



Luzerne County Children and Youth Services Advisory Board Meeting Minutes

Date/Time/Location: May 11, 2022/noon/ Conference Room 132 (MS Teams/Conference Call Meeting)

In Attendance: Denise Acosta, Robert Childs, Helene Elko, Kathleen McCarthy, Maylan Nicholson, Olga Papa, Eileen Song, Joshua Wilder

Absent: Charlene Aben, Mary Agnes Kratz, Alex Milanese, Susan Roskos, Dennis Gochoel

Children and Youth: Chris Dalessandro, Donna Domiano, Ellen Dymond, Kelly Gaughan, John Alunni, Georgine Meyers, Brian Steve

Office of Human Services:

Welcome – Chairman Wilder welcomed all to the May meeting. He also welcomed new members Helene Elko and Kathleen McCarthy. Everyone did a brief introduction for the new members. Ms. Meyers took attendance and announced that participants on the phone will need to press *6 to unmute to speak and all Advisory Board meetings are recorded in order to do the meeting minutes. Please stay muted to reduce background noise, which interferes with the meeting. If we hear excessive background noise, we will try to mute the person so please only unmute yourself to speak.

Approval of Minutes – April meeting minutes accepted by Member Childs, seconded by Member Acosta, all in favor.

Director's Report – Acting Director Alunni announced that the CYS Administrator position is posting until May 27th. There may be an interim Director until the new Director is hired as Acting Director Alunni will be leaving in three weeks. A permanent County Manager will be in place mid June. The Needs Based Budget (NBB) is our allocation from the State for funding. The agency is able to identify new services and new staffing complements that would be helpful. The agency receives a data package each year from the State that identifies the agency's top area(s) of need. The agency QA Department scheduled a Stakeholder's Meeting. At this meeting, providers are invited and discussions take place on needs and identifying services. Acting Director Alunni thanked Vice Chairwoman Nicholson for the generous donation from Dana Street School. They provided books, coloring books, crayons, arts and crafts supplies and drawing items for children to take home or improve their waiting time at the agency. They donated 11 copy paper boxes full of supplies. Dana Street School would like to try to do this yearly. Acting Director Alunni also thanked United Way for their donation of 10 copy paper boxes of new and gently used books. The donations will be split up between the main office, State Street Office and Hazleton Office. Acting Director Alunni noted that Carl Ayers from Casey Family Services will be on site on Tuesday, May 17th to work on the Strategic Planning.

Acting Deputy Alunni will send the final report from Carl to the Board Members. Phase 1 of this will be communication strategy. Casey's data support team is working with our Quality Assurance team to help develop a Continuous Quality Improvement Model. The Advisory Board would like to be a part of the data discussions. Acting Deputy Director Gaughan discussed the large vacancy rate. The agency continues to conduct interviews, hire and recruit. There were several applicants from recruitment at colleges. Job postings are on Civil Service. Caseworker 2 positions require Bachelor degrees with some experience with case management services. Without experience, applicants can be a Caseworker 1 for 6 months and then be promoted to a Caseworker 2. Mr. Steve discussed the CWEL program through the University of Pittsburgh. It is a fully paid Masters program in Social Work and is a great incentive for staff. CWEL captures students in the junior year with internships at the agency. Acting Deputy Director Gaughan discussed the Act 33 workgroups. They deal with fatality/near fatality cases and make recommendations for improvements. Luzerne County had a high number in 2021. The workgroup reviewed the cases and made recommendations. One of the recommendations was to convene a critical case decision making team where supervisors would bring cases that meet the criteria to make a decision together with the group. The agency hopes to keep data on this ongoing process. The paperless workforce group has started with the clerical group and screeners who are training to have more efficient record keeping.

Fiscal Update – Mr. Dalessandro discussed the 2021 financial audit and noted this ties in with the general fund audit. If any Board Members would like a copy, they can reach out to Mr. Dalessandro. In addition, it is the end of the 3rd quarter and the fiscal office is getting ready to submit to the State.

Committee Reports

1. **Events and Fundraising** – Chairman Wilder will be sending out an email to schedule a meeting with this committee.
2. **Strategic Planning and ByLaws** - Member Gochoel is working on a time table. He will be reaching out to the Acting Director and Acting Deputy Director.
3. **Recruiting and Community Advocacy** – Member Acosta thanked C&Y for donating to the shoe drive fundraiser. She was working with the Kirby House and shoes were given out to those in need. Member Acosta will be sending out a committee meeting date to everyone.

Old/New Business – Chairman Wilder asked about the formula shortage and how it affects our foster families. Any formula donations that the agency receives are given out to clients and foster families if they need any. Foster families are eligible for WIC so most go through that service for their needs. Vice Chairwoman Nicholson stated that the food drive that the school does has given out gift cards to St. Vincents, so if anyone is in need they can reach out to St. Vincents.

Final Questions/Comments – Chairman Wilder would like the Board to receive the final decisions from Casey Family Services and their data team. Acting Director Alunni felt it would be helpful for Josh, and perhaps Member Gochoel, to join the data discussions. Chairman Wilder noted that he would like the Advisory Board to see what changes are being made. Acting Director Alunni agreed and he will discuss with the team. He thanked the Advisory Board members for all the support they have provided to the agency and for taking an active and meaning role to benefit the agency in the community.

Adjournment - Motion to adjourn made by Member Acosta and seconded by Member Elko, all in favor.

NEXT MEETING: Next meeting **June 8, 2022.**