

Lorain County Children Services

Board Meeting

Wednesday, May 21, 2025 @ 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: Roberto Davila, Christina Doran, Kenneth Glynn, Martin Heberling, Andrew Lipian, Jim Miller, Tamara Newton, Martin O'Donnell, Thomas Patrick

Excused: Lee Armbruster, Rania Assily, Dan Gross, 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 May 21, 2025, Board meeting. No additions or changes made.

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 April 16, 2025, Board meeting. Hearing none, the minutes are approved as distributed.

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 4.1 Pay Scale- Non-Bargaining

The non-bargaining pay scale is based on the completion and approval of the union contract. Tabled until negotiations are completed.

B. Unresolved Action Items

None.

IV. Executive Director's Report

A. Policy 4.6 New Hires/Leaves

New Hires for the month of April:

1. Crystal Allen, DS Caseworker 4/7/25
2. Greg Dailey, DS Caseworker 4/21/25

Leaves for the month of April:

1. Brittany Fravel, DS Supervisor 4/4/25
2. Cartrina Moore, DS Caseworker 4/4/25
3. Markeisha Cooper, DS Caseworker 4/30/25

B. Policy 8.1 Annual Report

The annual report for 2024 was provided to the Board.

Highlights:

- Message to the Community
 - The levy passed in 2024. Kristen Fox-Berki acknowledged the support of the community and the citizens of Lorain County.
 - We are opening the new facility for child and parent visitation and Independent Living activities in 2025.
- Referral Statistics/Intakes
 - Of the intakes received, 75% are referred by mandated reporters; the majority are from school staff.
 - There was a 6.5% increase in intakes received from 2023 to 2024.
 - Almost 70% of children who had referrals that were screened in for an intake assessment/investigation live in Lorain and Elyria. The smaller cities in Lorain County also had moderate levels of screened in reports compared to the city's child population.
- Cases Transferring from Intake to Ongoing
 - The number of families that had ongoing cases increased by 9%, from 327 families in 2023, to 359 in 2024.
 - The number of children involved with ongoing/foster care services decreased by 18%, from 601 children in 2023, to 488 in 2024.
- Entry & Exit Foster Care Counts (*Strategic Plan Initiative*)
 - In 2023 the courts placed 135 children into agency custody and exited 84 children. In 2024, 128 children were placed in agency custody and 157 children exited care.
 - By the end of 2024, the number of children exiting foster care outpaced the number of children coming into custody by 14% over 2023. The number of children entering custody decreased by about 5% in the same years.
- Median Time in Foster Care (*Strategic Plan Initiative*)
 - The total number of children in our care in 2023 was 208 children. This number decreased in 2024 to 179 children.
 - We continue to monitor the number of children in congregate care, which includes group homes or residential placement setting, in and out of Ohio. In 2023, there were 25 children in congregate care. This number decreased to 19 in 2024. We continuously strive to increase the number of children exiting congregate care, into a less restrictive placement setting. This is why foster care recruitment is so important.
- Foster Care Recruitment
 - In 2024, our foster care recruitment efforts achieved significant success through a multi-faceted outreach strategy that engaged diverse communities across Lorain County and beyond.
- Income Statement
 - Slightly more than half of the LCCS budget is funded through the levy and other local revenue. The remainder of our revenue is received through State and Federal reimbursements.

Martin O'Donnell asked if there could be potential for a decrease in funding through the State or Federal reimbursements we currently receive. Kristen Fox-Berki shared that the House has passed the bill regarding our State funding, and we are now awaiting approval from the Senate. We have been well supported at the State and Federal level, and we are hopeful that this will continue.

Roberto Davila asked the Board if they would be interested in a more detailed report on demographics, and asked if it was possible to provide the Board with detail on the families that are involved with the agency, i.e. young families, single mothers, income level, etc. Kristen Fox-Berki agreed to provide a more detailed report with demographic information. Mr. Davila inquired about prevention services offered by the agency. Kristen Fox-Berki shared that we are receiving the referrals and completing investigations regarding child abuse and neglect, but there are prevention services available in Lorain County that our agency can refer families to for assistance, such as the Child Care Resource Center, Children and Families First Council (CFFC), mental health agencies, and the Health Department.

Martin Heberling shared that he looked closely at the data prior to today's meeting, in particular, the data that shows where the children live by city. In calculating percentages of each city's population in comparison to the child count provided on the annual report, he concluded that all cities within Lorain County have the same need, regardless of the demographics.

C. Visitation Center

Most of the interior of the building is painted. However, there are water leaks in a few locations inside the building. This building was previously the subject of a lawsuit filed against the architect that designed the building because of the leaks. Dan Gross met with our architect and the general contractor, and they are working on a resolution.

We will be meeting with a furniture company next week to order office furniture. A lot of our furniture for the visitation rooms is still in good condition and will be used at the new facility.

We applied for grant funding through Healthy Places through Lorain County Public Health and received a \$10,000.00 grant towards the outside playground at the visitation center. We were also just notified that our application for another grant through the Community Foundation of Lorain County was approved and we will receive an additional \$8,000. There is still one more grant application pending. The total cost of the playground is approximately \$41,000.

Kristen Fox-Berki announced that we received the results from the survey sent to the Board and staff members to rename the visitation center. The new name for the building is the Lorain County Children Services Connections Center; it will be announced to staff tomorrow.

Tamara Newton inquired about the leaks, and who is responsible for the repairs, since LCCS is leasing the building. It is currently owned by the Lorain County Visitors Bureau. There is no further information to provide at this time.

D. LCCS Board Subcommittee Re: Foster Care Recruitment

Christina Doran connected Kenneth Glynn and Rania Assily with Family Recruitment Coordinator, Judith Padua. They met; it was very informative. Kenneth Glynn shared that Lorain County Community College (LCCC) has funds available for children aging out of care. He requested that eligible youth connect with LCCC staff prior to aging out to assure timely eligibility of available funding. Another meeting will be scheduled to discuss further. This connection between our children and the college is a great step in the right direction, to help support our children.

Rania Assily connected Kristen Fox-Berki with an individual that is trying to open a group home in Cleveland, to share information with her that may help her to prepare. She has a home already furnished. Opening a group home is a huge undertaking, getting certified, licensed, etc. She is making connections within the child welfare system. Once it is established this could potentially be a good partnership with our agency.

Judith Padua continues outreach within the community for foster parent recruitment. In April, we hosted a well-attended open house in Wellington and facilitated a panel discussion of current foster parents on Facebook Live.

The annual Princess Ball, which is the largest fundraiser to support the levy, will be held on Sunday, October 19, 2025, at the New Russia Township Hall (The Lodge), which is the same location we used in 2022. The Princess Ball is typically held in the Grand Ballroom at LCCC in years past, but it is unavailable this year due to renovations. This year we are planning to increase our number of sponsors. Kristen Fox-Berki will provide information to the Board at the June 18, 2025, Board meeting to share sponsorship information with the community.

V. Fiscal Reports

None.

VI. New Business

A. New Items for Discussion and Approval

1. Timecard System Contract Approval

The Board reviewed the TimeClock Plus, LLC (TCP) Service Terms and Conditions Agreement. Kristen Fox-Berki and Jessica Basinski met with representatives to gather information on their services. We have contracted with our current provider for 12 years, however, given the nature of their work, caseworkers are often in the field and need to be able to complete the timecards from their mobile device. The current system does not provide the needed mobility, and the fiscal department entering data manually because the current system cannot provide them with the information they need regarding overtime, etc. TimeClock Plus is user friendly and provides the needed mobility. They will be providing onboarding and training prior to using the platform. The cost for the system we currently use is about \$5,000 annually, with little to no reporting, and limited abilities. The cost for the new system would be just over \$9,400 annually for a three-year term. There is an

additional one-time 30-hour training service fee of \$7,100. They have offered a 20% discount if we sign the contract prior to June 13, 2025.

Roberto Davila inquired if we had compared this system to others. Kristen Fox-Berki shared that we were invited to a system demonstration for the same system the County Commissioners would be implementing. However, TimeClock Plus is currently used by the Lorain County Auditor's office, making it easier to process payroll through the same system. The Lorain County Prosecutor and the Domestic Relations Court are also using the same system.

MOTION: It was moved by Martin Heberling, seconded by Thomas Patrick to approve the Agreement with TimeClock Plus, LLC. Motion carried.

Roll Call Vote

Ayes:	Roberto Davila, Christina Doran, Kenneth Glynn, Martin Heberling, Andrew Lipian, Jim Miller, Tamara Newton, Martin O'Donnell, Thomas Patrick
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**
None.

- IX. Adjourn**
MOTION: It was moved by Martin Heberling, seconded by Kenneth Glynn to adjourn the Board meeting at 5:47 p.m. Motion carried.

Roll Call Vote

Ayes:	Roberto Davila, Christina Doran, Kenneth Glynn, Martin Heberling, Andrew Lipian, Jim Miller, Tamara Newton, Martin O'Donnell, Thomas Patrick
Nays:	None- 0
Abstentions:	None- 0

The next Board meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, June 18, 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