



Luzerne County Children and Youth Services Advisory Board Meeting Minutes

Date/Time/Location: May 12, 2021/noon/ Conference Room 132 (MS Teams/Conference Call Meeting)

In Attendance: Robert Childs, Dennis Gochoel, Maylan Nicholson, Eileen Song, Joshua Wilder, Susan Roskos

Absent: Charlene Aben, Denise Acosta, Nicole Buckman, Mary Agnes Kratz, Larry Marchetti, Alex Milanese, Olga Papa

Children and Youth: Ceil Bartolai, Janice Bonner, Chris Dalessandro, Donna Domiano, Ellen Dymond, Kelly Gaughan, Deanna German, Lisa Koval, Dave Maslowski, Georgine Meyers, Robin Ritsick

Office of Human Services: John Alunni

Welcome – Chairwoman Song welcomed everyone to the meeting. Ms. Meyers announced that folks 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. Ms. Meyers took attendance.

Approval of Minutes – April meeting minutes approved by Member Childs, seconded by Secretary Wilder, all in favor.

Director's Report – Deputy Director German presented the Director's Report. May is National Foster Care month. The agency applied for and received a mini grant which is being used to create a webinar entitled "Dispelling the Myths about Fostering Teens: Straight out of the Horse's Mouth". It will be presented on May 19th virtually and the agency will continue to use it for foster parent recruiting. It starts at 6:30 and there will be a link to register. Staff continue to work remotely but come into the office as needed. There are staff who regularly are in the office such as reception and legal. The agency is planning an appreciation lunch for staff in place of the annual Retreat. It will be a hot to go lunch. The agency sent a letter of intent to apply for Plans of Safe Care that the State was distributing to counties to assist with educating the health care system and rolling out Plans of Safe Care to providers. The agency is in the process of finalizing its plan to present to the State. There are 35 vacancies at the agency. The caseworkers are carrying an average of 20-24 cases each. Best practice would be 10-15 cases. The GPS intake numbers have continued to remain high. Currently the agency has 520 children in out of home care. The agency was notified by the State that the inspection of the Independent Living Program went very well as usual. It included some positive comments from Theresa Musser, the Human Service Program Specialist for OCYF. The fiscal department just completed a IV-E funding audit and are in the middle of a financial audit which the Fiscal Officer will expand more on in his report. Chairwoman Song asked about the Staff Appreciation. The Visitation

Grant is used to hold this event. She suggested the Advisory Board assist by donating a basket and thank you notes. She will send out an email to Board Members.

Committee Reports

1. **Events and Fundraising** – Secretary Wilder noted that the extra jacket money was earmarked for the Children’s Party. There is a committee meeting at the end of the month to discuss fundraising for the Children’s Party. He will reach out to Mr. Rodgers to see if he is willing to assist. The plan is to raise money on our own. He will update next month.
2. **Strategic Planning and ByLaws** – Vice Chairman Gochoel discussed the Strategic Plan and reviewed the plan which was shared on the screen. Strategic imperatives were to improve our System of Governance, implement a robust board member training and engagement program, solidify agency relationships and to establish the board identity outside the agency. He will send out the information to all Members. Member Childs suggested some agencies to connect with. Chairwoman Song asked Vice Chairman Gochoel to meet with Member Acosta. Vice Chairman Gochoel noted the first step is to develop a social media plan and presence.
3. **Recruiting and Community Advocacy** – Chairwoman Song noted that Member Acosta is in training so the meeting will be rescheduled. They plan to put together a press release or awareness campaign to talk about the opioid issues.

Old/New Business – No old/new business.

Fiscal Update - Mr. Dalessandro discussed the IV-E audit and that he received positive results. There was a small deficiency on the RMTS so they will return to assist with solutions. The financial audit is almost complete. There should be a draft next week on results. When it is complete he can share the results with the Board.

Final Questions/Comments – Member Childs asked about the luncheon and how many staff the agency would be serving. Deputy German stated that we have potentially 170 employees attending. Chairwoman Song suggested a monetary contribution for a gift basket (perhaps \$5 per Board Member) as well as sending personalized thank you notes to staff. Secretary Wilder will email members.

Adjournment – Motion to adjourn made by Secretary Wilder, seconded by Member Nicholson, all in favor.

NEXT MEETING: Wednesday, June 9, 2021 at 12:00pm.