current needs of Lorain County. The Lorain County Prosecutor's office is currently investigating if LCCS funds can be transferred to LCCFC. LCCS is already one of the agencies contributing to LCCFC pooled funding, and beginning July 1, 2022, LCCS will become LCCFC's administrative agent.

**MOTION:** A motion was made by Martin Heberling, seconded by Kenneth Glynn to contribute \$200,000 annually to LCCFC for the next three (3) years, subject to approval by the Lorain County Prosecutor's office. Motion carried.

**Roll Call Vote**

Ayes:	Lee Armbruster, Tamika Bonilla, Christina Doran, Kenneth Glynn, Dan Gross, Martin Heberling, Andrew Lipian, Jim Miller, Mallory Santiago
Nays:	None- 0
Abstentions:	None- 0

- 2) The agency facilitates visits for children in care with their parents and families; currently held on-site. The rooms are small and make it difficult for

parents to interact with their child(ren). Establishing a visitation center within the community, outside of the agency would help to reduce trauma on the children. The visitation center could include an outdoor patio and play area, as well as a kitchen area, among other possibilities. Other children services agencies throughout the State of Ohio have a visitation center. LCCS cannot purchase property but could consider a long-term lease through a contracted service. The Board supports the agency establishing an off-site visitation center and will form a committee to begin the process of conceptualizing it. Board Chair Jim Miller asks that Board members interested in joining the committee notify Kristen Fox-Berki. The union is also in agreement with the visitation center. Once established, it will allow for additional space on the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor of the Administration Building for office space.

- 3) The third consideration for the Board is to forgo a levy collection for a period. Kristen Fox-Berki provided the Board with a budget projection for 2022-2025 with an immediate 0.2 mill one-time levy reduction. The current carryover is more than the agency's annual budget. Discussion held regarding increasing staff to provide more services for the community, and the impact on the fund balance. Kristen Fox-Berki will provide the Board with the personnel plan at the April Board meeting. Several new positions were added, expanding the FBC and kinship departments as well as direct services. Conversations by the Board to consider opportunities to spend the funds responsibly could be held before deciding on a reduction. However, the citizens of Lorain County are paying taxes and contributing to funds that are not being used, and it is the agency's responsibility to take this into consideration. The Budget Commission made the recommendation last year and years prior to reduce the carryover, and now it has grown since last year. The Auditor requests a decision regarding a levy reduction by June or July 2022. If the Board has ideas to share to spend the funds responsibly, Board Chair Jim Miller asks the Board members to reach out to Kristen Fox-Berki.

**VII. Executive Session** *(to discuss litigation, personnel matters and other matters required to be kept confidential by law)*  
None.

**VIII. Announcements**

Kristen Fox-Berki provided the Board with a flyer for Blue Sunday on April 24, 2022. Blue Sunday is a National Day for prayer for abused and neglected children and to highlight the need for foster parents in Lorain County. The flyer was sent to several churches throughout Lorain County.

April is Child Abuse Awareness month. Wear Blue Day will be held on Wednesday, April 13, 2022. Each Board member was provided with a pin to wear, and another to share with someone in the community to spread awareness.

**IX. Adjourn**

**MOTION:** It was moved by Martin Heberling, seconded by Kenneth Glynn to adjourn the Board meeting at 6:10 p.m. Motion carried.

The next Board meeting will be held on Wednesday, April 20, 2022, at 5:00 p.m. at the Lorain County Administration Building, 226 Middle Ave., 4<sup>th</sup> Floor, Room A, Elyria, Ohio 44035.

Minutes Prepared by:  
Kimberly Kassam, Administrative Supervisor

Approved by:  
Christina Doran, Board Secretary