

RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

Date of Meeting: October 11, 2021

Members Present: Chair Jim Kulig, Treasurer Jason Murray, Secretary Deanna West-Torrence, Nicole Blakley, Jim Nicholson, Bill Hope

Members Excused: Vice Chair Pat Heydinger, Scott Gatchall, Renee Bessick

Members Absent:

Others Present: Nikki Harless, Nicole Foulks, Kevin Goshe, Sarah Soliday, Marsha Coleman, Chris Zuercher, Tara Lautzenhiser, Recording Secretary Amy Hackedorn

The regular monthly Board meeting was held on Monday, October 11, 2021, in the Board Room at Richland County Children Services. Chair Kulig called the meeting to order at 3:31 p.m. of Board members present and representing a quorum.

AGENDA

On a motion by Nicholson, seconded by Blakley, the Board unanimously approved the proposed agenda by all Board members in attendance.

MINUTES

On a motion by West-Torrence, seconded by Hope, the Board unanimously approved the September 13, 2021 regular Board meeting minutes.

Board member Jason Murray arrived at this point in the meeting (3:36 p.m.).

Staff Recruitment & Retention Committee Report

RCCS Program Manager Tara Lautzenhiser reported out as the Agency Staff Recruitment & Retention Committee representative. Kulig reminded the Board members present that the Staff Recruitment and Retention Committee was asked to make this report in order to update the Board on what was discussed and/or implemented during those committee meetings throughout 2021. Lautzenhiser stated that some of the initial topics of discussion were employee mentorships, the 4-day work week, tuition reimbursement, and flex scheduling (working a schedule other than 8:00-4:30). Some of the identified retention issues were training (or a perceived lack thereof), inconsistent mentoring styles, caseload sizes, and intake caseworker overload (due to the quick case turnover rate in that department). Workers mentioned the possibility of having additional staff available to help with court and paperwork. Time management training and seating arrangements were also discussed along with establishing consistent expectations from supervisors. Paid mentorships were one of the

outcomes of the Committee meetings; these workers report to Lautzenhiser weekly along with their mentee's supervisor. One recommendation was for more caseworkers to use the SpeakWrite program to help with their paperwork completion in meeting timeliness mandates. Caseworkers who are in CORE training are now not given any new intakes on those days so that they can focus on their training instead. Trajectories were also completed so that Intake and Ongoing caseworkers can see what they should know at each stage in their development. There are plans for a staff survey to be completed at some point before the end of 2021, and RCCS HR Manager Sarah Soliday has been conducting new hire check-in's periodically during their first six months of employment. Hope asked if we have quantified exit interviews in any manner. Soliday stated that we have started tracking patterns for resignations. Hope asked whether we have evaluated our selection process as a result of this. Lautzenhiser stated that they have been trying to ask more situational type questions during interviews, and we have also implemented a new VR headset for applicants to use. The VR scenarios (which allow a potential candidate to virtually interact with clients in their homes so that they have a better understanding of what to expect) have also helped with the placement of new hires into either Intake or Ongoing. Workers do still have an opportunity to shadow other departments during their probationary period, however. Soliday stated that workers with a social work background are harder to retain; for example, Advantage pays \$14,000 more than us per year starting out. Soliday said that we have had numerous interns from local colleges, but many of these students realize this field is not a good fit for them before they graduate. Some of those who have stayed stated that they did so because they liked their supervisor, and others stayed because they enjoy the benefits that we offer (working a 4-day work week, telecommuting, etc.). Soliday said that some new hires (especially when this is their first job) have some unrealistic expectations about the Agency and the child welfare field in general. Kulig asked Lautzenhiser whether staff appreciated the opportunity to participate on the committee. Lautzenhiser stated that they did seem to see the benefit of this, and there are already some individuals who would like to participate in the second round in 2022.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Executive Director's Report and Comments

Harless commented on the visitation space issue. Team meetings have been occurring virtually, although we would like to begin offering these in-person again moving forward. Therefore, we will eventually need more space. The Prosecutor's Office told us that we cannot legally buy a building, but that we can receive one if it is gifted to us. The Commissioners own our current building. The CenturyLink building is nice, but it isn't very family friendly. West-Torrence expressed concern about public entities locating in one area but trying to serve individuals who live elsewhere. As stewards of public funding, those entities must be cognizant of what their mission is and whom they have been created to serve. Murray will contact the owner of the Longview property to see if he would be willing to consider other offers. Hope asked if we have had any increased interest from the community as a result of our additional efforts in foster home recruitment this year. The short answer to this is no. Becoming licensed as a foster parent is a 6-month process so we may or may not have a few new homes eventually, but the number of new applicants so far has been negligible.

On a motion by Nicholson, seconded by West-Torrence, the Board unanimously accepted the Executive Director's report.

Executive Committee Report

Kulig stated that the Executive Committee discussed the visitation space issue and also served in their dual role as Nominating Committee. West-Torrence and Heydinger have expressed interest in re-appointment by the Commissioners for final terms in 2022. Kulig stated that we should have a new member who responds to a need that will benefit the full Board, whether it be in the medical field, law enforcement, etc. We could also look at someone with a mental health background or with a religious background. Hope asked if there is a woman leader from Berean Baptist Church who would be interested in serving, since they have always traditionally supported our Agency and its mission. Kulig requested that Board members give him any names of potential candidates via email.

Finance Director Report

September Finance Report

Goshe distributed and reported on the September 2021 Final Financial Report regarding the revenues and expenditures. This included a beginning balance of \$8,418,957.97, \$998,342.80 in revenue, and \$874,014.82 in expenses with an ending balance of \$8,543,285.95. The ending fund balance reflects 73.7% or about 8.8 months of the 2021 budget.

Goshe stated that revenue for the year is running 6.7% higher than budgeted. One receipt during the month that was not expected was the State Child Protection Allocation (SCPA) advance (this was initially expected in October). Our expenditures are currently running 6.0% lower than budgeted. This is primarily due to our number of vacancies (the Personnel line is 9.4% lower than budgeted).

On a motion by Murray, seconded by Blakley, the Board unanimously accepted the September 2021 Final Financial report.

Finance Director Discussion

Goshe received several questions after the September Board meeting, and so he prepared two documents in order to address those questions. Heydinger had asked about levy collections, so Goshe handed out a breakdown of Agency levy collections since 2003. Hope had also asked about the Rover Pipeline and whether or not it will affect our finances, so Goshe reached out to Pat Dropsey regarding this topic. The top half of the second handout shows all of the revenue that came into Richland County as a result of money paid by Rover Pipeline in the first half of 2021. Out of the \$7.2 million that Rover Pipeline paid, Richland County offices received \$1.26 million of that.

Kulig wanted to officially acknowledge that the Finance Department has done a good job, which is evidenced by the fact that there were no findings as a result of the Agency's last financial audit.

On a motion by Blakley, seconded by Murray, the Board unanimously thanked Goshe and his staff for all of their efforts in maintaining the Agency's fiscal responsibility.

Finance Committee Report

No report at this time.

Levy Committee Report

No report at this time.

Personnel Committee Report

No report at this time.

Services and Program Report

No report at this time.

BILLS

Payment of Agency Bills - On a motion by Murray, seconded by Hope, the Board unanimously approved payment by signature of the Agency bills.

ADJOURNMENT

On a motion by Nicholson, seconded by West-Torrence, the Board moved to adjourn the meeting at 5:00 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted:

Jim Kulig, RCCS Board Chair

Amy Hackedorn, Recording Secretary