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**MINUTES OF LUCAS COUNTY CHILDREN SERVICES BOARD**  
**Regular Meeting Held January 17, 2024**

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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: Dr. Cowell, Ms. Easterly, Ms. McCollough, Mr. Meyer, Mr. Ridi, and Ms. Vasquez

Member(s) Absent: Ms. Arnold, Ms. Gagnon, Rev. Dr. Perryman (Zoom) Mr. Schinharl, and Mr. Walrod

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Ms. Vasquez called the January 17, 2024, regular meeting of the LCCS Board to order. Roll Call was taken. A quorum was present.

**INTRODUCTION OF NEW EMPLOYEES**

- Welcome New Board Member, Timothy Meyer (Appointment commencing January 1, 2024, and expiring December 31, 2027)

**APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA AND DECEMBER LCCS BOARD MEETING MINUTES**

Ms. Vasquez asked if any items were to be removed from the Consent Agenda. None were removed.

Ms. Vasquez read the Consent Agenda into the minutes:

**CONSENT AGENDA**

- Minutes from December 12, 2023, LCCS Board of Trustees Meeting
- Finance Committee Meeting Minutes and additional finance documents attached (1/9/24)

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

**OLD BUSINESS**

**LCCS 2019-2023 Strategic Plan Final Report**

The Strategic Plan was presented before the board via PowerPoint by the Directors of LCCS. LCCS requested to keep the Strategic Plan that was presented for the next two years as it is a working plan. This PowerPoint will be attached to the minutes.

Ms. Vasquez asked for a motion to approve the two-year extension of the Strategic Plan. Ms. McCollough made a motion for approval. Ms. Easterly seconded. Ms. Vasquez asked those in favor of the motion to signify by stating aye, and those opposed, nay. The motion unanimously carried.

**Building Update:**

Shelby Cully gave a brief update on the Summit Street building. The new address will be 301 Adams Street, Toledo, OH 43604. The first floor has been demolished and walls are going up. There has been carpet laid and some painting already done. There has been good progress so far. The move date remains projected for the end of May/first week of June. LCCS is still on budget for the renovations. Shelby Cully

and Kelly Dinkens has asked the staff to begin cleaning out their workstations with all unnecessary paperwork and shredding what is appropriate. LCCS would like to only move what is necessary to the new building.

**NEW BUSINESS**

**Nominating Committee**

On behalf of the Nominating Committee (Dan Ridi, Kathy Vasquez, and Johnetta McCollough) Ms. McCollough respectfully submits the following slate of officers for the fiscal year of 2024:

- Chairman: Suzette Cowell
- Vice Chairman: Johnetta McCollough
- Secretary: Althea Easterly
- Treasurer: Rev. Dr. Donald Perryman

Ms. McCollough asked if there were any nominations from the floor? Hearing none, Ms. McCollough moved that the nominations be closed. Ms. Cowell seconded this motion. Ms. Vasquez made a motion to accept the slate of officers with Mr. Ridi seconded. Ms. McCollough asked those in favor of the motion to signify by stating aye, and those opposed, nay. The motion unanimously carried.

**Resolution 01-24 Donation Account**

**Resolution** 01-24

**Date** January 2024

**Subject** 2023 Donations

**Whereas,** Lucas County Children Services received non-cash donations in 2023, and

**Whereas,** Lucas County Children Services received \$13,166.30 in cash donations in 2023, now be it therefore

**Resolved,** that the Executive Director be authorized to accept said donations on behalf of the Lucas County Children Services Board

| DATE                        | RECEIVED FROM                              | DESCRIPTION                 | AMOUNT              |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------|
| 01/10/23                    | Key Bank                                   | Walter Brown Trust          | \$ 2,776.16         |
| 01/10/23                    | Delta Sigma Theta Inc                      | Joy of Giving               | \$ 422.17           |
| 03/31/23                    | Key Bank                                   | Walter Brown Trust          | \$ 2,401.99         |
| 04/21/23                    | The Toledo Club                            | Wear Blue Campaign          | \$ 120.00           |
| 04/21/23                    | Glass City Federal Credit Union            | Wear Blue Campaign          | \$ 120.00           |
| 05/02/23                    | Anonymous                                  | In memory of Bernadine Dick | \$ 25.00            |
| 06/29/23                    | Key Bank                                   | Walter Brown Trust          | \$ 2,400.99         |
| 10/05/23                    | International Union of Operating Engineers | Holiday drive               | \$ 2,500.00         |
| 10/05/23                    | Key Bank                                   | Walter Brown Trust          | \$ 2,400.99         |
| <b>TOTAL 2023 DONATIONS</b> |                                            |                             | <b>\$ 13,167.30</b> |

Resolution 01-24 regarding the donation account was brought before the board. Ms. Vasquez made a motion for the Executive Director to be authorized to accept said donations on behalf of the Lucas County Children Services Board. Dr. Cowell seconded this motion. Those in favor of the motion were asked to signify by stating aye, and those opposed, nay. The motion unanimously carried.

**CHAIR'S REPORT**

No report given.

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

**Executive Director Report—Randy Muth**

**LCCS CHILD PLACEMENT STATISTICS:**

|                          | Current Month | Previous Month |
|--------------------------|---------------|----------------|
| Agency Foster Homes      | 292           | 297            |
| Subsidized Adoptions     | 1,140         | 1,143          |
| Purchased Boarding Homes | 196           | 189            |
| Institutions/Group Homes | 23            | 25             |
| Relative Placement       | 392           | 445            |

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR ACTIVITIES**

**Placement Crisis in the State**

The federal FFPSA (Family First Prevention Services Act) was adopted by Congress on February 9, 2018, and became effective in Ohio on October 1, 2021. This act represented the most single most significant change in the structure of federal child welfare finance since the establishment of Title IV-E in 1980. While the FFPSA entails many changes to the way we view and fund child welfare in the nation, the changes can be grouped into three broad categories – (1) the creation of financial incentives for the use of evidence-based services; (2) permitted, for the first time, the use of IV-E dollars to provide services designed to alleviate the need for placement of children in foster care; (3) placed new limits on federal financial participation (FFP) in congregate care settings by limiting reimbursable days in non-qualifying residential facilities and restricting ongoing FFP only to those children who have been determined to be eligible for congregate care settings by some objective tool and court order and then only when placed in agencies which have been certified as Qualified Residential Treatment Programs (QRTP).

Prior to the implementation of the FFPSA, the federal government would reimburse Ohio for any child placed in a non-kinship substitute care setting so long as a court determined that reasonable efforts had been made to prevent the need for removal, effectuate reunification with the family of origin and that continued placement outside the home was in the best interest of the child. The FFPSA ceased open-ended FFP in congregate care settings by limited IV-E payments when a child is placed in a residential facility to fourteen days unless the facility is a Qualified Residential Treatment Facility (QRTP). In order to qualify as a QRTP, any facility wishing to be IV-E eligible facility after October 1, 2021, had to meet the following criteria:

- Adhere to a trauma-informed treatment model that includes service of clinical needs.
- Have a registered or licensed nursing staff in accordance with the model on call at all times.
- Maintain a treatment modality which includes family members in all treatment plans and programs.
- Offer a step-down plan that provides for least a six-months of support after discharge.
- Is accredited by at least one of three accreditors: Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities; Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations; Council on Accreditation

Because these requirements appeared burdensome and expensive to establish and maintain, child welfare professionals across the country were concerned that this would greatly increase the cost of care at the facilities. Those concerns appear to have been justified. After two years of actual experience with QRTPs in Ohio, the cost to counties and the state is significant.

The State recently conducted an analysis of state-wide data beginning in the fourth quarter of 2021 (when the FFPSA became effective in Ohio) through the third quarter of 2023. This correlates to the first 2 full years under FFPSA. This analysis revealed:

- The average cost for congregate rose from \$284.87 per day in September of 2021 to \$396.49 as of November 30, 2023, which correlates to an increase of 39.18 percent.
- The number of paid days went up by only 5%, however total cost went up by 42.5%.
- The reimbursement percentage went down from 28.60% to 15.95%
- The state-wide loss of IV-E dollars as a result of non-reimbursable placements totaled \$22,106,371.83 over that 2-year period.

It is clear that the factors impacting increased placement costs across the state are a major component of, though not the sole explanation for, the increases we're seeing here in Lucas. For the year immediately preceding implementation of the FFPSA (most of CY 2021) our placement costs totaled almost \$12 M. At the close of 2013, we had spent \$19.3 M. That is an increase of 58%. However, the information recently received from the state indicates that total congregate care costs went up 42.5% across the state.

### **LCCS and the Placement Crisis**

In August of this last year, LCCS developed an interim operational plan to address the placement crisis here locally. We refer to that as the "Cross-Departmental Action Plan." The plan was amended in September to include additional strategies designed to address disproportionality. We have made significant progress on the final version of the Cross-Department Action Plan which we will bring to the Board in February. We have seen some encouraging success with the interim plan. We have reduced our custody numbers by about 7% since September and we are starting to see our total placement costs decrease slightly.

### **2023 Year-end Fiscal Data**

The Finance Committee reviewed the 2023 year-end fiscal data on Tuesday of last week. I'd like to thank Sam and Laurie for having these to us so quickly. I received them the morning of Tuesday, January 2, 2024, which was within hours of the first working day of the new year. This allowed us the opportunity to provide the Finance Committee with a timely and meaningful review of how we did in 2023 and how we did in comparison to 2022 spending and budgeting.

### **2023 Actual year-end compared to 2022 Actuals:**

- Revenue - we finished by receiving \$2,344,308 more in 2023 than we received in 2022. Major contributors were:
  - Levies – we received \$475,504 from our levies. Although HB 920 restricts our levies from bringing in more money than they did when originally passed (even as property values increase), we do often see increases of 1-2% each year due to:

- New construction
  - Less delinquencies
  - Better collection efforts
- IV-E FCM – This is that portion of Title IV-E which correlates to foster care reimbursement. Because, as you’ll see below, we spent \$4 M more in placements, our reimbursements went up by almost \$1 M (\$998,845)
- State - \$1,118,979
  - SCPA went up by \$567,695 due to the increase provided in the SFY 2024/2025 biennial budget
  - State reimbursements up by \$551,283 due to increases in state-level Multi-System Youth (MSY) funding and state assumption of OhioSTART funding which had previously been grant funded
- Expenditures – we finished 2023 spending \$3,908,115 more than we did in 2022. This was almost completely due to the fact that we spent \$4,016,651 more in placements this year than we did last. That represents an increase of 26.18 percent.
- Reserves – we will draw \$3,430,394 from our reserves this year. That is \$1,563,806 more than we drew in 2022. We will end 2023 with \$12, 281,677 in reserve. This is down from \$15,712,071 last year.
- Bottom Line:

|                                       | <b>2022 Final</b>       | <b>Prelim. Finals</b>   | <b>Difference</b>       |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| <b>Revenue</b>                        | \$53,306,175.12         | \$55,650,483.60         | \$2,344,308.48          |
| <b>Expenses</b>                       | \$55,172,763.28         | \$59,080,877.81         | \$3,908,114.53          |
| <b>Added/Subtracted from Reserves</b> | <b>(\$1,866,588.16)</b> | <b>(\$3,430,394.21)</b> | <b>(\$1,563,806.05)</b> |
| <b>Balance Carried Forward</b>        | \$15,712,071.41         | \$12,281,677.20         |                         |

**Projections:** Using the fiscal forecast assumptions incorporated into the CY 2024 approved budget, we appear to have increased our solvency period from late 2028 to late 2029.

The Finance Committee requested opportunity to discuss (1) alternative forecast philosophies; (2) alternative solvency targets, and (3) various levy initiatives.

### **Building Update**

The Lucas County Children Services Board has strongly advocated over the last two years for a safe work environment for its employees and the families served by Lucas County Children Services. In April 2022, the Board invited the Lucas County Commissioners to an open board meeting to discuss the condition of the current building its continued deterioration. During that meeting the commissioners vowed to correct the issue and to revitalize the building for the Lucas County workers. The Commissioners appointed a project manager, retained an architect and commissioned a construction firm to explore the rehabilitation of the current building. Once the cost estimates of the renovation came back, the commissioners determined that restoring the current building to reasonably habitable conditions would be cost prohibitive for the citizens of Lucas County. Therefore, the Commissioners began looking for other solutions in a different venue.

The Commissioners quickly located office space at 333 North Summit Street, which is a property managed by Promedica. They negotiated a 20-year lease with Promedica for space to house several county agencies. Specifically, portions of the first floor and five upper floors for LCCS, the 6th floor for the Northwest Ohio Regional Training Center, one upper floor for the Mental Health and Recovery Services Board. The Commissioners permitted LCCS to select floors that required the least amount of renovation to keep cost down.

An architect assisted in designing the first floor for efficiency of service to the clients and safety for both the employees and children served by LCCS. There will also be minimal renovations to the upper floors. LCCS is working with the

Ohio Dept. of Job and Family Services to trouble shoot any IT needs and ensure our network transition to the new building will be smooth. The county also hired a move management company to work out the logistics of moving 360 plus employees. Still all the while keeping in mind cost.

Construction commenced in November 2023 and continues. It is anticipated that LCCS will move to the new building in May or June 2024. The project coordinator has already negotiated parking for LCCS employees which will commence upon our move. Our current focus is on cleaning up and minimizing items that will be taken to the other building. We continue to monitor construction and IT to ensure cost are controlled and the project is moving forward timely. We are moving toward plans for operations out of the new building come summertime.

Upon completion of the build-out and the move, the Lucas County Treasurer will issue a bond in an amount equal to the cost of the renovation and move. LCCS will repay the Bond over a 10-year period. LCCS will also pay rent on the square footage of the building that it occupies as well as the parking for employees.

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**DONATIONS/PARTNERSHIPS**

The LCCS holiday gift drive wrapped up with much success. Community partners and others contributed more than 24,000 donations, a new record. But the greater number was needed, as the number of families and children LCCS served increased significantly over last year. LCCS was able to provide teens with extra gift cards again this year because of the One Church statewide donation program.

LCCS has the capacity to give out more than 800 winter coats this season. Holiday gift drive donors contributed dozens of coats. Friends of LCCS was able to secure another coat grant through the Governor's Office of Faith-Based Initiatives, in addition to the one from last year that provided coats to children through the fall. One change to an internal Owens Corning gift drive was a big help, resulting in a few dozen adult-size coats for older children served by LCCS. The winter coat efforts will save LCCS thousands of dollars in voucher money, which can be used for other child and family-related needs.

LCCS is marking its third anniversary in partnership with the Salvation Army for its diaper bank. In that time, LCCS has distributed 5,592 packs of diapers and 2,752 packs of wipes. The partnership started toward the end of COVID to make the LCCS diaper bank sustainable. The LCCS diaper bank grew out of the community need during the pandemic as demand exceeded what church diaper drives and Friends of LCCS could provide. The Salvation Army model operates on funding raised by the Hospital Council of NW Ohio and the buying power of Mercy Health. The program has saved the agency nearly \$50,000 and improved the quality of life for the children we serve.

The 2024 Child Memorial will be held in the CLC Thursday, April 18, the date available. Planning is underway now for the event, which remembers children lost to abuse, neglect and violence over the past year (April to April) since the last event. The statewide Wear Blue Day takes place Wednesday, April 10.

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**IN THE MEDIA**

|                              |                                                           |             |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|-------------|
| WTOL, wtol.com               | Teddy Bear Toss distribution                              | 12-12-2023  |
| WTVG, 13 abc.com             | Daily coverage of the Gift of Joy event                   |             |
| BCSN, BCAN                   | continued through 12/20/23<br>(Kevin Milliken interviews) |             |
| <i>The Blade</i> , blade.com | PEI Graduation                                            | 12-13-2023  |
| WTOL, The Blade, 13abc       | Coverage of Chesser indictments                           | 12/28-29/23 |

**EXECUTIVE SESSION**

There was no need for an executive session.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Motion to adjourn by Ms. Vasquez.

Seconded by Mr. Ridi.

The meeting is adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Ms. Alethea Easterly  
Board Secretary