

Lorain County Children Services

Board Meeting

Wednesday, July 19, 2023 @ 5:00 p.m.

I. Call to Order

Board Chair Jim Miller called the meeting to order at 5:08 p.m. at the Lorain County Administration Building, 226 Middle Ave., 4th Floor, Room A, Elyria, Ohio 44035.

A. Roll Call

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

Excused: Lee Armbruster, Kenneth Glynn, Tawana Jackson

Also Present: Kristen Fox-Berki, Executive Director

1. Swearing In Ceremony for New Board Members

Tabled.

B. Review Agenda

Board Chair Jim Miller asked if there were any additions or changes to the Board Meeting Agenda submitted for the July 19, 2023, Board meeting. Travelmax Contract will be added to Agenda Item IV, Executive Director's Report.

MOTION: A motion was made by Mallory Santiago, seconded by Tamara Newton to approve the Board Meeting Agenda as amended. Motion carried.

Roll Call Vote

Ayes:	Rania Assily, Roberto Davila, Christina Doran, Dan Gross, Martin Heberling, Andrew Lipian, Jim Miller, Tamara Newton, Mallory Santiago, Joshua Varney
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 21, 2023, Board meeting. No additions or changes made.

MOTION: A motion was made by Martin Heberling, seconded by Christina Doran to approve the June 21, 2023, Board Meeting Minutes. Motion carried.

Roll Call Vote

Ayes:	Rania Assily, Roberto Davila, Christina Doran, Dan Gross, Martin Heberling, Andrew Lipian, Jim Miller, Tamara Newton, Mallory Santiago, Joshua Varney
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

None.

B. Unresolved Action Items

1. Visitation Center

Board member Dan Gross provided the Board with an update. The Board of the Lorain County Visitor's Bureau is willing to adjust the rental rate to \$4,500 per month/ \$54,000 annually (\$9.25 per square foot), for the former Lorain County Visitors Center located at 8025 Leavitt Road, Amherst, Ohio 44001. Dan Gross did inquire about the former Lorain City Health Department building, but it does not have an elevator to access the second floor, and there's only about 1,800 square feet on the first floor for public use, which is not enough space. The former visitors center in Amherst is more centrally located and has better access to highways. The Board will continue to move forward with a potential lease for the former visitor's center but will also continue to monitor available properties. Kristen Fox-Berki will reach out to the Lorain County Prosecutor's office to inquire about next steps and entering into an MOU. Dan Gross will contact available local architects. Bids are not required for professional services. The Board requests consideration for an option to purchase (buyout) at the end of the lease after an identified number of years.

IV. Executive Director's Report

A. Policy 4.6 New Hires/Leaves

New Hire for the month of June:

1. Tiana Mitchell, DS Caseworker 6/5/23

Leave for the month of June:

1. Craig Palmer, DS Caseworker 6/2/23

B. Policy 5.14 Annual Management Plan

Kristen Fox-Berki provided the Board with the Lorain County Children Services 2022-2023 Management Plan Executive Summary of Results. The identified initiatives include:

1. Maintain national accreditation with the Council on Accreditation for Services to Children and Families (COA).
 - a. The COA site visit was held in June, and we are waiting for the final results.
2. Improve workforce recruitment and retention.
 - a. The agency applied for and received the workforce grant, which includes staff incentives, team building exercises and leadership training, and we are very close to being fully staffed.
 - b. In reviewing exit interviews, one item identified as a recurring theme was safety in the community and in the office. We secured a contract with Guardian MPS to provide staff working in the field with personal

safety devices and secured a contract with the Lorain County Sheriff's office to have a full-time deputy on site.

- c. To help with retention, we added the Training Supervisor position, and will begin to focus on professional development. Board member Andrew Lipian shared there is funding available for training employees through OhioMeansJobs Lorain County. Kristen Fox-Berki will gather more information.
3. Open Visitation Center.
 - a. The agency is working to secure a building for the Visitation Center. This may carryover to the 2024 Management Plan.

C. Policy 7.14 Client Grievance

Kristen Fox-Berki provided the Board with the Ombudsman Quarterly Report from April 1, 2023, through June 30, 2023, including the number of Grievances Filed, Public Complaints, Interested Third Party (ITP), 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/trends include understanding reunification or requirements of the case plan and the placement of children. Kristen Fox-Berki reviewed the public complaint with the Board.

D. Policy 8.2 Strategic Plan Update

Kristen Fox-Berki provided the Board with the Lorain County Children Services 2022-2023 Strategic Plan Executive Summary of Results. The identified initiatives include:

1. Diversity, Inclusion, Family and Individual Rights.
 - a. The agency aligned its Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) initiative with Public Children Services Association of Ohio's (PCSAO's) Race, Equity and Inclusion (REI) initiative and participate in the State workgroup, to increase knowledge on systemic issues related to race, bias and cultural differences. Some of the areas of focus include:
 - i. Organized staff to review data on racial disproportionality of the children we serve.
 - ii. Reviewed and revised procedures.
 - iii. PCSAO is developing a shared practice model, focusing on the rights of the families.
 - iv. The DEI Committee participated in a diversity training with the Lorain County Urban League.
 - v. The agency is reviewing the Custody Review Team (CRT) process to identify changes needed when making decisions regarding agency custody.

Kristen Fox-Berki shared the agency's goal to increase the diversity at all levels of staff regarding race, gender, socioeconomics, etc. Based on the data previously provided to the Board, Board member Andrew Lipian discussed the ratio of male to female caseworkers, and the disproportionality to the number of male vs. female children that are involved with LCCS and suggests a mentorship program. There are also females that could benefit from additional supports. Faith-based organizations, Operation Open Heart and Big

Brothers Big Sisters could be good resources for mentorships. Kristen Fox-Berki shared that we hosted a recent Community Advisory Network (CAN) meeting to discuss ways to partner.

2. Responding to Trauma/Advance Trauma-Informed and Resilient Professionalism.
 - a. Increased staff education on trauma.
 - b. Resiliency trainings were offered.
 - c. The Short-Term Trauma Caseworker position was created to provide support to children placed in foster homes.
3. Family First Act Implementation and Innovation.
 - a. Procedures were created to align with federal government processes and Qualified Residential Treatment Program (QRTP) requirements.
 - b. The State of Ohio started OhioRISE to focus on ways to avoid children with complex behavioral health issues entering agency custody.

The next strategic plan will focus on safety, permanence and wellbeing; children separated from their families, in foster and kinship care. The Board will form a subcommittee, chaired by Board Vice Chair Andrew Lipian. Members of the subcommittee will include Andrew Lipian, Rania Assily, Tamara Newton, Martin Heberling and Mallory Santiago. Kristen Fox-Berki discussed the 2025 levy and the possibility of considering holding the levy a year early, in conjunction with the 2024 general election. Further discussion will be held at the August Board meeting.

Travelmax Contract

Kristen Fox-Berki requests the Board’s approval to increase the do not exceed amount for the Travelmax contract from \$75,000 to \$220,000 due to a significant increase in travel and travel expenses. The current Travelmax contract expires at the end of August. The Board requests that Kristen Fox-Berki ensure there is a process in place to monitor contract limits for all contracts.

MOTION: A motion was made by Christina Doran, seconded by Martin Heberling to increase the travel allowance from \$75,000 to \$220,000 for the current Travelmax contract. Motion carried.

Roll Call Vote

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

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 06/30/23.

Revenue:

The total Revenue for April – June 2023 is \$3,519,887.89.

Expenditures:

The total Expenditures for April – June 2023 is \$7,114,407.06.
The Beginning Fund Balance for April – June 2023 is \$21,260,772.68 and the Ending Fund Balance is \$17,666,253.51.

MOTION: A motion was made by Martin Heberling, seconded by Mallory Santiago to accept the Quarterly Financial Update as presented. Motion carried.

Roll Call Vote

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

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: A motion was made by Roberto Davila, seconded by Dan Gross to enter into Executive Session to discuss litigation, personnel matters and other matters required to be kept confidential by law. Motion carried.

Roll Call Vote

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

MOTION: A motion was made by Martin Heberling, seconded by Roberto Davila to approve the settlement for the case of Jennifer Stopper vs. Lorain County Commissioners & Lorain County Children Services, not to exceed \$12,000. Motion carried.

Roll Call Vote

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

The settlement agreement will be approved by the Lorain County Prosecutor’s Office and the Lorain County Commissioners.

VIII. Announcements

Board Vice Chair reminds the Board to adhere to Robert’s Rules of Order.

IX. Adjourn

MOTION: It was moved by Martin Heberling, seconded by Andrew Lipian to adjourn the Board meeting at 6:29 p.m. Motion carried.

The next Board meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, August 16, 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