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**MINUTES OF LUCAS COUNTY CHILDREN SERVICES BOARD**  
**Regular Meeting Held February 19, 2025**

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The regular meeting of the Lucas County Children Services Board was held at 301 Adams Street, 3:00 P.M., in person and via Zoom.

Members Present: Mr. Corfman, Dr. Cowell, Ms. Gagnon, Ms. McCollough, Mr. Meyer, Mr. Ridi, Ms. Vasquez and Mr. Walrod

Member(s) Absent: Rev. Dr. Perryman (Zoom)

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Dr. Cowell called the February 19, 2025, regular meeting of the LCCS Board to order. Roll Call was taken. A quorum was present.

**INTRODUCTION OF NEW EMPLOYEES**

- There were no new employees

**CONSENT AGENDA**

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

- Minutes from December 18, 2024 LCCS Board of Trustees Meeting
- Finance Committee Minutes additional finance documents attached. (1/14/25) (2/11/25)
- Personnel Committee Minutes (2/3/25)
- Services and Programs Minutes (2/5/25)

Dr. Cowell asked if any items would be removed from the Consent Agenda. None were removed.

Dr. Cowell read the Consent Agenda into the minutes:

Dr. Cowell asked for a motion to approve the Consent Agenda. Ms. Gagnon made a motion for approval, which Mr. Walrod seconded. The motion passed by unanimous voice vote.

**OLD BUSINESS**

**Building Update**

Owen Hoskins gave a building update regarding 301 Adams Street renovation cost. The county has agreed to a ten-year, zero-interest not to offset the buildout cost for the new building. The full payment for 705 Adams has been given.

**NEW BUSINESS**

**DEIS Update**

Director Bland and her team closely watch what is happening politically. LCCS has not been directly impacted yet but will keep monitoring the developments. Directors have discussed Plan B but work on disproportionality and related issues will continue. Board members suggested changing the unit's name and removing references from the website, considering the levy will be on the November ballot.

- 2024 Year-end Financial Analysis

- HB 257
- Dr. Joyce James Consulting
- Family Help Center
- START
- Governor DeWine's Executive Budget
- Levy Planning

Please see the Executive Directors Report for detailed information regarding these items.

## CHAIRS REPORT

Dr. Cowell invited the Board Members to join LCCS at the monthly Community Conversation Forums. The next one will be on February 24<sup>th</sup> at The Believe Center on South Street. They will be the last Monday of every month at different locations around Toledo.

## EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS REPORT

**Executive Director Report—Randy Muth**

### LCCS CHILD PLACEMENT STATISTICS:

|                          | Current Month | Previous Month |
|--------------------------|---------------|----------------|
| Agency Foster Homes      | 291           | 290            |
| Subsidized Adoptions     | 1,115         | 1,115          |
| Purchased Boarding Homes | 201           | 201            |
| Institutions/Group Homes | 17            | 17             |
| Relative Placement       | 399           | 391            |

## EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR ACTIVITIES

### 2024 Year-End Financial Analysis

With respect to revenues, we received almost exactly the same amount of revenue in 2024 as we did in 2023 – only \$10,255 more last year than the year before. Which is equivalent to a 0.02% increase. We spent \$ 4,271,917.84 or 7.23% more in 2024 than we did in 2023. The four primary drivers of our increased costs are:

1. Total Labor costs rose by at \$2.01 M or 6.71% last year over 2023.
2. Placement costs went up 9.06 % or \$1.75 M.
3. Rent went up by \$1.05 M.
4. Health insurance expenditures rose by \$598 K which equates to 13%. Ten percent is due to a rate increase and the other three is due to more staff members and/or more staff members taking higher cost plans.

We should be solvent through almost 100% of 2029. While this is shorter than we are normally comfortable with, there are two intervening levy cycles which present opportunities to reset our financial situation if something catastrophic happens.

### HB 257

HB 257 passed in lame duck and was signed by Governor DeWine. This new law authorizes certain public bodies to meet virtually under certain conditions if they adopt policies for virtual meetings and adhere to other specified legal requirements. If the Board drafts a qualifying policy and so long as it remains in compliance with all other legal

requirements, it will be legally permissible for it to meet quorum, hold official meetings and hold votes (on most things) even when some or all of our members can attend only virtually.

### **Joyce James Consulting**

Joyce James Consulting has submitted a revised proposal which lowers the cost and time commitment for the Agency. See the proposal entitled, "Updated LCCS Proposal for Phase One GWA for Supervisors" which was attached to last month's email. The cost goes from \$36,000 to \$25,000 and the time commitment goes from 3 days per supervisor to 2.5 days.

### **Family Help Center Hotline**

One of recurring themes we have heard at our monthly Community Conversations is that navigating the child welfare system can be both complex and daunting. We hear often that families and caregivers are unsure where to go when services are needed, or concerns arise. In response, we have instituted a Family Help Center hotline (419-213-3833). Calls placed to that number are routed directly to an independent Client Rights Office, which will help them to navigate Lucas County Children Services and address their concerns in a constructive way. We've changed our procedure to make the Family Help Center the appropriate avenue to raise concerns and find assistance. The goals are better communication, advocacy, and service for the children, caregivers, and families the agency serves. LCCS will track these concerns and make other internal changes as needed along the way.

### **START**

LCCS has recently achieved national certification of our START (Sobriety, Treatment and Reducing Trauma) program. We are the seventh county in the state and the first metro county to achieve this certification. We'll also be testifying at the next hearing of the Toledo City Council's Public Safety & Criminal Justice Committee to be held on Thursday, March 20, 2025, at 3:00 pm in the City Council Chambers. The subject of our testimony will be how this program will utilize opioid settlement dollars to improve the lives of opioid crisis victims and Toledo residents in general.

### **Governor DeWine's Executive Budget**

Gov. DeWine released his executive budget last Monday in which he proposed an increase to the SCPA (State Child Protection Allocation – the most unrestricted funding stream we have) of \$25 million in the first year of the biennium and an additional \$5 million (\$30 million total) in the second year, for a two-year total of \$55 million over the biennium. The budget also includes \$30 million for children's wellness campuses (short-term crisis stabilization centers) over the biennium (\$20 million in the first year and \$10 million in the second). If this goes through, we could see up to one million additional state dollars in the first year of the biennium and another \$1.2 M in the second.

It appears that all other line items have been maintained at SFY25 levels - MSY, Best Practices, Ohio START, etc. In addition, Director Wenthe highlighted during her briefing that there will be language for DCY to contain costs with the rising cost of placements through a state procurement process – this is the RFQ proposal that we discussed at the end of last year.

### **Levy Planning**

The deadline to submit our request for a levy to be on the ballot in November of 2025 will be shortly after the May Board meeting. Administration will prepare a list of options for the Finance Committee next month. We hope to have preliminary discussion at our March Board meeting.

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## DONATIONS/PARTNERSHIPS

The SEE Committee is leading an agency-wide collection of cleaning products for families LCCS serves. The collection is in observance of Social Work Month in March. The idea is to be a force for good as an agency—and cleaning products is one of the most-requested items from families. If you'd like to assist, please bring donations to the March board meeting or you can shop an Amazon wish list:

[https://www.amazon.com/hz/wishlist/ls/1S6R5WLS44WM9/ref=nav\\_wishlist\\_lists\\_2](https://www.amazon.com/hz/wishlist/ls/1S6R5WLS44WM9/ref=nav_wishlist_lists_2)

Connecting Kids to Meals has temporarily halted weekend food bag delivery by LCCS caseworkers, citing the uncertainty surrounding federal funding and grants. LCCS has distributed more than 20,000 of the bags directly to caregiver homes over the past five years. Both sides are working on potential funding solutions to resume the partnership as soon as possible.

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## IN THE MEDIA

|                                 |                                            |         |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|---------|
| <i>Toledo Blade</i> , blade.com | LCCS staff- LEAD Program                   | 1-19-25 |
|                                 | (Sarah Gioiella,, Madison Williams quotes) |         |

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|---------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---------|
| <i>Toledo Blade</i> , blade.com | Community Conversations             | 1-23-25 |
| WTOL, wtol.com                  | (Randy Muth & Hope Bland interview) |         |

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|---------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------|
| <i>Toledo Blade</i> , blade.com | Ohio START Certification                                                     | 2-10-25 |
| WTVG, 13abc.com                 | (Chanda Beal, Tionna Jackson,<br>Kari Vebenstad, Brandi Amonette interviews) |         |

## EXECUTIVE SESSION

None Needed

## ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn by Ms. Vasquez  
Ms. McCollough seconding the motion.  
The meeting is adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Ms. Rachel Gagnon  
Board Secretary