

Lorain County Children Services

Board Meeting

Wednesday, December 20, 2023 @ 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., 4th Floor, Room A, Elyria, Ohio 44035.

A. Roll Call

Present: Roberto Davila, Christina Doran, Kenneth Glynn, Dan Gross, Martin Heberling, Jim Miller, Tamara Newton

Excused: Lee Armbruster, Rania Assily, Tawana Jackson, Andrew Lipian, Mallory Santiago

Also Present: Kristen Fox-Berki, Executive Director

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

B. Review Agenda

Board Chair Jim Miller asked if there were any additions or changes to the Board Meeting Agenda submitted for the December 20, 2023, Board meeting. The following changes will be made:

1. Agenda Item I.A Swearing in Ceremony for New Board Member, is tabled until the January Board meeting.
2. Agenda Item III.A.2 Policy 1.2 Board Officers- Nominations and Vote, will be tabled until the January Board meeting.
3. Agenda Item VI.A.1. Passages Guest Speaker will follow Agenda Item II Public Comment.

MOTION: A motion was made by Roberto Davila, seconded by Kenneth Glynn to approve the December 20, 2023, Agenda, as revised. Motion carried.

Roll Call Vote

Ayes:	Roberto Davila, Christina Doran, Kenneth Glynn, Dan Gross, Martin Heberling, Jim Miller, Tamara Newton
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 November 15, 2023, Board meeting.

MOTION: A motion was made by Tamara Newton, seconded by Kenneth Glynn to approve the November 15, 2023, Board Meeting Minutes. Motion carried.

Roll Call Vote

Ayes:	Roberto Davila, Christina Doran, Kenneth Glynn, Dan Gross, Martin Heberling, Jim Miller, Tamara Newton
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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.

Passages Guest Speaker

Mycal Brown, Director of Family Resiliency Programming and Mary Nozak, Case Manager were present from Passages to provide the Board with information about the services they offer. There are two programs they are choosing to focus on for today's presentation, regarding fathers/father figures.

A. STEPS Program (Stabilizing Through Employment and Parenting Skills)

This program is for fathers/father figures over the age of 18, providing them with the skills and support they need to be the fathers they would like to be and the father their child(ren) deserves. Classes are offered in the morning and evening and topics include domestic violence, communication, co-parenting and men's health. The program also offers case management and employment services, helping with system navigation, obtaining a GED, referrals to legal services. Employment services are provided through an employment coordinator to help with resume building, mock interviews, and job searches. Class attendance is incentivized with gift cards. To connect LCCS clients to their programming, a release of information is completed and once signed, the Passages Case Manager would contact the LCCS Caseworker, mainly to assist fathers with system navigation and referrals. Passages is funded by the federal government through health and human services.

B. Non-STEPS Programming

Passages has offices in Cuyahoga, Lorain, and Lake Counties. Cuyahoga County is piloting a program called EPIC, with a Father Engagement Specialist embedded in Cuyahoga County Children Services, to link fathers to services to help them complete the program, help with employment, resources, furniture, bedding, etc. Passages can assist fathers in Lorain County with navigating situations and helping them to untangle issues they are having. They currently serve 200 fathers per year in Lorain County and Cuyahoga County combined. The LCCS caseworker would provide their contact information to the Passages case manager, and they will take it from there.

Kristen Fox-Berki and Lorain County Children and Families First Council (LCCFFC) Director Chelsea Freeman met with Passages staff. Passages is already working with both agencies, but there is always an ongoing opportunity to work together. Providing extra support to fathers is always welcome, including help with navigating the court system regarding custody issues, child support and other challenges they are facing.

The Board thanked Mr. Brown and Ms. Nozak for attending the Board meeting to provide information about their services.

III. Old Business

A. Tabled Items

1. 2025 LCCS Levy

It is important to begin assessing our needs now to help guide decisions regarding the 2025 levy. There is legislation that could impact whether a replacement levy would be allowed, but the legislation has not passed yet. If an increase were needed, an additional levy would be more straight-forward than a replacement levy. We will also need to decide how to promote the levy. Further discussion will follow.

2. Policy 1.2 Board Officers- Nominations and Vote

Tabled.

3. Policy 6.6 Adoption, Foster, and Kinship Rates

Foster Care Rates:

- No proposed changes to the foster care rates. If there is a child with special needs, we work with those individual foster families and increase the rates for a particular child based on their needs.

Kinship Rates:

- The current kinship rate is \$13.15 per day (averages \$400/month). No proposed changes to the kinship rates.

Adoption Rates:

- Adoption rates are determined by the State, no changes made for the upcoming year. Adoption Assistance Rates range from \$0 up to \$1162/month. Rates are negotiated between the agency and the prospective adoptive parents.

MOTION: A motion was made by Martin Heberling, seconded by Roberto Davila to keep the rates the same for Foster Care, Kinship and Adoption. Motion carried.

Roll Call Vote

Ayes:	Roberto Davila, Christina Doran, Kenneth Glynn, Dan Gross, Martin Heberling, Jim Miller, Tamara Newton
Nays:	None- 0
Abstentions:	None- 0

4. LCCFFC Contract Approval

The Lorain County Children and Families First Council (LCCFFC) is seeking Board approval to ratify three contracts:

1. Applewood Centers
2. Recoup & Relief
3. Respite Care services provided by Charneshia Johnson.

The Board noted that all three contracts are funded by LCCFFC and they do have the available funds to cover the cost of the contracts.

MOTION: A motion was made by Christina Doran, seconded by Kenneth Glynn to approve the LCCFFC Agreement with Applewood Centers, Recoup &

Relief, and the LCCFFC Professional Services Agreement with Charnesia Johnson. Motion carried.

Roll Call Vote

Ayes:	Roberto Davila, Christina Doran, Kenneth Glynn, Dan Gross, Martin Heberling, Jim Miller, Tamara Newton
Nays:	None- 0
Abstentions:	None- 0

B. Unresolved Action Items

1. LCCS Board Subcommittee Re: Strategic Plan

The LCCS Board Subcommittee will meet after today’s Board meeting to review the finalized Strategic Plan.

IV. Executive Director’s Report

A. Policy 4.6 New Hires/Leaves

New Hire for the month of November:

1. Kegan Bartlome, DS Caseworker, 11/6/23
2. Sara Simpson, DS Caseworker, 11/20/23
3. Cartrina Moore, DS Caseworker, 11/20/23

Leaves for the month of November:

1. Ashley Curry, DS Caseworker, 11/7/23

B. Visitation Center

As discussed at the previous Board meeting a contractor is needed for lawn care for the Visitation Center. After obtaining our required three quotes, we established an agreement with Neighborhood Lawn Care, the lowest of the three quotes. This is the same company that the Lorain County Visitor’s Bureau was using as well, so they are familiar with the property. A copy of the agreement was provided to the Board.

MOTION: A motion was made by Tamara Newton, seconded by Christina Doran to ratify the Agreement with Neighborhood Lawn Care. Motion carried.

Roll Call Vote

Ayes:	Roberto Davila, Christina Doran, Kenneth Glynn, Dan Gross, Martin Heberling, Jim Miller, Tamara Newton
Nays:	None- 0
Abstentions:	None- 0

Kristen Fox-Berki and a few of the LCCS staff members met with the architect at the property for a walk-through to provide feedback on the blueprint sketch. Following this, the architect updated the floor plan based on the feedback he received. There will be six (6) visitation rooms instead of seven (7), which allows for the visitation rooms to be larger; keeping in mind that the most important objective of the new building is visitation. We also asked to enclose the receptionist area. There will be an office for the Deputy Sheriff, a staff only area with office space, and an area for Independent Living staff to teach youth life skills i.e., laundry, kitchen, computer skills, etc. We are also considering adding parking in front of the building, however,

Amherst Township does have a setback code that will need to be further investigated. Kristen Fox-Berki held an open house at the Visitation Center to allow staff the opportunity to walk through the building. Kristen Fox-Berki offered the Board to reach out to her if they are interested in walking through the building to review the plans.

V. Fiscal Reports

None.

VI. New Business

A. New Items for Discussion and Approval

1. Passages Guest Speaker

This agenda item followed Agenda Item II Public Comment.

2. LCCS Board Subcommittee Re: Foster Care Recruitment

At the November Board meeting LCCS staff attended as guest speakers to provide the Board with information about foster care, kinship care and the recruitment of foster care, and the Board discussed forming a subcommittee to assist with foster care recruitment. Further discussion will be held at the January Board meeting.

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

None.

VIII. Announcements

None.

IX. Adjourn

MOTION: It was moved by Dan Gross, seconded by Martin Heberling to adjourn the Board meeting at 5:41 p.m. Motion carried.

The next Board meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, January 17, 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