

RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

Date of Meeting: November 12, 2019

Members Present: Chair Deanna West-Torrence, Treasurer Jason Murray, Jim Kulig, Pat Heydinger, Nicole Blakley, Pam Siegenthaler

Members Excused: Rick Grega

Members Absent: Vice Chair Renee Bessick, Secretary Dr. Michelle Kowalski

Others Present: Nikki Harless, Chris Zuercher, Kevin Goshe, Marsha Coleman, Recording Secretary Amy Hackedorn, Windy Rose, Jenny Cotto, Jolene Zehner, Lisa Baker, Ashley Christenson, Jeraca Barnett, Sarah Owen, Susan Curatti

Others Absent:

The regular monthly Board meeting was held on Tuesday, November 12, 2019, in the Board Conference Room at Richland County Children Services. Treasurer Murray called the meeting to order at 3:34 p.m. of Board members present and representing a quorum.

AGENDA

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

NEW HIRE INTRODUCTIONS

HR Manager Chris Zuercher introduced the latest Agency new hires. Windy Rose (AS) started as a caseworker on Tara Lautzenhisser's Intake team on 9.25.19. Jenny Cotto (AS) started as a paralegal on 10.21.19. Jolene Zehner (ADCJ) started as a caseworker on Tara Lautzenhisser's Intake team on 10.31.19. On 11.4.19, Lisa Baker (BCJ) started as a caseworker on Tiffany Rouse's Ongoing team and Ashley Christenson (BS) started as a caseworker on Miranda Walker's Intake team. The Board members present introduced themselves and welcomed the new employees to the Agency.

Board Chair Deanna West-Torrence arrived at this point (3:37 p.m.), and Rose, Cotto, Zehner, Christenson, and Baker left the meeting at this point.

MINUTES

On a motion by Siegenthaler, seconded by Murray, the Board unanimously approved the October 14, 2019 Board meeting minutes.

MINI-TRAINING

RCCS Foster Care – Recruitment & Retention

RCCS Placement Supervisor Jeraca Barnett introduced Susie Curatti and Sarah Owen from the RCCS foster care team. Since Barnett took over as supervisor, the foster care team has begun going to more local festivals, fairs, and churches for foster parent recruitment. They also developed foster care recruitment postcards which include per diem rates and Binti software information. Their focus has been primarily on homes for teens lately, because we only have two foster homes right now in Richland County that will take in teenagers. Most foster parents either want to care for younger children or teenagers without any behavioral or social difficulties (which is rare). In 2020, individuals will be able to become a foster parent at age 18 (down from age 21), so the team has started changing the age that is listed in the recruitment brochures. Placement decisions are still up to the Agency, however, so we can choose whether or not to place a child in any certain home. Siegenthaler asked where the team has been the most successful with recruiting efforts. Barnett said that attending community events has been the most beneficial method for recruitment thus far. Making face-to-face contacts has been important. Kulig thanked the foster care team for taking the time to meet with the Board and asked how Board members could be more helpful. Barnett and Owen said that they appreciate any opportunity to speak with committees, groups, and religious establishments within the community, so it would be helpful anytime a Board member can foster those connections for the team.

Barnett, Owen, and Curatti left the meeting at this point (4:05 p.m.).

INTERIM DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Interim Director's Report and Comments

Coleman read a 'Thank You' card that Tim Harless received from CASA program manager Brooke Henwood. The Board members present signed a card to give to Harless, thanking him for his dedication to assisting other entities within the community.

Interim Director Nikki Harless gave an update on the Child Advocacy Center (CAC) meetings. The individuals involved have been meeting monthly on a regular basis. There was an issue between the hospitals (OhioHealth and Avita) working together, but they are both supposed to be at the next meeting. One part of the CAC model is to start regular Multi-Disciplinary Team (MDT) meetings. Multidisciplinary teams represent a variety of disciplines (entities within the community) that interact and coordinate their efforts to make a plan for children and families receiving child welfare services. The Prosecutor's Office and law enforcement entities have agreed to resume these meetings with RCCS, and the first one is scheduled to be held next week.

Siegenthaler asked about Beth Burns retiring, and specifically how the Agency honors retiring employees for their dedication. HR Manager Chris Zuercher stated that they receive a party and a gift of their choosing. Zuercher will compile a list of other RCCS employees who have retired since 2011 and add their names to a plaque for additional recognition.

Kulig asked about the article detailing how Ohio must begin paying kinship caregivers to care for children. Harless said that the state still needs to find a feasible way to do this, but they have assured us that the money will not come out of the funds that are already allocated to our Agency.

On a motion by Kulig, seconded by Siegenthaler, the Board unanimously accepted the Interim Director's report.

Executive Committee Report

Murray said that he will call Dr. Charles Shaw to see if he would like to serve on our Board. Jim Nicholson from Mid-Ohio Youth Mentoring was another candidate suggested for recommendation. Kulig also proposed Don Moroney if either of the other two are not interested. Harless will make sure that Shaw and Nicholson are contacted.

Nominating Committee Report

The Nominating Committee met and has a recommended slate of officers for 2020. The Chair will be Jim Kulig, the Vice Chair will be Pat Heydinger, the Treasurer will be Jason Murray, and the Secretary will be Deanna West-Torrence. This will be put to a vote at the December Board meeting.

Finance Director Report

October Finance Report

Goshe distributed and reported on the October 2019 Final Financial Report regarding the revenues and expenditures. This included a beginning balance of \$7,735,510.99, \$615,290.53 in revenue, and \$929,553.04 in expenses with an ending balance of \$7,421,248.48. The ending fund balance reflects 69.2% or 8.3 months of the 2019 budget.

Goshe commented on revenue. This is currently 12.1% higher than budgeted. Expenses are 6.1% lower than budgeted. Auditor Pat Dropsey told Goshe recently that Richland County is currently seeing the most growth in the commercial property tax category.

On a motion by Heydinger, seconded by Blakley, the Board unanimously accepted the October 2019 Final Financial Report.

Finance Committee Report

2020 Foster Care Rates

Murray explained that we normally increase these rates every other year, but the proposal for this year is to increase the rate by \$2.00 per day in order to eliminate the clothing allowance.

This allows the foster parent(s) to purchase clothing from whichever store they choose. The Agency will still provide an initial \$250 voucher for clothing when the child is first placed.

On a motion by Murray, seconded by Kulig, the Board unanimously approved the 2020 foster care rates as presented.

2020 Budget

Murray explained that we traditionally budget very conservatively, and the proposed budget for 2020 is no different. Murray briefly discussed some of the highlights of the 2020 budget. The pay scale had not been adjusted since 2015, so this was increased across the board. The pay ranges also used to run from 1-40 but pay ranges 1-15 all started lower than the lowest wage we currently pay. The Committee proposed eliminating pay ranges 1-15 and starting the ranges at pay range 16 (now to be called pay range 1). With 2020 contract obligations, we increased the Youth & Family Council line, the Family Life Counseling line, and the Domestic Violence Shelter line. We did not use services through Vorys Healthcare at all in 2019. The Core Team and the Board Finance Committee would also like to bring back tuition reimbursement as a recruitment and retention tool, so \$50,000 has been added to the budget for this. Zuercher said that the Board Personnel Committee is going to meet in December to discuss a new policy to cover tuition reimbursement (in addition to approving the 2020 Personnel Manual). Murray stated that the Finance Committee's recommendation is to approve the 2020 budget in its entirety.

On a motion Murray, seconded by Siegenthaler, the Board unanimously approved the 2020 budget in its entirety as presented.

Levy Committee Report

No report at this time.

Personnel Committee Report

No report at this time.

Services and Program Report

3rd Quarter PQI Report

Kulig stated that the Committee met on 10.29.19. Kulig gave kudos to Marsha Coleman for succinctly summarizing the full PQI report for Board consumption. One item discussed was the fact that there were 12 resignations in the 3rd Quarter, which seemed like a lot to the Committee members present. There are consequences associated with having open positions, such as employee burnout and retention issues. However, it was noted that none of the individuals who have resigned in the last year have left to go to another child welfare

agency; they have all left the field entirely. Another item discussed was the children who have aged out of foster care. Eight children have aged out of care so far in 2019, and a summary of their current status was included with the Board packet. The Open Table program and the Bridges program were discussed briefly. West-Torrence said that NECIC has been trying to find another individual to help with the Open Table program, but they will have to go through the mandatory 6-week training. RCCS Independent Living worker Dennis Rickett has completed the Referral Partner training. One main issue for these kids is housing. Lorain County is working on adding this demographic to metro housing.

On a motion by Kulig, seconded by Murray, the Board unanimously approved the 3rd Quarter PQI report.

West-Torrence stated that the Agency does not currently have a volunteer workforce, but that maybe Siegenthaler and/or Kowalski could fill a role here on a voluntary basis. There are numerous other individuals who may be willing to volunteer as well, including other former Board members. Harless said that we used to employ a Volunteer Coordinator here at the Agency to work with all of the volunteers and that she is open to revisiting that possibility in the future.

Murray left the meeting at this point (5:12 p.m.).

Search Committee Report

The Search Committee members present updated the full Board on the progress made thus far regarding the search for a new Executive Director. West-Torrence said that four candidates were interviewed, and the field was narrowed to two applicants (Nikki Harless and Cassandra Holtzman). HR Manager Chris Zuercher stated that a second interview for each of the two final candidates was scheduled for next Tuesday (11/19). The interviews will start at 4:00 p.m. The hope is that this later timeframe will allow more Board members to attend. West-Torrence thanked Zuercher for all of his work on this project.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

At 5:20 p.m, Chair West-Torrence recommended an Executive Session. On a motion by Heydinger, seconded by Siegenthaler, the Board voted unanimously to move into Executive Session by roll call vote in order to consider the employment, dismissal, and/or discipline of a public employee or official. At that time, each Board member responded as follows: Kulig, “yes”; Blakley, “yes”; Siegenthaler, “yes”; West-Torrence, “yes”; and Heydinger, “yes.” West-Torrence asked Harless, Coleman, Zuercher, Goshe and Hackedorn to stay.

On a motion by Blakley, seconded by Siegenthaler, the Board voted unanimously to return to open session at 5:40 p.m.

The Board is recommending that Interim Director Nikki Harless and/or HR Manager Chris Zuercher contact the Prosecutor’s Office on behalf of the Board and the Agency to find out how to proceed with a personnel matter.

BILLS

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

ADJOURNMENT

On a motion by Heydinger, seconded by Blakley, the Board moved to adjourn the meeting at 5:42 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted:

Deanna West-Torrence, RCCS Board Chair

Amy Hackedorn, Recording Secretary