

Lorain County Children Services

Board Meeting

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

I. Call to Order

Board Chair Jim Miller called the meeting to order at 5:05 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, Kenneth Glynn, Dan Gross, Martin Heberling, Andrew Lipian, Jim Miller, Tamara Newton, Thomas Patrick, Mallory Santiago

Excused: Kim Withrow

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

1. Swearing In Ceremony for New Board Member

Board member Thomas Patrick was sworn in by Judge James T. Walther. Judge Walther invited all Board members to attend an adoption hearing, which encapsulates all the good work of the LCCS staff.

B. Review Agenda

Board Chair Jim Miller asked if there were any additions or changes to the Board Meeting Agenda submitted for the July 17, 2024, Board meeting. No additions or changes made.

MOTION: It was moved by Martin Heberling, seconded by Andrew Lipian to approve the July 17, 2024, Board Agenda. Motion carried.

Roll Call Vote

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

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 June 12, 2024, Board meeting.

MOTION: It was moved by Kenneth Glynn, seconded by Martin Heberling to approve the June 12, 2024, Board Meeting Minutes. Motion carried.

Roll Call Vote

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

II. Public Comment

Board Chair Jim Miller confirmed that there were no requests from the public to address the Board.

III. Old Business

A. Tabled Items

None.

B. Unresolved Action Items

1. Levy Discussion

The Commissioners approved the Board's request, to request the Lorain County Auditor to certify to the Commissioners the total current tax valuation and the dollar amount of revenue that would be generated by a 5-year 1.8 mill renewal levy for years 2026-2030. To meet the timeline demands, the Board is required to request the Commissioners to place the levy on the ballot by the end of July. Kristen Fox-Berki will be presenting to the Board of Commissioners at their meeting scheduled for Friday, July 19, 2024. Kristen Fox-Berki provided the Board with a narrative to assist them with responding to questions in the community regarding the 2026 -2030 levy.

2. Policy 5.12 Executive Director's Performance

Board Subcommittee members include Lee Armbruster, Martin Heberling and Tamara Newton. The subcommittee did confirm they are working on the evaluation and intend to meet the August deadline.

IV. Executive Director's Report

A. Policy 4.6 New Hires/Leaves

There were no new hires for the month of June.

Leaves for the month of June:

1. Sasha Martinez, Case Aide 6/7/24
2. Dorena Gilchrist, DS Supervisor 6/14/24

B. Visitation Center

We received a packet of blueprints with electrical, floor plans etc. from the architect. These plans have been shared with the State and County IT departments to coordinate installation for data placement, cameras etc. The finalized data plans will be added to the architect's floor plans. Once completed, we will be ready to begin the public bidding process.

C. LCCS Board Subcommittee Re: Foster Care Recruitment

A meeting was held in June with the Lorain County Veterans Services Commission (LCVSC) and a decision was made to co-sponsor an event, focusing on recruitment for foster caregivers and providing information for veterans in Lorain County. The event will be held the week of November 18th at Lorain County Community College (LCCC), which aligns with Veterans Day in November. Approximately twenty (20) of our foster/kinship caregivers are veterans and will be invited to the event, in addition to attendees invited by LCVSC. LCVSC's motto is "Service to Country, Service to Community." Judge Walther will also be invited to attend as a special

guest; he is a veteran, a kinship caregiver, and oversees the Veterans' Treatment Court. As the event approaches, Kristen Fox-Berki will provide the Board with the flyer to promote the event and the Board is invited to attend.

Internally, foster care recruitment is an ongoing effort. Family Recruitment Coordinator Judith Padua has attended, and will continue to attend, events in the community throughout the summer including festivals, parades, the fair and the 3rd annual LCVSC race on November 9, 2024, in Elyria. Board member Rania Assily invited Judith Padua to present at one of the campuses at Cuyahoga County Community College.

D. Policy 5.12 Annual Management Plan

Kristen Fox-Berki reviewed the 2023-2024 Management plan and summarized the results of each of the three (3) priorities:

1. LCCS Visitation Center
Phase 1 is complete- the property and an architect were selected, and the floor plans have been finalized. Phase 2 will be included in the next Management Plan to see the project through to completion.
2. Improve Retention and Reduce Turnover in Direct Services by 5%
The goal to reduce turnover was achieved and exceeded, with a 13.5% reduction for Direct Services. The peer mentor program was implemented. Improvements were made to the onboarding process and the first-year training program. A process was established for Stay Surveys; we will continue to monitor and review outcomes.
3. Upgrade the Agency Website
After receiving an estimated cost for a new website, a decision was made to make improvements to our current website rather than create a new one.

Kristen Fox-Berki provided the Board with the 2024-2025 Management Plan. The priorities are:

1. Open Visitation Center
We will continue to work collaboratively with the architect, engineer and County and State IT. Fabo Architecture Inc. and the Lorain County purchasing dept will assist with the public bidding process once we are ready. Once bids are received, the lowest and best wins the bid, based on scoring that includes several factors; cost is one of, but not the only, factor for consideration.
2. Improve Staff Retention/Reduce Agency Turnover by 5%
For the 2023-2024 Management plan the focus was the turnover rate in the Direct Services department. The 2024-2025 Management Plan will expand the focus to include turnover agency wide. Because we received feedback from new hires that the previous orientation process was overwhelming, adjustments were made. Once the new process is fully implemented, it will be a combination of face to face and self-paced orientation sessions. Stay Surveys are now being conducted by the Human Resources department; we will continue to review the process based on feedback. The HR Committee has been revitalized. The previous charter will be reviewed and updated. This is a great opportunity for the entire staff to participate and, based on the

information received, make recommendations on identified areas of improvement. The stay surveys, exit interviews and suggestion box results will be incorporated into the committee.

3. Create an Emergency Short-Term Placement for Children who are in Need of Placement

Over the last several months, the number of children in care and placement costs have increased, which has stretched the workforce state-wide. We will continue to work with the State as they draft a plan, but we will also work collaboratively with social service agencies within our community to find a short-term solution for emergency placements until a more permanent placement can be found. Another option to consider is a recurring payment to a congregate care facility to keep a bed on hold to ensure a short-term placement for our agency is available when needed. The Visitation Center is not designed to house a child, even temporarily as it would require licensing, staffing, a nurse on staff to administer medication, etc.

MOTION: It was moved by Roberto Davila, seconded by Martin Heberling to approve the 2024-2025 Management Plan. Motion carried.

Roll Call Vote

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

E. Policy 7.14 Client Grievance

Kristen Fox-Berki provided the Board with the Ombudsman Quarterly Report from April 1, 2024, through June 30, 2024, 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 Pending Requests Resolved from Last Quarter and Resolved New Requests.

F. Policy 8.2 Strategic Plan Update

Kristen Fox-Berki provided the Board with the Strategic Plan update from January – June 2024, which focuses on the fundamentals of safety, permanency, and wellbeing. Since Board approval January, the committees are meeting regularly with strong attendance, 12-14 staff members per committee. They have been engaged in the objectives, working hard, and have come up with some proposed strategies. Although they will not all be included in the final tasks, Kristen Fox-Berki provided the Board with the comprehensive list of ideas. An overlap was identified regarding the number of foster homes and bringing children closer to home. Adjustments were made to the objectives in each goal to prevent duplicating work. The next six (6) months will be used to narrow down the proposed strategies and work on a plan to implement them.

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 June 30, 2024.

Revenue:

The total Revenue for April – June 2024 is \$3,492,255.45.

Expenditures:

The total Expenditures for April – June 2024 is \$6,776,956.62.

The Beginning Fund Balance for April – June 2024 is \$18,197,141.50 and the Ending Fund Balance is \$14,912,440.33.

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)

MOTION: It was moved by Roberto Davila, seconded by Kenneth Glynn to enter Executive Session to discuss personnel matters. Motion carried.

Roll Call Vote

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

Following Executive Session, Board Chair Jim Miller reviewed Resolution 07-2024-02, which states: “The Lorain County Children Services Board hereby requests the Board of Commissioners to approve a Resolution to place the 1.8 mill renewal levy to support services to abused and neglected children on the November 5, 2024, General Election Ballot for the years 2026-2030.”

MOTION: It was moved by Roberto Davila, seconded by Andrew Lipian to approve Resolution 07-2024-02. Motion carried.

Roll Call Vote

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

VIII. Announcements

Board Member Martin Heberling formally apologized to Kristen Fox-Berki for taking the initiative to request a walk-through at the Visitation Center for the Board members that had not yet seen the building, confirmed availability, but was unable to attend due to an

emergency. He did indicate that he would still like to see the building if there is another opportunity; Mallory Santiago is also interested.

IX. Adjourn

MOTION: It was moved by Martin Heberling, seconded by Kenneth Glynn to adjourn the Board meeting at 6:15 p.m. Motion carried.

Roll Call Vote

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

The next Board meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, August 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