

Lorain County Children Services

Board Meeting

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

I. Call to Order

Board Vice Chair Andrew Lipian called the meeting to order at 5:00 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, Dan Gross, Martin Heberling, Tawana Jackson, Andrew Lipian, Tamara Newton

Excused: Kenneth Glynn, Jim Miller, Mallory Santiago

Also Present: Kristen Fox-Berki, Executive Director

- **Swearing In Ceremony for New Board Member**
Tabled.

B. Review Agenda

Board Vice Chair Andrew Lipian asked if there were any additions or changes to the Board Meeting Agenda submitted for the October 18, 2023, Board meeting. No additions or changes made.

C. Review and Approve Minutes

Board Vice Chair Andrew Lipian asked if there were any additions or changes to the Board Meeting Minutes submitted for the September 20, 2023, Board meeting. No additions or changes made.

MOTION: A motion was made by Martin Heberling, seconded by Dan Gross to approve the October 18, 2023 Agenda and the Board Meeting Minutes submitted for the September 20, 2023 Board meeting. Motion carried.

Roll Call Vote

Ayes:	Lee Armbruster, Roberto Davila, Christina Doran, Dan Gross, Martin Heberling, Tawana Jackson, Andrew Lipian, Tamara Newton
Nays:	None- 0
Abstentions:	None- 0

II. Public Comment

Board Vice Chair Andrew Lipian noted that there was no one from the public present and wishing to address the Board.

III. Old Business

A. Tabled Items

1. **2025 LCCS Levy**
Tabled.

B. Unresolved Action Items

1. Visitation Center

The Board reviewed the Lease between the Lorain County Convention and Visitors Bureau and Lorain County Children Services and the Fabo Architecture Proposal for Professional Services. Currently, visits are held in the Administration Building and space is limited. The new building will provide a larger area to host visits between children and their parents, a space for the Independent Living program, and open more office space at the Administration Building once visits are moved.

Dan Gross reviewed the lease with the Board members. We have the right to renew the lease after the initial 10-year lease ends.

Dan Gross also reviewed the Fabo Architecture proposal with the Board. Page 2, Section III Compensation, A. provides a list of tasks 1-4 with a fixed fee for each phase, as well as reimbursable expenses; these are estimated costs. Page 3, Section V Additional Services lists further charges that could exceed the fixed fees should the agency change our minds and delay their project. This agreement does not have a “do not exceed” amount. The Board reviewed Page 2, Section IV, Item 11. This stipulation is a protection for the architect.

Next Steps: after the architect finishes the blueprint, we are required to go through the bidding process for the renovations. Fabo Architecture can assist us for an additional cost. The Board requests to be a part of the unveiling of the building.

MOTION: A motion was made by Christina Doran, seconded by Roberto Davila to approve the Lease between the Lorain County Convention and Visitors Bureau and Lorain County Children Services, and the Fabo Architecture Proposal for Professional Services. Motion carried.

Roll Call Vote

Ayes:	Lee Armbruster, Rania Assily, Roberto Davila, Christina Doran, Dan Gross, Martin Heberling, Tawana Jackson, Andrew Lipian, Tamara Newton
Nays:	None- 0
Abstentions:	None- 0

2. LCCS Board Subcommittee Re: Strategic Plan

The Board’s Strategic Plan Subcommittee will meet following today’s Board meeting. A group of approximately 30 LCCS staff met on October 13, 2023, to brainstorm ideas for developing the next strategic plan, which will center around safety, permanency, and wellbeing. There was wonderful conversation with a challenging topic. Survey results were reviewed, as well as data metrics. Board members Andrew Lipian, Mallory Santiago and Tamara Newton attended. Kristen Fox-Berki thanked the Board members for attending; it meant a lot to our staff. For some staff this was their first time participating in the strategic planning process. Some of the ideas given during the staff meeting

will be used to form the next strategic plan, in conjunction with ideas provided by the Board Subcommittee.

IV. Executive Director’s Report

A. Policy 4.6 New Hires/Leaves

New Hire for the month of September:

1. Laurie Luda, DS Caseworker 9/11/23

Leave for the month of September:

1. Dawn Marquard, DS Caseworker 9/21/23

B. Policy 7.14 Client Grievance

Tabled.

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, 2023.

Revenue:

The total Revenue for July – September 2023 is \$9,203,183.08. During this quarter we received our second levy payment. We received than projected.

Expenditures:

The total Expenditures for July – September 2023 is \$6,570,274.08.

The Beginning Fund Balance for July – September 2023 is \$17,666,253.51 and the Ending Fund Balance is \$20,299,162.51.

B. Policy 6.5 Additional Appropriation of Funds

Kristen Fox-Berki requests the Board to approve an additional appropriation of funds, directly related to placement costs, in the amount of \$2.3 million; \$1.5 million for Purchased Board and Care and \$0.8 million for Direct Services to Children. From September 2021 to September 2023, placement costs have increased by 52.9%.

MOTION: A motion was made by Martin Heberling, seconded by Christina Doran to approve the Additional Appropriation of Funds. Motion carried.

Roll Call Vote

Ayes:	Lee Armbruster, Rania Assily, Roberto Davila, Christina Doran, Dan Gross, Martin Heberling, Tawana Jackson, Andrew Lipian, Tamara Newton
Nays:	None- 0
Abstentions:	None- 0

VI. New Business

A. New Items for Discussion and Approval

1. Enterprise Fleet Management

Kaci Krupko, Account Executive from Enterprise provided a presentation to the Board. Agenda items included: References, Cycle of Service, Local Account Team, State Contract Comparison, Fleet Profile, Right Vehicle-Right Term, and Funding Options. Should the Board choose to approve the agency utilizing

Enterprise Fleet Management services, an account manager would be assigned to meet and create a plan. As a follow-up, a second meeting would be held at the beginning of the new year to check in and assess any needed cost improvements. An account team coordinator is also assigned to help with the day-to-day tasks, answer questions, etc.

Vehicle costs continue to increase over the years. There are different funding options available through Enterprise, lease, purchase, or a hybrid. Enterprise purchases their vehicles from manufacturers at a lower cost than a local dealership could offer to the agency. The average current agency fleet vehicle is about 5 years old, with an average of 10,000 miles per year. Enterprise will continue to assess the fleet from year to year to see when the best equity is available, whether it is before or after the planned term. Kaci Krupko provided the Board with a price comparison to continue with our current fleet retention schedule vs. the proposed retention plan through Enterprise. For vehicle service/maintenance, the Board expressed their interest in continuing to support local vendors. Enterprise outsources maintenance vendors locally so we could continue to support our local vendors. There was some discussion among the Board regarding vehicle make and models. Some companies will no longer manufacture sedans, and options may be limited. The current strikes may also influence vehicle availability.

MOTION: A motion was made by Lee Armbruster, seconded by Dan Gross to approve contract negotiations with Enterprise Fleet Management. The ayes have it and the motion is carried.

Roll Call Vote

Ayes:	Lee Armbruster, Rania Assily, Roberto Davila, Christina Doran, Dan Gross, Tawana Jackson, Andrew Lipian, Tamara Newton
Nays:	Martin Heberling
Abstentions:	None- 0

2. Peer Mentor Program Approval

We currently have an informal mentoring process in place with new employees for on-the-job training. They are encouraged to shadow fellow caseworkers to home visits, court hearing etc. The union has advocated to provide an incentive. Having an assigned peer mentor would allow the mentee to learn how to build rapport with families, testify in court, document their work and observations, etc. After meeting with the union, the Direct Services Managers created a proposal to formalize the process. It is well-written and outlines the roles and responsibilities of the supervisor, mentor and mentee, the training curriculum and qualifications, and an evaluation process. The program will be reviewed quarterly at the Manager’s and Labor Management meetings and fine-tuned over time.

The peer mentor will receive a flat rate of \$140 per week; the total for the peer mentor program is not to exceed \$75,000 annually. The program will be offered to new employees on probation and extended by manager approval if needed.

To become a peer mentor, caseworkers will be recommended by their current supervisor, and must complete the application and interview process. An evaluation will be completed at the end of the 90-day mentorship, with survey questions completed by the mentor, mentee, and supervisor. In addition to the compensation provided to the peer mentors, having the experience will be beneficial for resumes for staff seeking promotions. This program should also benefit staff retention.

MOTION: A motion was made by Martin Heberling, seconded by Roberto Davila to approve the Peer Mentor Program proposal as presented. Motion carried.

Roll Call Vote

Ayes:	Lee Armbruster, Rania Assily, Roberto Davila, Christina Doran, Dan Gross, Martin Heberling, Tawana Jackson, Andrew Lipian, Tamara Newton
Nays:	None- 0
Abstentions:	None- 0

3. Policy 1.2 Board Officers- Nominations

Christina Doran will continue as the Board Secretary for one more year. Nominations will be open and Board members are encouraged to provide nominations at the November Board meeting for Board Chair and Board Vice Chair. Votes will be held in December.

4. LCCFFC Contract Approval

The Lorain County Children and Families First Council (LCCFFC) is seeking board approval for two contracts:

1. Lorain County Public Health to collaborate with LCCFFC to meet the needs of pregnant and postpartum women, their children and their families who are enrolled and participating in the Plan of Safe Care Program, in the amount of \$8,748.75 (one-time payment).
 - a. Lorain County Public Health received a grant, but the grant ended. For about a year, their nurses were providing this preventative service to the entire family and were seeing a positive change. Public Health is one of the Council members and partially funding the program. They are asking the Council to contribute as well.
2. Respite Care services provided by Charneshia Johnson. The cost for respite care is \$30 per hour for the hours of 7:00 a.m. – 7:00 p.m. and \$50 per hour for the hours of 7:01 p.m. – 6:59 a.m. No more than \$750 can be billed in one single week. The maximum amount allocated for the agreement is \$4,500.00.

Board member Rania Assily requested the Board discuss the agency’s work with Passages and consider inviting a representative to speak about their organization and work with LCCS. Kristen Fox-Berki contacted the LCCFFC Director, Chelsea Freeman, as one of their core responsibilities is to do a scan of

services within Lorain County and fill in identified gaps. LCCFFC does provide fatherhood initiative services through Passages, Fathers and Sons of Northeast Ohio and Catholic Charities. We could request the Council to provide an overview of the County to see if there is a need for mentoring fathers and fill that gap if needed.

MOTION: A motion was made by Martin Heberling, seconded by Christina Doran to approve the LCCFFC Agreement with Lorain County Public Health and the LCCFFC Professional Services Agreement with Charneshia Johnson. Motion carried.

Roll Call Vote

Ayes:	Lee Armbruster, Rania Assily, Roberto Davila, Christina Doran, Dan Gross, Martin Heberling, Tawana Jackson, Andrew Lipian, Tamara Newton
Nays:	None- 0
Abstentions:	None- 0

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

VIII. Announcements
Princess Ball

The Princess Ball was held on Sunday, October 8, 2023, at the Lorain County Community College in the Grand Ball Room. It was a great success. Although we do not have the exact total, the Friends of Children Services raised approximately \$4,000 through ticket sales, sponsorships, and silent auction baskets. Kristen Fox-Berki thanked everyone that participated.

Council on Accreditation (COA):

Kristen Fox-Berki provided the Board with the COA Final Accreditation Report and the Press Release, sent to the Chronicle Telegram, Morning Journal and Plain Dealer. The agency has been accredited since 1999. The COA reviewers complimented the agency on a job well done. The Board congratulated Kristen Fox-Berki and the LCCS staff.

Rania Assily thanked Kristen Fox-Berki for looking into the need for a fatherhood initiative and requested a Passages representative to attend a Board meeting soon to provide insight on their organization and how they interface with LCCS. Once the need is affirmed or unaffirmed by LCCFFC, the Board will work with Kristen Fox-Berki and Passages to add Passages as an agenda item if needed.

IX. Adjourn

MOTION: It was moved by Martin Heberling, seconded by Roberto Davila to adjourn the Board meeting at 6:11 p.m. Motion carried.

The next Board meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, November 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