

# Lorain County Children Services

## Board Meeting

Wednesday, October 16, 2024 @ 5:00 p.m.

### I. Call to Order

Board Chair Jim Miller called the meeting to order at 5:01 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, Rania Assily, Roberto Davila, Christina Doran, Dan Gross, Martin Heberling, Jim Miller, Thomas Patrick, Mallory Santiago

**Excused:** Kenneth Glynn, Andrew Lipian, Tamara Newton, Kim Withrow

**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 October 16, 2024, Board meeting. No additions or changes made.

**MOTION:** It was moved by Martin Heberling, seconded by Dan Gross to approve the October 16, 2024, Board Meeting Agenda. Motion carried.

#### Roll Call Vote

Ayes:	Lee Armbruster, Rania Assily, Roberto Davila, Christina Doran, Dan Gross, Martin Heberling, Jim Miller, 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 September 18, 2024, Board meeting. Hearing none, the minutes are approved as distributed.

**MOTION:** It was moved by Thomas Patrick, seconded by Martin Heberling to approve the September 18, 2024, Board Meeting Minutes. Motion carried.

#### Roll Call Vote

Ayes:	Lee Armbruster, Rania Assily, Roberto Davila, Christina Doran, Dan Gross, Martin Heberling, Jim Miller, 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**

##### **1. Policy 3.4 Public Comment**

The Board received a copy of Policy 3.4 Public Comment. The Board previously discussed the need to amend the policy to create a process for Board members to appropriately respond if they are approached by members of the public, including current and past employees, with concerns about the agency. A meeting was held with the prosecutor's office to receive guidance. Kristen Fox-Berki was provided with a memo from the prosecutor's office, which advises the Board members in the event someone from the public reaches out to them directly, including a current or past employee, to direct the individual to the Board Chair or Executive Director. Jim Miller and Kristen Fox-Berki will draft a revision to Policy 3.4 for the Board to review and approve at the next Board meeting.

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

##### **1. Levy Discussion**

November 5, 2024, is election day. There have been a lot of opportunities to speak at candidates' meetings. Kristen Fox-Berki thanked Martin Heberling for extending an invitation to attend the AFL-CIO meeting on October 10, 2024, and we gained their endorsement. We were also endorsed by the Chronicle Telegram and the UAW. Kristen Fox-Berki will attend the Lorain Education Association meeting on October 21, 2024, as well as the Township Trustees Association meeting tomorrow, October 17, 2024, in Rochester. In addition, she attended the Candidates' Night at LCCC and provided levy information. Billboards are up, and 16,000 mailers were sent to absentee voters. Everyone has been very supportive. Kristen Fox-Berki commended the entire LCCS staff for their efforts in supporting the levy, and their ongoing relationships within the community.

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

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

New Hires for the month of September:

1. Jenna Pasenow, DS Caseworker 9/9/24
2. Rainelle Henry, DS Caseworker 9/23/24
3. Sarah Boesger, DS Caseworker 9/23/24

Leaves for the month of September:

1. Heather Thacker, DS Caseworker 9/27/24
2. Sandra Edwards, DS Administrative Assistant 9/30/24
3. Sh'Lea Williams, DS Caseworker 9/30/24

#### **B. Policy 7.14 Client Grievance**

Tabled until the November Board meeting.

#### **C. Visitation Center**

Kristen Fox-Berki provided the Board with the Notice to Bidders, which will be posted in the Chronicle Telegram on October 29, 2024, and again on November 5, 2024. There is a mandatory walk-through/on-site meeting on November 12, 2024, at

10:00 a.m. The bids are to be received by the County Purchasing department before 2:00 p.m. on November 22, 2024. Once the vendor is selected the Board of Commissioners will need to approve a Resolution to enter into a contract with the vendor that is selected. Because the next LCCS Board meeting will be held prior to the date the public bids are due, the Board agrees to authorize Jim Miller, Dan Gross, and Kristen Fox-Berki to review the bids and make a recommendation to the Lorain County Commissioners.

**MOTION:** It was moved by Christina Doran, seconded by Lee Armbruster to authorize Jim Miller, Dan Gross, and Kristen Fox-Berki to review the bids and make a recommendation to the Lorain County Commissioners. Motion carried.

**Roll Call Vote**

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

**D. LCCS Board Subcommittee Re: Foster Care Recruitment**

Kristen Fox-Berki provided the Board with a flyer for November 21, 2024, Veterans Recruitment event, co-sponsored by the Lorain County Veterans Services Commission (LCVSC), featuring keynote speaker Judge James T. Walther, a veteran and kinship caregiver. This is a dinner and discussion to talk about foster care recruitment and available services for veterans in Lorain County. Kristen Fox-Berki thanked Christina Doran for connecting LCCS with LCVSC. Rania Assily is offering to connect LCCS with Cuyahoga Community College (Tri-C) to host an event at the Westshore campus in Westlake. Rania Assily met with the campus president he is very receptive. Rania Assily and the campus president will be meeting with Kristen Fox-Berki and Recruitment Coordinator Judith Padua on Monday, November 4, 2024, to begin planning. The Board was asked for suggestions on the event type. In addition to foster care recruitment, students could be invited to hear more about employment with LCCS to expand staff recruitment. There could also be an opportunity to discuss college enrollment with Independent Living (IL)/Emancipated Youth (EY) exiting LCCS custody. There may be a few EY over the age of 18 that might be willing to present and/or attend. Rather than fundraising, which is done through the Friends of Children Services toward the levy campaign, the Board agrees this event would be more beneficial as a dinner/discussion event. It will take some time to plan and coordinate and would likely take place sometime in the spring semester. We could also consider partnering with LCCC to hold a similar event.

The Princess Ball will be held this Sunday, October 20, 2024, from 11:00 a.m. – 1:30 p.m. at LCCC Spitzer Conference Center in the Grand Ballroom. The event is sold out. Approximately \$2,000 was raised in sponsorships and the silent auction baskets will raise additional funds.

Today is Boss’s Day. Kristen Fox-Berki thanked the union for taking the lead, in conjunction with bargaining staff, to provide management with a dessert bar.

**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 September 30, 2024.

Revenue:

The total Revenue for July – September 2024 is \$9,628,639.87.

Expenditures:

The total Expenditures for July – September 2024 is \$6,861,333.63.

The Beginning Fund Balance for July – September 2024 is \$14,912,440.33 and the Ending Fund Balance is \$17,679,746.57.

- The increase to the fund balance for this quarter was primarily due to the second levy contribution. It was higher than projected because the funding for children with medical handicaps was not deducted this year.
- Placement costs continue to increase. We exceeded what was originally projected, but the budget was revised to make the necessary changes, and we are continuing to adjust internally including a decrease to the kinship subsidy, vouchers, and other adjustments within the Direct Services to Children line item and providing training to staff on community resources available to the children and families we serve. The State continues to advocate for more controlled placement costs, which is hopeful.
- Year to date, we have utilized 72.47% in expenditures, which is consistent with where we should be for this time of year.

**VI. New Business**

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

**1. Policy 1.2 Board Officers- Nominations**

The Board Secretary is the only open Board Officer position currently. Jim Miller will remain the Board Chair and Andrew Lipian will remain the Board Vice Chair for the duration of their term.

Board Chair Jim Miller requested the Board members propose a slate of officers for the Board Secretary. Jim Miller nominated Christina Doran for Board Secretary.

**MOTION:** A motion was made by Mallory Santiago, seconded by Martin Heberling to nominate Christina Doran for Board Secretary. Motion carried.

**Roll Call Vote**

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

**MOTION:** A motion was made by Roberto Davila, seconded by Martin Heberling to close nominations for Board Secretary. Motion carried. Nominations closed.

**Roll Call Vote**

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

The nominations were accepted. No additional nominations were received.

**MOTION:** A motion was made by Martin Heberling, seconded by Thomas Patrick to elect Christina Doran Board Secretary. Motion carried.

**Roll Call Vote**

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

Kristen Fox-Berki asked the Board if they would like to have staff presentation at the Board meetings more frequently to provide education on agency practices. The Board requested to have staff presentations every other month.

**VII. Executive Session** *(to discuss litigation, personnel matters and other matters required to be kept confidential by law)*

None.

**VIII. Adjourn**

**MOTION:** It was moved by Roberto Davila, seconded by Martin Heberling to adjourn the Board meeting at 5:37 p.m. Motion carried.

**Roll Call Vote**

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

The next Board meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, November 20, 2024, 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