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**MINUTES OF LUCAS COUNTY CHILDREN SERVICES BOARD**  
**Regular Meeting Held May 17, 2023**

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The regular meeting of the Lucas County Children Services Board was held at 705 Adams Street, 3:00 P.M. in person and via Zoom.

Members Present: Ms. Arnold, Dr. Cowell, Ms. Easterly, Ms. McCollough, Mr. Ridi, Mr. Schinharl, and Ms. Vasquez
Member(s) Absent:, Ms. Gagnon (Zoom), Rev. Dr. Perryman (Zoom), and Mr. Walrod

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Ms. Vasquez called the May 17, 2023, regular meeting of the LCCS Board to order. Roll Call was taken. A quorum was present.

**INTRODUCTION OF NEW EMPLOYEES**

- Connie White – Client Rights Coordinator

**APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA AND APRIL 2023 LCCS BOARD MEETING MINUTES**

Ms. Vasquez asked if there were any items to be removed from the Consent Agenda. The finance committee minutes were pulled from the consent agenda.

Ms. Vasquez read the Consent Agenda into the minutes:

**CONSENT AGENDA**

- Minutes from 04/19/2022 LCCS Board of Trustees Meeting
- Services and Programs Committee Meeting Minutes (5/3/2023)

Ms. Vasquez asked for a motion to approve the Consent Agenda. Mr. Schinharl made a motion for approval. Ms. McCollough seconded. Ms. Vasquez asked those in favor of the motion to signify by stating aye, those opposed nay. Motion unanimously carried.

**OLD BUSINESS**

**Building Update:** Donna Seed gave a building update on the summit street address. A 20-year bond may not be possible; it will likely be a 10-year one. Fiscal will cost that out, and let us know the difference. LCCS would be paying more upfront because of the buildout; it will be less long-term. They estimated 5.5 million dollar savings in interest costs. Once LCCS obtains that sublease agreement, those figures will be in writing for the board to see. Other issues that LCCS would like to focus on would be; security cameras, swipe card access, parking spots available under the building for our drivers, and ProMedica filing for tax-exempt status. LCCS will have these updates soon. The sublease is supposed to be completed the first week of June at minimum.

**NEW BUSINESS**

Ms. Vasquez read a proclamation for Billie Johnson's retirement.

# Proclamation

**WHEREAS,** Billie Johnson was among the founding members of the Area Office on Aging of Northwestern Ohio, Inc. and has been its first and only executive director since 1974; and

**WHEREAS,** Billie Johnson has built a 49-year career in public service as a leader and champion of elder, women's, and family issues while at the helm of the Area Office on Aging of Northwestern Ohio, Inc.; and

**WHEREAS,** Under Billie Johnson's leadership, Lucas County became one of the early pioneers of a Kinship Navigator program in Ohio after the state legislature established the program in 1999; and

**WHEREAS,** Since the Kinship Navigator program's launch, under Billie Johnson's stewardship, that program has grown over 25 years to become a vital community partner to Lucas County Children Services; and

**WHEREAS,** LCCS Interim Executive Director Donna Seed summed up Billie Johnson's important role in that relationship this way: "Her contribution to the children and families LCCS serves is beyond measure. Her leadership of the Kinship Navigator program has helped this agency, in 2022, to place more than half of the children on open cases with kin, and particularly, with grandparents;" and

**WHEREAS,** Her pioneering work as President/CEO of the Area Office on Aging of Northwestern Ohio has led to numerous awards and accolades, including induction into the Ohio Women's Hall of Fame in 2008, a 2017 YWCA Milestones for Women Award, a Touchstone Award for Lifetime Achievement in 2021, among many others; and

**WHEREAS,** Through her leadership as a vital and important community partner, Billie Johnson exemplifies and promotes the LCCS mission of leading the community in the protection of children and strengthening of families;

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED,**  
That the Board of Trustees of Lucas County Children Services congratulates and extends our best wishes to Billie Johnson on her retirement after such a successful and commendable career as a public servant to Toledo, Lucas County, and all of Northwest Ohio.

Ms. Vasquez asked for a motion to approve the proclamation. Dr. Cowell made the motion for approval. Ms. Arnold seconded. Ms. Vasquez asked those in favor of the motion to signify by stating aye, those opposed nay. Motion unanimously carried.

**CHAIR'S REPORT**

Ms. Vasquez thanked Dr. Cowell for chairing last month's meeting in her absence. Ms. Vasquez congratulated everyone on the Child Memorial Event last week. There were many positive remarks on how well the staff made this a wonderful, although sad, event.

There is an upcoming fundraiser for ALS on August 24th at Hensville. If you can make it to this event, that would be wonderful. Mr.Schinharl will get more information to everyone regarding this event.

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

**Interim Executive Director Report—Donna Seed  
LCCS Child Placement Statistics**

|                          | Current Month | Previous Month |
|--------------------------|---------------|----------------|
| Agency Foster Homes      | 301           | 304            |
| Subsidized Adoptions     | 1,185         | 1,182          |
| Purchased Boarding Homes | 165           | 178            |
| Institutions/Group Homes | 26            | 29             |
| Relative Placement       | 427           | 417            |

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR ACTIVITIES**

Human Services/Child Welfare organizations across the country have begun to refocus and re-align their strategic planning initiatives to reflect a strong movement towards community engagement, creating a workforce culture of safety, well-being, and belonging, and addressing the profound reckoning needed

within the system to acknowledge the previous harm that has been done to children and families and the contributing role the system plays within systemic racism and other inequities. The management team here at LCCS feels these values need to be reflected through our planning, partnerships, and service initiatives. This can be accomplished by expanding collaborations with persons with lived experiences, developing partnerships with community agencies, and engaging staff for their insights in envisioning these strategies moving from concepts to operational realities. We have been developing or expanding collaborations with Mercy/Nationwide, Lucas County Metroparks, and possible expansion into the Iowa Project, a state-administered program involving the engagement of persons with lived experiences. Throughout these initiatives, child welfare must continue to see through a clear equity lens. Planning and development of strategy, program, and service should ensure that the overall impact on all families and children is in the highest regard.

Placement costs have shown a month-to-month influx based on the needs of presenting children, the number of resources available to be engaged, and placement availability. LCCS has successfully recruited some new foster homes; however, the new homes must be able to handle placements in the early months of fostering, and there has been an increase in home closures for existing homes. This has created fewer available homes within the placement network. We have engaged strategies of developing new resources for placements outside of Lucas County, both foster and group home level of care. We also have found that many congregate care facilities have requested increased service contracts after a state-approved Title IV-E ceiling rate increase. This is one factor impacting increased placement costs. The Placement Department has been reaching out to other county agencies to begin troubleshooting efforts to curtail costs, share strategies being utilized to address budget increases, and consider existing options for children presenting with significant behavioral health and delinquency issues.

LCCS and Friends of Lucas County Children Services have been reaching out to funders involved with the playground project to inform them of the current status of the playground and to request their support in locating another public venue that this inclusive playground could serve. We have been meeting with the Glass City Metroparks and are in early discussion about possibly relocating the playground into that space.

**DONATIONS/PARTNERSHIPS**

Unity Church held its second baby shower of the spring April 30 to benefit the littlest ones served by LCCS. The congregation donated a carload of diapers, wipes, Pullups, and infant items.

The LCCS Family Visits team received from Stephen Guillette and Jupmode a donated case of T-shirts to be used in a special Father's Day project by the children LCCS serves.

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**IN THE MEDIA**

|                                                                      |                                                                                               |           |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| WTVG, 13abc.com                                                      | Child Memorial Preview                                                                        | 4-24-2023 |
| WTVG, 13abc.com                                                      | Child Memorial Interviews<br>(Donna Seed, Charles Williams,<br>Jason Wegman)                  | 4-27-2023 |
| WTVG, 13abc.com<br>WTOL, wtol.com<br><i>Toledo Blade</i> , blade.com | Child Memorial                                                                                | 4-27-2023 |
| WTVG, 13abc.com                                                      | Interview segment about Love &<br>Luggage, emancipating youth<br>(Keith Robinson, Sarah Otis) | 5-5-2023  |

Proclaim-FM

Foster Care Month interviews  
(Shelby Cully, Sherry Dunn)

5-8-2023

**ADJOURNMENT**

Motion to adjourn by Dr. Cowell

Seconded by Ms. Easterly

Meeting is adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathy Vasquez  
Board Chair