

RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

Date of Meeting: April 13, 2020

Members Present: Chair Jim Kulig, Vice Chair Pat Heydinger, Secretary Deanna West-Torrence, Treasurer Jason Murray, Rick Grega, Nicole Blakley, Jim Nicholson, Renee Bessick
(via phone)*

Members Excused:

Members Absent:

Others Present: Nikki Harless, Chris Zuercher, Kevin Goshe, Recording Secretary Amy Hackedorn, Marsha Coleman (via phone)

Others Absent:

The regular monthly Board meeting was held on Monday, April 13, 2020, in the Board Conference Room at Richland County Children Services. Chair Kulig called the meeting to order at 3:45 p.m. (due to technological difficulties) of Board members present via phone and representing a quorum. *Please note that RCCS is following Federal and State guidance related to social distancing in light of the COVID-19 pandemic and conducted this meeting via teleconference as authorized by temporary changes to the Open Meeting law in Ohio.

“On March 27, Gov. Mike DeWine signed into law House Bill 197, allowing members of public bodies to hold and attend meetings, and to conduct hearings, by teleconference, video conference or any similar electronic technology. Such meetings are legal for as long as the governor’s coronavirus emergency remains in effect, up until Dec. 20, 2020.

The details:

- *Members attending the meeting through the body’s chosen electronic method count as present and count toward a quorum. They are permitted to vote on any issues that come before the body.*
- *Any resolution, rule or other formal action taken or adopted by the public body during such a session will have the same effect as one taken during an in-person meeting.*
- *The public body is required to give notice of the meeting to the media and other parties requiring notice at least 24 hours before it takes place. In an emergency situation, the public body must give notice as soon as practical.*
- *Members of the public must be provided access to the public body’s discussions and deliberations conducted via the electronic method to the same extent that they would get from attending in person. That includes the ability for the viewer/listener to hear every member participating in person or electronically. Examples of electronic methods that afford public access (and that are cited in the law) include live-streaming via the internet; local radio, television, cable or public access channels; and calling in to a teleconference.*
- *For a public hearing, the electronic method the public body uses for the meeting must be widely available to the public and must permit the public to converse with witnesses and receive documentary testimony and physical evidence.” - Ohio Attorney General’s website*

AGENDA

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

MINUTES

On a motion by Blakely, seconded by West-Torrence, the Board unanimously approved the March 31, 2020 regular Board meeting minutes.

On a motion by Bessick, seconded by Murray, the Board unanimously approved the April 6, 2020 emergency Board meeting minutes.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Executive Director's Report and Comments

Harless stated that we were planning on doing a lot more activities in April for Child Abuse Prevention Month, but unfortunately almost all of them were cancelled. Kulig commented favorably on the impact of the pinwheels that were placed in the courthouse lawn as a representation of the investigations conducted by RCCS in 2019.

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

Executive Committee Report

No report at this time.

Finance Director Report

March Finance Report

Goshe distributed and reported on the March 2020 Final Financial Report regarding the revenues and expenditures. This included a beginning balance of \$5,314,514.92, \$596,327.82 in revenue, and \$779,219.14 in expenses with an ending balance of \$5,131,623.60. The ending fund balance reflects 45.5% or 5.5 months of the 2020 budget.

Revenue for the year is up to \$1,261,601.76 which is about 12.2% less than budgeted. It is still early in the year, however. Expenditures are up to \$2,627,943.26. This is running about 1.7% lower than budgeted overall for operating expenditures. Goshe said that we just received our first tax payment of the year in April (the first since we passed our replacement levy in November of 2018). It is higher than last year, but we will still need to wait to see what will happen with property taxes when the August payment arrives.

West-Torrence asked if we have seen any changes with Agency finances in response to the COVID-19 situation. Goshe stated that we have allowed staff to work from home, so our mileage reimbursement expense will increase slightly. Since staff are working out of the building, they do not have their Surface Pros plugged into the Agency network. This may result in a cost increase to our Verizon data plan. Harless stated that we haven't had any issues with foster parents coping at this point. Reports of abuse/neglect have gone down slightly, but our reporting numbers are still higher than many other counties. This has gone down by an average of 50% across Ohio. We continue to see families in person when necessary, and visits are all still occurring in one form or another.

On a motion by Grega, seconded by Heydinger, the Board unanimously accepted the March 2020 Final Financial Report.

Agency Management COVID-19 Response Proposal

One of the new funding sources that we received as a result of the 2020-2021 State budget is the Children Services Best Practices fund. Governor DeWine made children services agencies a priority during his campaign, and so this fund was established in part to help assist PCSAs with the recruitment and retention of staff (workforce support) if necessary. We spoke with ODJFS (the Ohio Department of Job & Family Services) to find out if we can use money from the Best Practices fund to give RCCS staff lump sum payments, and they stated that this would be an appropriate use of the funds. The money must be used by 6/30/2020 or else returned to the state. This would allow us to draw down additional Federal dollars as well. Ninety-three staff would be eligible for a one-time payment of \$1,700. Management would like to have this distributed to employees via their first paycheck in the month of May. The recommendation of management is for the Board to approve the allocation for the benefit of RCCS staff in the language as follows:

Employees who are regular, full-time employees as of Wednesday, April 29, 2020, are eligible to receive a one-time service recognition supplement of \$1,700 to their pay effective via their first paycheck in the month of May, except for any employee who has (a) submitted his or her letter of resignation or other written notice of their intent to terminate employment, and/or (b) is on paid administrative leave pending the outcome of a disciplinary investigation.

On a motion by West-Torrence, seconded by Bessick, the Board unanimously approved the proposal as presented.

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 Grega, seconded by Bessick, the Board unanimously approved payment by signature of the Agency bills.

Executive Session

At 4:20 p.m, Chair Kulig recommended an Executive Session. On a motion by Grega, seconded by Blakley, the Board voted unanimously to move into Executive Session by roll call vote in order to consider the dismissal of a public employee or official. At that time, each Board member responded as follows: Kulig, “yes”; Blakley, “yes”; Nicholson, “yes”; Murray, “yes”; West-Torrence, “yes”; Bessick, “yes”; Grega, “yes”; and Heydinger, “yes.” Kulig asked Harless, Coleman, Zuercher, Goshe and Hackedorn to stay.

On a motion by West-Torrence, seconded by Grega, the Board voted unanimously to return to open session at 4:37 p.m. There were no members of the public waiting to rejoin the meeting via teleconference.

ADJOURNMENT

On a motion by Grega, seconded by Bessick, the Board moved to adjourn the meeting at 4:38 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted:

Jim Kulig, RCCS Board Chair
Amy Hackedorn, Recording Secretary