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**MINUTES OF LUCAS COUNTY CHILDREN SERVICES BOARD**  
**Special Meeting Held November 25, 2024**  
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The special 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, Ms. Vasquez, and Mr. Walrod

Member(s) Absent: Ms. Easterly, Mr. Meyer, Rev. Dr. Perryman (Zoom), Mr. Ridi, and Mr. Schinharl

Dr. Cowell called the November 25, 2024, special meeting of the LCCS Board to order. Roll Call was taken. A quorum was present.

INTRODUCTION OF NEW EMPLOYEES

- Owen Hoskins

APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA AND JULY LCCS BOARD MEETING MINUTES

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:

CONSENT AGENDA

- Minutes from September 18, 2024 LCCS Board of Trustees Meeting
- Services and Programs Meeting Minutes (10/03/24)
- Personnel Committee Minutes (10/07/24)
- Finance Committee Minutes additional finance documents attached. (10/08/24)
- Personnel Committee Minutes (11/4/24)
- Finance Committee Minutes additional finance documents attached. (11/12/24)

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

OLD BUSINESS

Building Update

Shelby Cully gave a building update regarding 301 Adams. Building operations are going as expected and negotiations with contractors are continuing regarding the final price of building renovations. Those are expected to be wrapped up within the next several weeks.

NEW BUSINESS

DEIS – Dr. Joyce James Presentation

- Presentation will be given at the next board meeting.

Approval of the 2025 Operation Budget

Owen Hoskins gave a presentation on the 2025 operating budget. Placement cost and wages and benefits are the two largest line items in the spending plan. The new budget does contain the levy that was just passed in November.

Ms. McCollough made a motion to accept the 2025 budget request made by the financial committee, Ms. Gagnon seconded the motion. The motion passed by unanimous voice vote.

Resolution 11-24 – Funds for Christmas Gifts

Owen Hoskins presented a resolution for the board's consideration.

RESOLUTION: 11-2024

SUBJECT: **REQUEST FOR FUNDS FROM THE DONATION ACCOUNT**

WHEREAS, *Administration is requesting up to \$40,000 from the Donation Account to purchase holiday gifts for children served by Lucas County Children Services, if needed, and for additional expenses pertaining to client-related holiday projects sponsored by LCCS.*

WHEREAS, *LCCS, will also be asking for donated gifts from a variety of providers in the community, now be it therefore*

RESOLVED, *that the Board approves the request for up to \$40,000 from the Donation Account to purchase holiday gifts for children served by Lucas County Children Services and for additional expenses pertaining to client-related holiday projects sponsored by LCCS.*

Mr. Walrod made a motion to accept the resolution, which Ms. Gagnon seconded. The motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

CHAIRS REPORT

Dr. Cowell gave acclimates for all those who helped with the efforts at getting the Levy passed.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS REPORT

Executive Director Report—Randy Muth

LCCS CHILD PLACEMENT STATISTICS:

	Current Month	Previous Month
Agency Foster Homes	310	320
Subsidized Adoptions	1,115	1,112

Purchased Boarding Homes	188	193
Institutions/Group Homes	12	14
Relative Placement	371	365

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR ACTIVITIES

Levy

Our levy passed 54/46 on November 5. I am extremely grateful to all who donated their time to ensure that our message was positively received. I'm also grateful for the confidence the community expressed in us by the passage of the levy. The work now will be for us to validate that confidence.

Budget

The Lucas County Commissioners require that appointing authorities approve and submit proposed calendar year 2025 proposed budgets this month. The Finance Committee reviewed and directed some changes to the first draft of Administration's proposed budget at its regular meeting on November 12, 2024.

Specifically, the Finance Committee requested that we increase the amount budgeted for overall salaries from 1 percent increase over this year's spending to 4.5% which is consistent with historical averages and to increase placement costs by 3% over projected 2024 levels.

In Administration's first proposal to the Finance Committee, we included a slight reduction in placement costs for 2025. We were basing this on three factors:

1. The success we have over the past 12 months in reducing our overall custody numbers and children in high-end congregate settings:
 - a. General Information – Placement costs are driven primarily by the number of children in care and the amount per day that it costs us. We don't have a lot of control over either, however we do have somewhat more control over the number of kids than we do what the private providers charge us. We have been actively working on ensuring that we seek custody of children only when necessary to ensure their safety and after efforts to stabilize the family with the children in the home are either not appropriate due to exigent circumstance or when we have tried but they have failed. We have demonstrated remarkable success in this area.
 - b. Historical perspective – below are the total custody numbers as they existed on July 15 for the five years prior to FFPSA (2017-2021):
 - i. 2017 = 758
 - ii. 2018 = 721
 - iii. 2019 = 662
 - iv. 2020 = 631
 - v. 2021 = 697
 - vi. Average = 694
 - c. Start of FFPSA - the FFPSA was fully implemented in Ohio on October 1, 2021. Below are the total custody numbers as they existed on July 15 for the years subsequent to FFPSA implementation:
 - i. 2022 = 810
 - ii. 2023 = 914

- d. Recent Efforts to reduce custody episodes - In November of 2023, we implemented a Cross-departmental Placement Reduction Committee to identify the causes of the increased numbers of children in care and implement strategies to reverse the upward trend. We started tracking our results weekly starting in November. When we started, we had a total of 907 children in custody, which equates to 213 children above our pre-FFPSA average. Of those, 76 were placed in those high-end congregate care placements (group homes and hospital-like facilities). As of October 2nd of this year, we had reduced the total number of children in custody to 791, a reduction of 116 children and are now only 97 over our pre-FFPSA average. We also reduced the congregate care population from 76 to 67. We are also starting to see our over-all placement costs trend downward.
2. The hope that the dramatic increase in per-diems has peaked. The below table shows that it appears that the rate of increase in placement costs is declining both on the state and local level.

TOTAL PLACEMENT COSTS						
Year	Statewide	Percentage of change from prev. year	Percentage of change since FFPSA	LCCS	Percentage of change from prev. year	Percentage of change since FFPSA
2019	\$335,596,858			\$11,539,587		
2020	\$334,252,235	-0.40%		\$11,109,645	-3.73%	
2021	\$321,361,967	-3.86%		\$11,929,032	7.38%	
2022	\$343,944,911	7.03%	7.03%	\$15,341,899	28.61%	28.61%
2023	\$399,929,517	16.28%	24.45%	\$19,358,550	26.18%	62.28%
2024*	\$409,679,993	2.44%	27.48%	\$21,294,407	10.00%	78.51%

*Annualized with data through 8/31/24

3. The hope that the state will implement meaningful and effective cost-containment strategies in the next calendar year.

However, in an abundance of caution, the Finance Committee directed us to increase our proposed placement cost budget line item to 3% over projected 2024 spending and continue a 3% increase in our projections.

The amended proposed budget incorporates those changes.

DONATIONS/PARTNERSHIPS

Alpha Xi Delta, a University of Toledo sorority, donated a large supply of hygiene kits and blankets. Friends of LCCS helped set up the donation.

The LCCS holiday gift drive is underway. The toy room will open Monday, Dec. 2, following the long Thanksgiving holiday weekend. The Angel Tree effort at the Franklin Park Mall is already underway.

Other events are as follows:

- November 23: Toyathon
 - December 1: Community Bike Build
 - December 2: Toy Room Opens
 - December 7: Christmas Tree Ship
 - December 7: Shred for a Toy
 - December 7: Teddy Bear Toss
 - December 12: WTOL Drive-thru Drop-off
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IN THE MEDIA

WTOL-TV, wtol.com <i>Toledo Blade</i> , blade.com	Trunk or Treat (Kevin Milliken interview)	10-19-24
WTOL-TV, wtol.com	Issue 30 (Randy Muth, Kevin Milliken)	10-20-24
WTOL-TV, wtol.com	Community Conversation (Hope Bland live interview)	10-25-24
WTOL-TV, wtol.com <i>Toledo Blade</i> , blade.com	Isaiah 117 House fundraiser (Jennifer Bohnseck, Rhonda Paulson)	10-25-24
WTVG-TV, 13abc.com	Issue 30 (Kevin Milliken, Hope Bland)	10-31-24
WTOL-TV, wtol.com WTVG-TV, 13abc.com <i>Toledo Blade</i> , blade.com	Election Night Coverage (Randy Muth interviews)	11-5-24

EXECUTIVE SESSION

None Needed

ADJOURNMENT

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

Respectfully submitted,

Dr. Suzette Cowell
Board Chair