

RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

Date of Meeting: January 13, 2020

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

Members Excused: Don Moroney

Members Absent:

Others Present: Nikki Harless, Chris Zuercher, Kevin Goshe, Marsha Coleman, Recording Secretary Amy Hackedorn, Elizabeth Swiger, Mark Keck, Dennis Rickett

Others Absent:

The regular monthly Board meeting was held on Monday, January 13, 2020, in the Board Conference Room at Richland County Children Services. Chair Kulig called the meeting to order at 3:30 p.m. of Board members present and representing a quorum.

Kulig stated that it is an honor for him to be Board Chair this year. His hope is that he will be able to perform all of his duties in the same clear and diplomatic manner that Deanna West-Torrence did for the last two years.

NEW HIRE INTRODUCTIONS

HR Manager Chris Zuercher introduced the latest Agency new hire. Elizabeth Swiger (BCJ) started at the Agency on 1.9.2020 as a caseworker on Jeanetta Elia's Intake team. Swiger just graduated from Grace College in Indiana with a dual major in Counseling and Criminal Justice. She completed her school internship at a local domestic violence shelter.

Kulig introduced one of the new Board members, Jim Nicholson. Nicholson informed everyone that he is the Director of Mid-Ohio Youth Mentoring, so he has a passion for helping kids. Blakley arrived at this point in the meeting (3:35 p.m.).

All of the individuals present introduced themselves to Swiger and Nicholson. Bessick arrived at this point in the meeting (3:39 p.m.).

AGENDA

Kulig stated that there is need to revise the agenda for today's meeting. An announcement and motion will be made regarding the Executive Director search immediately following approval of the agenda.

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

Executive Director Search

Kulig stated that all of the issues brought to the Board's attention over the past few months have been resolved. After an extensive search, they are pleased to offer current Interim Director Nikki Harless a 3-year contract as the Executive Director of Richland County Children Services, effective upon the signing of the contract.

On a motion by West-Torrence, seconded by Blakley, the Board unanimously approved extending a formal offer of employment to Nikki Harless for the position of Richland County Children Services Executive Director.

West-Torrence thanked the Board Search Committee members and RCCS HR Manager Chris Zuercher for all of their hard work during the search. West-Torrence also expressed appreciation to Harless for her perseverance and dedication to the Agency throughout this process, and Murray thanked West-Torrence for her leadership during this time. Kulig thanked Tim Harless for his many years of dedication and service to the Agency and for the sacrifice that he made through his recent resignation. Murray left the meeting at this point (3:49 p.m.).

MINUTES

On a motion by Heydinger, seconded by Blakley, the Board unanimously approved the December 9, 2019 regular Board meeting minutes.

MINI-TRAINING

Independent Living

RCCS caseworker Dennis Rickett gave a presentation on the Independent Living services offered by the Agency. Rickett stated that he has an average of 30-35 youth at any one time who are receiving Independent Living services. These are children aged 14 and older who are either in Agency custody or who have been involved with the Agency. Rickett would like to start offering one class every month to these youth on life-skills topics (i.e. finishing school, finding a job, budgeting money, obtaining housing, making their own medical appointments, developing a support system, obtaining transportation, finding legal activities to do during their leisure time, etc.). He would keep rotating the class schedule and invite guest speakers as applicable. Rickett currently tries to help kids learn how to advocate for themselves in a positive manner. He helps them find apartments and works with landlords on their behalf. His main focus is on employment, and he tries to help these kids obtain a job so that they can learn how to support themselves. He also helps them obtain a state ID when necessary, and he tries to get kids into Bridges whenever they qualify. The Bridge program requires monthly visits with the youth, but they also have a lot of financial backing. Kids often cut ties with children services as soon as possible, so it can be difficult for Rickett

to keep in touch with these youth. The Open Table project is getting ready to begin, and this will help provide a support system for involved youth to guide them with various life decisions. Permanency Supervisor Mark Keck explained that the kids who go into Bridges have stricter guidelines to follow (they must be working and/or pursuing education). Emancipated youth do not have those same restrictions. Harless recently entered into an agreement with Metro to obtain housing vouchers for these kids. Many other residential entities who we work with (Safe House, Keeping Kids Safe, etc.) offer Independent Living services as well. Rickett celebrates successes when he can, and sometimes kids who want nothing to do with him initially will text him out of the blue several months later for support. Kulig asked Keck and Rickett to come back to the Board at a later date with some ideas for things that would make their jobs easier. Keck and Rickett agreed to do so.

Keck, Rickett, and Swiger left the meeting at this point (4:18 p.m.).

INTERIM DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Interim Director's Report and Comments

Harless reported on Ocie Hill. This took some time, but we are almost ready to start scheduling visits in these rooms. Harless will ask Records/Support Manager Angie Poth to discuss this further at an upcoming Board meeting.

Kulig commented on the fact that Harless acknowledged Blakley's interview with the press in her Board report. Blakley stated that she has had seven individuals reach out to her already, and four of the seven seemed very interested in becoming foster/adopt parents.

West-Torrence said that the upcoming MLK CommUNITY breakfast event came out of the new superintendent's desire to support the community. There will be several presentations and proclamations made throughout the day. Tickets are still available online or at the Raemelton School central office.

Heydinger commented on the number of contributions made to families over the holidays. There is a need for donations year-round, however. Blakley would like to meet with Harless and Julie Kleshinski next year before Christmas regarding this matter.

Kulig noted that the Agency has been on a steady downward trend over the last five years with the number of investigations. Time will tell if this trend will continue.

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

Telecommuting Policy Changes

This is currently in the Agency Personnel Manual. The goal is to change this so that it is only applicable to non-exempt employees covered under the Fair Labor Standards Act. Zuercher stated that these are individuals who qualify for overtime and comp time (unlike exempt employees, who do not).

On a motion by Heydinger, seconded by Blakley, the Board unanimously accepted the changes to the Telecommuting policy.

Executive Committee Report

Kulig stated that the list of 2020 Board committees will be finalized once the conflict of interest with Don Moroney is resolved.

Finance Director Report

December Finance Report

Goshe distributed and reported on the December 2019 Final Financial Report regarding the revenues and expenditures. This included a beginning balance of \$6,870,104.49, \$465,603.52 in revenue, and \$837,742.91 in expenses with an ending balance of \$6,497,965.10. The ending fund balance reflects 60.6% or 7.3 months of the 2019 budget.

We received 7.0% more than budgeted for the year in 2019. Total operating expenditures for the year were 5.6% less than budgeted. The fund balance decreased for the year by \$654,988.89. Capital expenditures (which are outside of the operating budget) totaled \$566,199.79 for the year. Overall, Goshe was pleased with the outcome of the finances for the year considering that we had budgeted very conservatively.

On a motion by West-Torrence, seconded by Bessick, the Board unanimously accepted the December 2019 Final Financial Report.

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 West-Torrence, seconded by Bessick, the Board unanimously approved payment by signature of the Agency bills.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

At 4:50 p.m, Chair Kulig recommended an Executive Session. On a motion by West-Torrence, seconded by Blakley, the Board voted unanimously to move into Executive Session by roll call vote in order to consider the employment, dismissal, or discipline of a public employee or official. At that time, each Board member responded as follows: Kulig, "yes"; Blakley, "yes"; Nicholson, "yes"; West-Torrence, "yes"; Bessick, "yes"; and Heydinger, "yes." Kulig asked Harless, Coleman, Zuercher, Goshe and Hackedorn to stay.

On a motion by Bessick, seconded by West-Torrence, the Board voted unanimously to return to open session at 5:11 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

On a motion by West-Torrence, seconded by Blakley, the Board moved to adjourn the meeting at 5:12 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted:

Jim Kulig, RCCS Board Chair

Amy Hackedorn, Recording Secretary