

Lorain County Children Services

Board Meeting

Wednesday, April 17, 2024 @ 5:00 p.m.

I. Call to Order

Board Chair Jim Miller called the meeting to order at 5:07 p.m. at the Lorain County Administration Building, 226 Middle Ave., 4th Floor, Room A, Elyria, Ohio 44035.

A. Roll Call

Present: Lee Armbruster, Roberto Davila, Christina Doran, Kenneth Glynn, Dan Gross, Martin Heberling, Jim Miller, Kim Withrow

Excused: Rania Assily, Andrew Lipian, Tamara Newton, Mallory Santiago

Absent: Tawana Jackson

Also Present: Kristen Fox-Berki, Executive Director, and Judge James T. Walther

1. Swearing In Ceremony for New Board Member

Board member Kim Withrow was sworn in by Judge James T. Walther.

Judge Walther acknowledged a few of the Board members that recently attended an adoption hearing and invited all Board members to attend.

B. Review Agenda

Board Chair Jim Miller asked if there were any additions or changes to the Board Meeting Agenda submitted for the April 17, 2024, Board meeting. No additions or changes made.

MOTION: A motion was made by Martin Heberling, seconded by Roberto Davila to approve the April 17, 2024 Board Meeting Agenda. Motion carried.

Roll Call Vote

Ayes:	Lee Armbruster, Roberto Davila, Christina Doran, Kenneth Glynn, Dan Gross, Martin Heberling, Jim Miller, Kim Withrow
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 March 20, 2024, 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

None.

B. Unresolved Action Items

None.

IV. Executive Director's Report

A. Policy 4.6 New Hires/Leaves

New Hires for the month of March:

1. Gina Branco, DS Caseworker 3/25/24
2. Eliyasa Dampha, DS Caseworker 3/25/24
3. Elizabeth Torres, DS Caseworker 3/25/24

Leaves for the month of March:

1. Misty Eddy, DS Caseworker 3/8/24
2. Crystal Moore, FBC Support Caseworker 3/15/24

B. Visitation Center

Kristen Fox-Berki provided the Board with the Fabo Architecture Proposal for Professional Services.

1. Section I, General Description of Services
2. Section II, Scope Breakdown by Phase
 - o Tasks 1, 2, and 4 are completed. The next phase is Task 5, Construction Documents. The fees associated are outlined in Section III, Compensation.
3. Section III, Compensation
4. Section IV, Stipulations
5. Section V, Additional Services
6. Section IV, Schedule

Kristen sent the proposal to the prosecutor's office for review and received a response with questions, one relating to the bidding process. Fabo will assist with the preparation of contract documents that are distributed for bids and the County purchasing department will handle most of the bidding process responsibilities. The prosecutor's office recommended a few changes to the proposal including:

1. Under Section III, Compensation: add language not to exceed \$50,000.
2. Under Section IV, Stipulations:
 - o Remove #10 regarding late fees.
 - o Remove #11 regarding limitation of liability (strictly about design). Fabo responded stating this is a requirement of both their attorney and insurance requirement.

The prosecutor's office also requested Fabo's Terms and Conditions, which was received. Once we hear back from the prosecutor's office about the response regarding #11 limitation of liability, we can move forward. Kristen Fox-Berki is hoping to provide the updated proposal to the Board at the May Board meeting.

C. Policy 7.14 Client Grievance

Kristen Fox-Berki provided the Board with the Ombudsman Quarterly Report from January 1, 2024, through March 31, 2024, including the number of Grievances Filed, Public Complaints, Telephone Calls, Emails, Walk-ins, New Requests for Ombudsman Services, Pending Request Resolved from Last Quarter, and New Requests Resolved within This Quarter. Kristen Fox-Berki reviewed the Pending Request Resolved from Last Quarter and the New Requests.

County Audit

The County underwent a County Single Audit; part of this audit involved our agency. The results were received, and there were no findings related to LCCS. Everything through our agency was done correctly.

Hero for a Day

The Hero for a Day event is scheduled for Sunday, May 19, 2024, at the Amvets Post #32 pavilion in Elyria. Kristen Fox-Berki will resend the sponsorship form to the Board if needed. It is also sharable on Facebook.

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 March 31, 2024. Director of Fiscal Affairs, Jessica Basinski was asked to join the Board to answer questions.

Revenue:

The total Revenue for January – March 2024 is \$10,163,697.33.

Expenditures:

The total Expenditures for January – March 2024 is \$7,015,342.76.

The Beginning Fund Balance for January – March 2024 is \$15,048,786.93 and the Ending Fund Balance is \$18,197,141.50.

B. Policy 6.3 Annual Budget (Presentation)

Kristen Fox-Berki provided the Board with the revised 2025 Annual Budget. At the last meeting Kristen Fox-Berki shared the projected ending fund balance for 2025 and strategies were discussed to increase it, including:

1. Proposed positions that will not be filled.
2. Ending the kinship subsidy, as of May 31, 2024. Kinship caregivers can apply for available services through Job and Family Services (JFS).

Revenue

On the revised budget, a line item was added to include Children and Family First Council (CFFC) allocations in the amount of \$150,000. These funds are received and then redistributed.

Expenses

1. Personnel was adjusted to remove the positions that were projected to be added but will no longer be filled. These adjustments will also decrease the previous projections for PERS, Hospitalization/Dental, Life Insurance and Medicare.
2. Services to Clients and their Families – Kinship Subsidy will decrease for 2024 due to kinship subsidies ending on May 31, 2024, and will be removed from the 2025 budget entirely.
3. Kristen Fox-Berki confirmed there will be a \$100,000 contribution to ISP in 2024.

With the changes to the 2025 Annual Budget, the new projected 2025 ending fund balance is \$4,673,982.

MOTION: A motion was made by Martin Heberling, seconded by Christina Doran to approve the 2025 Annual Budget. Motion carried.

Roll Call Vote

Ayes:	Lee Armbruster, Roberto Davila, Christina Doran, Kenneth Glynn, Dan Gross, Martin Heberling, Jim Miller, Kim Withrow
Nays:	None- 0
Abstentions:	None- 0

1. Policy 4.1 Pay Scale- Non-Bargaining

Kristen Fox-Berki provided the Board with the Non-Bargaining Pay Scale. The Established Base and Maximum increased by 2% which follows suit with the bargaining unit contract.

MOTION: A motion was made by Martin Heberling, seconded by Kenneth Glynn to approve the Non-Bargaining Pay Scale. Motion carried.

Roll Call Vote

Ayes:	Lee Armbruster, Roberto Davila, Christina Doran, Kenneth Glynn, Dan Gross, Martin Heberling, Jim Miller, Kim Withrow
Nays:	None- 0
Abstentions:	None- 0

2. Policy 6.3a Contracts and ODJFS Required Contracts w/ Child Placement Agencies

Kristen Fox-Berki provided the Board with the master contract list with all companies and providers, with the term begin and end date and the approximate annual amount for each contract. Kristen Fox-Berki noted that some of the contracts are based on usage so there is no set amount/rate. The Visitation Center contracts were added.

There was a question posed regarding how the funds we contribute to Turning Point Shelter are utilized. Turning Point is funded through the County General Fund, and then we also provide a portion of the cost to run the shelter. Placement at the shelter is sometimes related to a parent/child conflict and in some cases a short-term stay at the shelter could prevent the need for our agency to take custody of a child. There is no other shelter in the County that can provide us with short-term placements when needed.

MOTION: A motion was made by Kenneth Glynn, seconded by Dan Gross to approve the LCCS Contracts. Motion carried.

Roll Call Vote

Ayes:	Lee Armbruster, Roberto Davila, Christina Doran, Kenneth Glynn, Dan Gross, Martin Heberling, Jim Miller, Kim Withrow
Nays:	None- 0
Abstentions:	None- 0

Kristen Fox-Berki provided the Board with:

- a) the ODJFS Master Contracts with Child Placement Agencies.
- b) the list of Contracted Professional Services, including the cost and a summary for each service.
 - We contract individually with these providers because it is sometimes difficult to find these services within the community.

MOTION: A motion was made by Lee Armbruster, seconded by Kim Withrow to approve the contracts. Motion carried.

Roll Call Vote

Ayes:	Lee Armbruster, Roberto Davila, Christina Doran, Kenneth Glynn, Dan Gross, Martin Heberling, Jim Miller, Kim Withrow
Nays:	None- 0
Abstentions:	None- 0

3. Policy 6.3b Personnel Plan

Kristen Fox-Berki provided the Board with the 2024-2025 Personnel Plan. This personnel plan looks very different than previous years. Previously, we identified gaps in services and focused on adding the needed positions to fill those gaps. Some of those positions included the Case Aides, Independent Living (IL) Supervisor, Family Recruitment Coordinator, Human Resources (HR) Supervisor, HR Training Supervisor, Fiscal Data Analyst, Kinship Caseworker, among others. With these positions now in place, we want to shift the focus to evaluating all positions to determine where changes may be needed to utilize our staff in the best way possible. In addition, we will be looking at staffing in anticipation of the Visitation Center opening. The Visitation Center will be the full time worksite for case aides, IL staff including supervisors, and support staff.

There has been a change in the landscape of child welfare, including the implementation of federal programs such as KGAP, and a significant increase in the number of children in custody and placement costs. These changes have caused us to monitor the budget more closely.

Board member Kenneth Glynn informed the Board that he was contacted by a former disgruntled employee that shared with him that they felt bullied by someone in management. Board Chair Jim Miller will follow up with Kenneth Glynn following the meeting to discuss further. Mr. Glynn inquired about the means for staff to share their concerns. All staff are offered an exit interview as an opportunity to provide feedback. Labor Management meetings are held every other month to provide bargaining staff the opportunity to present issues that arise, and management with a chance to resolve those issues. There are also meetings between management and bargaining staff to assure that things are being addressed.

MOTION: A motion was made by Martin Heberling, seconded by Dan Gross to approve the 2024-2025 Personnel Plan. Motion carried.

Roll Call Vote

Ayes:	Lee Armbruster, Roberto Davila, Christina Doran, Kenneth Glynn, Dan Gross, Martin Heberling, Jim Miller, Kim Withrow
Nays:	None- 0
Abstentions:	None- 0

4. Policy 6.3c Major Purchases

In the Annual Budget, under Office Supplies and Agency Equipment, Vehicles are considered a Major Purchase. Vehicles will cost \$192,207 in 2024 and \$98,000 in 2025. This does not include the resale value of the vehicles that will be turned in, which is estimated to be between \$80,000 - \$90,000 for 2024. We can opt to receive a check for the resale amount, or we can choose to receive a credit toward future purchases. The vehicles will continue be replaced on a 5-year cycle, with Enterprise Management evaluating the vehicles to maximize trade-in values.

MOTION: A motion was made by Christina Doran, seconded by Martin Heberling to approve the vehicle purchases, not to exceed \$300,000 for the next 2 years. Motion carried.

Roll Call Vote

Ayes:	Lee Armbruster, Roberto Davila, Christina Doran, Kenneth Glynn, Dan Gross, Martin Heberling, Jim Miller, Kim Withrow
Nays:	None- 0
Abstentions:	None- 0

VI. New Business

A. New Items for Discussion and Approval

1. LCCS Subcommittee Re: Foster Care Recruitment

Board Secretary Christina Doran met with Kristen Fox-Berki regarding the Board Foster Care Recruitment Subcommittee. LCCS would like the Board’s help with getting in front of organizations, both civic organizations and helping professions such as rotaries, Kiwanis, school-based organizations, veterans, etc. Participating Board members in any of these organizations that are willing to provide contact information, please see Christina Doran. As a part of the 2024-2026 Strategic Plan, the agency’s goal is to increase the number of licensed foster homes from 80 – 100 over the next three (3) years. Keeping in mind that some of our current foster homes will be closing during this time. The personal relationship and connection of the Board members will be helpful in meeting this goal. The primary presenter for organizations that invite someone to speak will be Judith Padua, Family Recruitment Coordinator. Kristen Fox-Berki will also attend some of the events. There is also literature available that can be shared with the organizations.

2. Prosecutor Contract

Kristen Fox-Berki provided the Board with the Primary Agreement Between Lorain County Children Services and Lorain County Prosecutor’s Office, and the Supplemental IV-E Agreement Between Lorain County Children Services

and Lorain County Prosecutor’s Office. LCCS helps subsidize the Prosecutor’s office budget. All the work the prosecutor’s office does for our agency is IV-E eligible and they are reimbursed through federal funding; we do receive a small portion of the reimbursement. There are four (4) assistant prosecuting attorneys (APA’s) assigned to our agency that provide us with legal advice, help with court filings, represent us in Court, help prepare staff for testimony, etc. In addition, there is a paralegal that does research for us and support staff. We cover the salary of two (2) APA’s, 2 support staff and one-half (½) of the salary of the paralegal. The agreements include an increase of \$31,000 for half a year/\$62,000 for the full year.

MOTION: A motion was made by Christina Doran, seconded by Dan Gross to approve the Primary Agreement Between Lorain County Children Services and Lorain County Prosecutor’s Office, and the Supplemental IV-E Agreement Between Lorain County Children Services and Lorain County Prosecutor’s Office. Motion carried.

Roll Call Vote

Ayes:	Lee Armbruster, Roberto Davila, Christina Doran, Kenneth Glynn, Dan Gross, Martin Heberling, Jim Miller, Kim Withrow
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 6:06 p.m. Motion carried.

Roll Call Vote

Ayes:	Lee Armbruster, Roberto Davila, Christina Doran, Kenneth Glynn, Dan Gross, Martin Heberling, Jim Miller, Kim Withrow
Nays:	None- 0
Abstentions:	None- 0

The next Board meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, May 15, 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