

## RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

Date of Meeting: May 9, 2022

Members Present: Chair Pat Heydinger, Vice Chair Nicole Blakley, Secretary Jim Nicholson, Renee Bessick, Mary Stentz, Scott Gatchall, Bennie Allen-Stanford, Bill Hope

Members Excused: Treasurer Jason Murray

Members Absent:

Others Present: Nikki Harless, Nicole Foulks, Kevin Goshe, Sarah Soliday, Marsha Coleman, Mark Keck, Jennifer Hissom, Recording Secretary Amy Hackedorn

The regular monthly Board meeting was held on Monday, May 9, 2022, in the Board Room at Richland County Children Services. Chair Heydinger called the meeting to order at 3:30 p.m. of Board members present and representing a quorum.

### AGENDA

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

### MINUTES

On a motion by Blakley, seconded by Nicholson, the Board unanimously approved the April 11, 2022, regular Board meeting minutes.

#### **Mini-Training**

RCCS Executive Director Nikki Harless introduced Mark Keck and Jen Hissom. Keck is the Agency's Permanency & Placement Supervisor, and Hissom is one of the Agency's two Adoption Assessors. Keck stated that they were there to discuss safe haven laws and permanent surrender. Safe haven is essentially the allowance to leave a child with a first responding facility (police, EMS, hospital, etc.). There are some stipulations involved in order for the parent(s) to avoid prosecution. The child cannot have tested positive for any illicit drugs at birth, and they cannot be left anywhere other than at a first responding facility (i.e., at a church). This is for children 30 days old or younger. Children 31 days old or older who are given up are consider permanent surrender and the parent does not qualify for safe haven exemption. If all of these criteria are met, the PCSA screens the case in as a FINS deserted child. We cannot know the name(s) of the parents or any other identifying information about the family. This is normally a rare occurrence, but we have had two here in Richland County in the past year. The worker does not need to do a family assessment, and this (in

theory) should be able to instantly become an adoption case. In the most recent case, however, we are waiting on the judgement entry from the court. As soon as we receive the judgement entry, we will begin working this as an ongoing adoption case. Hissom distributed brochures to the Board members regarding Safe Haven laws in Ohio. The first priority is to make sure the child is medically assessed, and then evaluated by an early intervention specialist. Both of the safe haven children we have received in the past year were immediately placed in identified foster-to-adopt homes. Hissom would then meet with the foster-to-adopt family to make sure they have everything they need to properly care for the child; after six months have passed, the family can officially make the decision to adopt or not. Heydinger asked if we have families who specifically want these children. Keck and Hissom said that we have quite a few homes that are just foster-to-adopt. For safe haven children, we have to check with several different places to make sure that the child wasn't abducted and/or that there aren't parents who have been looking for the baby. There is a putative father registry where they can register their name if they believe they have impregnated a woman who might try to give up the child. *Keck and Hissom left the meeting at 3:57 p.m.*

## **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

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

Harless updated the Board on the progress of the statewide Race, Equity & Inclusion Community of Practice committee. The RCCS Core Team recently completed a survey about race and equity here at the agency, and this will be compiled into a state report. Harless will share more information with the Board once it becomes available. Commissioner Darrell Banks met with Harless to discuss Sherry Bouquet and her work in local churches (such as Mosaic, Berean Baptist, and Crossroads) to recruit foster parents. Hope asked about the Prosecutor's office and our drug-positive child cases. Harless stated that we have not had many drug-positive children lately, so we have not had to refer any additional clients for potential charges.

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

### **Executive Committee Report**

No report at this time.

### **Finance Director Report**

#### **April Finance Report**

Goshe distributed and reported on the April 2022 Final Financial Report regarding the revenues and expenditures. This included a beginning balance of \$7,437,393.64, \$3,012,939.84 in revenue, and \$909,195.60 in expenses with an ending balance of \$9,541,137.88. The ending fund balance reflects 78.3% or about 9.4 months of the 2022 budget.

Goshe passed out a new cover sheet for the final April report. We are now 7.6% higher than budgeted with respect to revenue. This is primarily due to the fact that we received \$2,101,316.64 in April from our first real estate tax settlement of 2022 and \$404,183.69 from our first Public Utilities

Property tax payment. Goshe explained Title IV-E reimbursement. This is part of the Social Security Act. When we receive custody of a child, we have 60 days to determine whether or not a child is eligible. If a child is determined to be IV-E eligible and in a licensed foster care setting, their placement costs are reimbursable at around 67%. Expenses at the end of April were 5.1% lower than budgeted. Heydinger asked about the Rover Pipeline company. Hope stated that this is still under appeal due to reappraisal.

On a motion by Nicholson, seconded by Blakley, the Board unanimously approved the April 2022 Final Financial Report.

## **Finance Committee Report**

### **2022 Pay Scale Revisions**

Goshe stated that the revised recommendation was to consolidate all of the RCCS caseworker classifications into one pay range and widen the range so that all caseworkers can be paid out of the same line. This effects 37 positions here at the Agency. Gatchall informed the Board that pay compression issues for other staff members will be dealt with during the normal budget conversations at the end of 2022. Harless received informal approval from Commissioner Tony Vero today for this streamlined recommendation.

On a motion by Gatchall, seconded by Hope, the Board unanimously approved the recommendation of the Board Finance Committee.

*Board member Renee Bessick arrived at this point (4:15 p.m.) and Blakley left.*

### **Performance Incentives**

The new proposal is that each caseworker could earn up to \$300.00 and eight (8) hours of additional personal leave every quarter by meeting three specific departmental goals (\$100 for each goal reached, and 8 hours of additional personal leave if they meet all three). This would be retroactive back to January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2022, so that workers who met goals in the first quarter can be rewarded. The financial impact to the Agency for the first quarter of 2022 would be \$2,300.

On a motion by Gatchall, seconded by Hope, the Board unanimously approved the recommendation of the Board Finance Committee.

### **Referral/Hiring Bonus**

The new proposal is \$500 for the referring employee and \$1,000 for the new hire. Half of each amount (\$250 and \$500 respectively) would be paid out once the new hire had been retained for 6 months, and the other half of each amount would be paid out once the new hire successfully reaches the end of their probationary period of employment (1 year) here at the Agency. This proposal is only for referrals of hired casework applicants.

On a motion by Gatchall, seconded by Hope, the Board unanimously approved the recommendation of the Board Finance Committee.

### **Levy Committee Report**

No report at this time.

### **Personnel Committee Report**

No report at this time. HR Manager Sarah Soliday will email this committee tomorrow in order to set up a meeting date and time.

### **Services and Program Report**

No report at this time.

### **BILLS**

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

Hope requested that the mini training at the June Board meeting center around the foster care process. Harless stated that this will be split into two trainings: one pertaining to foster care itself and one discussing emancipated youth and the services available to them after aging out of care.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

On a motion by Nicholson, seconded by Bessick, the Board moved to adjourn the meeting at 4:31 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted:

Pat Heydinger, RCCS Board Chair  
Amy Hackedorn, Recording Secretary