

## **RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS**

Date of Meeting: September 9, 2019

Members Present: Chair Deanna West-Torrence, Vice Chair Renee Bessick (4:21 p.m.), Secretary Dr. Michelle Kowalski, Jim Kulig, Pat Heydinger, Nicole Blakley, Pam Siegenthaler, Rick Grega (3:34 p.m.)

Members Excused: Treasurer Jason Murray

Members Absent:

Others Present: Nikki Harless, Chris Zuercher, Kevin Goshe, Marsha Coleman, Recording Secretary Amy Gosser, Casey Neff

Others Absent:

The regular monthly Board meeting was held on Monday, September 9, 2019, in the Board Conference Room at Richland County Children Services. Chair West-Torrence called the meeting to order at 3:30 p.m. of Board members present and representing a quorum.

### **AGENDA**

West-Torrence stated that she will need to add an Executive Session to the agenda at the end of the meeting prior to adjournment.

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

### **NEW HIRE INTRODUCTIONS**

HR Manager Chris Zuercher introduced the newest Agency employee. Casey Neff joined the Agency on Thursday (9.5.19) as a Family Support Specialist. Neff was in Ashland twice on her first day, so she has really hit the ground running. She graduated from Crestline High School. The Board members present introduced themselves and welcomed Neff to the Agency. Neff left the meeting at this point (3:35 p.m.).

### **MINUTES**

Siegenthaler was not at the August Board meeting, and so she asked for further clarification regarding the meeting between Interim Director Nikki Harless and Commissioner Marilyn John. Harless informed Siegenthaler that the meeting went very well, and that the Commissioner was very thankful for the information that was provided. Siegenthaler also inquired about the electronic equipment that was approved for disposal at the August Board

meeting. Goshe stated that approval from the Commissioner's office was just received last week for the Agency to sell the electronic equipment as well as the older fleet vehicles, and so nothing has been listed for sale yet.

On a motion by Heydinger, seconded by Kowalski, the Board unanimously approved the August 12, 2019 Board meeting minutes.

## **MINI-TRAINING**

### **Oral Drug Testing Synopsis**

Executive Assistant Amy Gosser provided the Board with a brief synopsis of some of the oral drug testing trends that RCCS encountered between January and June of 2019, in addition to a breakdown of the drugs included in the Agency's current test panel. The use of medically-assisted treatment options (such as Suboxone and Subutex) has increased steadily over the last four years, which corresponds with a decline in the number of heroin-positive tests. Meth usage has increased significantly, both locally and throughout Ohio. There were ten children aged 4 and younger who tested positive for at least one illegal drug between mid-April 2019 and mid-August 2019. There was some discussion of the reasons for children testing positive, as well as the Agency's response in these instances. Gosser will provide an updated list at the October Board meeting showing the status of each of these cases. The Agency is on track to spend \$44,000 in 2019 for oral drug test kits. This money is not reimbursable and so must be taken from local levy funds.

## **INTERIM DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

### **Interim Director's Report and Comments**

Kulig asked about the shortage of caseworkers and the impact of the seven open positions on Agency staff. Several of the items mentioned were higher caseloads (and thus more stress), a greater risk for burnout, and a higher probability of turnover. Every county in Ohio is currently experiencing problems with caseworker recruitment and retention; the local JFS is short four caseworkers as well. Some areas are considering hiring individuals who do not have a degree or a human services-related degree. These individuals can legally be hired as caseworkers as long as they obtain a bachelor's degree in a related field within five years of Agency employment. The lack of an Agency tuition reimbursement program, though, could cause those individuals to leave after the five years have passed. Kowalski will set up a date and time for Chris Zuercher to come talk to students at OSU-Mansfield. We may need to increase wages, but we also need to find other ways to address employee burnout. Most of the employees who have resigned recently have left the child welfare field altogether. Zuercher will be at the Bellville Street Fair every day this week for recruitment purposes. Grega asked if the Agency could hire intermittent or part-time caseworkers. That is one of the options that management has been considering.

Siegenthaler asked about the 24 children in out-of-network foster care. This is typical of the number of children in this category. Kulig stated that one of the goals of the S&P

Committee is to ‘get our kids home.’ Harless passed out a list of the ages and locations of the 22 kids in Agency custody who are currently placed in foster homes, kin homes, or residential facilities outside of Richland county. The total cost per day for these out-of-county children is \$2,305.10.

On a motion by Kowalski, seconded by Siegenthaler, the Board unanimously accepted the Interim Director’s report. Grega left the meeting at this point (4:37 p.m.).

### **Executive Committee Report**

No report at this time.

### **Finance Director Report**

#### **August Finance Report**

Goshe distributed and reported on the August 2019 Final Financial Report regarding the revenues and expenditures. This included a beginning balance of \$6,346,338.66, \$2,177,871.44 in revenue, and \$956,645.68 in expenses with an ending balance of \$7,567,564.42. The ending fund balance reflects 70.6% or 8.5 months of the 2019 budget.

Goshe commented on the fact that we are currently 12.0% higher than budgeted for revenue. The ProtectOH payment was postponed last month (July) due to delayed passage of the state budget. That payment was distributed in August. We received a tax payment for local real estate taxes. Expenses are slightly higher than normal in this report because August was a three-pay month, but this category is still 3.9% lower than budgeted for the year.

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

### **Finance Committee Report**

No update at this time.

### **Levy Committee Report**

No report at this time.

### **Personnel Committee Report**

No report at this time.

## **Services and Program Report**

### **2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter PQI Report**

Kulig said that there were two main topics of discussion at the last S&P Committee meeting. One was the Committee's normal review of the PQI report. However, the Committee also met with the RCCS Foster Care team to discuss their concerns and their needs related to foster parent recruitment and retention. The RCCS Foster Care team will be giving a presentation to the full Board at an upcoming meeting regarding their efforts in this area.

Kulig wanted to personally thank Nicole Foulks, Jeraca Barnett, Sarah Owen, Heather Higgins, Amy Shenberger, Brigitte Coles, and Evadyne Troyer for their dedication to the Agency and to the children and families of Richland County. Kulig stated that they are all terrific people and he will leave it to them to encapsulate the foster parent recruitment and retention discussion at an upcoming Board meeting. There may be opportunities where Board members can help them connect with others in the community for their recruitment efforts.

The PQI report itself was fairly standard for the 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter, so there are no takeaways from that portion of the Committee discussion.

On a motion by Kulig, seconded by Kowalski, the Board unanimously approved the 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter PQI Report.

### **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 stated that there will be a brief Executive Session following the meeting today. They received 14 applications during the month of August and they will need the Board to take some action to formally close the application process. Zuercher posted the job internally, on the RCCS website, on the RCCS Facebook page, on the PCSAO website, on the Indeed website, and on the Ohio Means Jobs website. Zuercher does not believe that there was any question in the community about this position being available. The Committee is recommending two focus groups: one with local schools and one with other area directors. Tom Brennan will be facilitating those discussions, which will potentially be held in October and November. The goal of the Search Committee is to notify the selected individual at the end of November/beginning of December for a January start date.

On a motion by Kulig, seconded by Blakley, the Board moved to officially end the application period for the Executive Director position effective today.

## **BILLS**

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

## **EXECUTIVE SESSION**

At 4:54 p.m, Chair West-Torrence recommended an Executive Session. On a motion by Siegenthaler, seconded by Heydinger, the Board voted unanimously to move into Executive Session by roll call vote in order to consider the appointment, employment, promotion, and/or compensation of a public employee or official. At that time, each Board member responded as follows: Bessick, “yes”; Kulig, “yes”; Blakley, “yes”; Siegenthaler, “yes”; West-Torrence, “yes”; Heydinger, “yes”; and Kowalski, “yes.” The Board asked Zuercher to stay.

On a motion by Siegenthaler, seconded by Blakley, the Board voted unanimously to return to open session at 5:17 p.m. No action was taken as a result of the Executive Session.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

On a motion by Bessick, seconded by Heydinger, the Board moved to adjourn the meeting at 5:18 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted:

Deanna West-Torrence, RCCS Board Chair

Amy Gosser, Recording Secretary