



Luzerne County Children and Youth Services Advisory Board Meeting Minutes

Date/Time/Location: May 13, 2020/noon/ Conference Room 132 (**Conference Call Meeting**)

In Attendance: Charlene Aben, John Bonin, Robert Childs, Martin Dartoe, Maggie Farrell, Dennis Gochoel, Mary Agnes Kratz, Larry Marchetti, Alex Milanese, Eileen Song, Joshua Wilder

Absent: Ciro Cinti, LeDonne Kelly, Francis Scarnulis, Susan Roskos

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

Office of Human Services: John Alunni, Lynn Hill

Welcome – Ms. Meyers took attendance. Chairman Song welcomed everyone and introduced the newest member, Alexander Milanese. Everyone introduced themselves.

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

Director's Report – Deputy Director German welcomed Member Song as the Chairman. She reported that staff are working remotely and doing a great job. Referrals here and across the state are down to half compared to last year. GPS referrals are general protective services such as lack of supervision and neglect. CPS referrals are child protective services referrals such as a numbered referral for physical or sexual abuse. The agency is in the process of formalizing plans for a return to work. There are many staff who share offices so a plan is being worked on to alternate workers in the office. Administration has put Safe Step stickers and tape on the floor for 6 foot distancing, conference rooms have been marked with where people can sit to maintain distance, there are sanitizing wipes by all the equipment that staff utilizes and the agency has ordered gloves, masks, and touchless sanitizer dispensers. The agency is keeping track of all the expenses related to COVID-19 for possible reimbursement by PEMA. Administration asked staff for feedback on what they would like to see in the future. Many staff liked the idea of the ability to continue working some days remotely. Other counties have done it prior to the pandemic so we are looking at their policies. The Needs Based Budget draft has been sent to counties so the agency will be reviewing this document and meeting with management staff on how to respond. It is due in August and is a lengthy process. The Director and Deputy Director have been participating in State calls twice per week. Director Van Saun continues to participate in the Child Welfare Case Management Systems meetings. The State is in the process of converting everyone into one system. The agency received the Visitation Grant again this year.

It has been difficult planning. This grant is used to enhance visitation, worker retention and recruitment/morale. Things we did in the past are difficult under these circumstances. We have a group that meets regularly to brainstorm on ideas for use of the grant. The annual Retreat is usually the first week in June but due to the pandemic it is doubtful that this can be held or if it will be delayed. The team purchased messenger bags for all staff through this grant. Currently there are 25 caseworker vacancies with 1 caseworker that has temporarily stepped up to a supervisory position. There are 2 supervisor and 1 Program Specialist position open. Management continues to interview potential candidates. Staff is required to have clearances and Ms. Meyers is coordinating which staff are due. Ms. Meyers will also review the Advisory Board members that are due for clearances.

Committee Reports

1. **Events and Fundraising (Wilder)** – The committee met and ran through ideas of online fundraising, selling a product, or a table at Sams Club. Also discussed was the possibility of raising money and getting gifts to kids if the events can't happen. They would like baseline participation from the board.
2. **Strategic Planning and ByLaws (Gochoel)** – The committee discussed what success would look like and lay the ground work, improving Board and C&Y synergy, value adding, the process of strategic planning and (short term) having a clear understanding of the agency's needs. The committee will look at the ByLaws expectations and discussed the need to align with Council and Board Member needs. Are there opportunities to better align? Member Aben and Member Milanese to join this committee.
3. **Recruiting and Community Advocacy (Song)** – The committee made a wish list of qualifications in their search for additional members. People with community influence and networking background are important. She would like committees to meet every 1 ½ months or so. Chairman Song talked about Bylaws, recruiting and attendance. Every Board Member should be active and participating. If you cannot attend the meetings, please contact Chairman Song. It is important to be active so the Board can achieve their goals. There are 3 openings for the Board currently.

Old and New Business

1. **New Business** – Member Wilder wanted to remind Members to reapply if their term ends in 2020. Members are Cinti, Song, Scarnulis, Bonin, Kratz, Martin and Farrell. Applications are online under the County website (look for ABC Boards). Chairman Song asked folks to renew sooner than later and if you do not plan to renew, please contact her. Feel free to keep a copy of the application with you so you can hand out to folks that you feel would be a good fit for the Board.
2. **New Business** - Chris Dalessandro talked about Chairman Song's request for an account for the Advisory Board. She would like their own budget that they manage. Mr. Dalessandro noted that the agency has a separate account for fundraising for the Board which is managed by the fiscal department. They have a spreadsheet that tracks all money coming in and out.

Final Questions/Comments – Member Aben asked if the McGlynn Center is still open. Staff are not sure if they are functioning during the COVID crisis but they are still active. Chairman Song noted that she wanted to get information passed out to the Board so they have a better understanding of how relationships with other community groups work. Members need to understand the work of the agency so they can discuss out in the community. Mr. Dalessandro

wanted to update everyone that the 2019 audit is currently wrapping up and he will share information he receives from the auditors.

Adjournment – Motion to adjourn approved by Member Bonin, seconded by Member Wilder, all in favor.

NEXT MEETING: Wednesday, June 10, 2020 at 12:00pm.