



Luzerne County Children and Youth Services Advisory Board Meeting Minutes

Date/Time/Location: June 10, 2020/noon/ Conference Room 132 (MS Teams/Conference Call Meeting)

In Attendance: Robert Childs, Dennis Gochoel, Mary Agnes Kratz, Larry Marchetti, Eileen Song, Joshua Wilder, Alex Milanese, Susan Roskos

Absent: Charlene Aben, John Bonin, Ciro Cinti, Martin Dartoe, Maggie Farrell, LeDonne Kelly, Fritz Scarnulis

Children and Youth: Ceil Bartolai, Donna Domiano, Kelly Gaughan, Deanna German, Caitlyn Holland, Lisa Koval, Georgine Meyers, Robin Ritsick

Office of Human Services: John Alunni

Welcome – Chairman Song welcomed everyone to the June meeting. Ms. Meyers took attendance.

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

Director's Report – Deputy Director German discussed that staff are continuing to work remotely. When the County goes into green phase, staff will be brought back on rotating days. This is to avoid too many people in the building, at any given time, as well as due to some staff share offices. Workers will come into the building one week M-W-F and work from home the other days and the next week will switch to working in the building on Tuesday and Thursday. The agency purchased Safe Step stickers that are now placed on the floors, masks, gloves, booties, disinfecting wipes and hand sanitizer. The building continues to be closed to the public. The State has reduced their calls to once per week. Administration participates in these calls. There have not been many updates. Intake numbers were down in all counties, however in the past 3 weeks there has been an increase in the GPS and CPS referrals which was expected. As more people are out and about, the agency expects more referrals. It wasn't that abuse wasn't occurring, but that with everyone isolated there was no one to see it and report it. Staff participated in two Needs Based Budget trainings as we are beginning the process now. The narrative section is due August 15 and the fiscal section is due in September. The Director continues to participate in the State Child Welfare Case Management Systems meetings. They are held two or three times per month. It is to create one computer system that all counties would use. We received the Visitation Grant again this year. Last week was Child Welfare Appreciation Week and administration distributed messenger bags with a few treats inside to every staff member. We have also purchased shelving for the clothing closet as well as toys and supplies for the visit rooms for when the agency returns to in-person visitation. In addition, the

agency still hopes to have a holiday lunch for staff in December. There are a few other ideas the committee is working on for staff. Staff have been working in collaboration with the judge regarding the suspension of in-person visits for families. A plan is being worked on to determine what those visits will look like once visitation is allowed to resume when the County reaches the green phase. It is a priority to keep everyone safe. Temperatures will be taken when people come into the building, folks will have to wear masks and other measures. Management continues to interview and hire new workers. A few started in the past few weeks and more are starting next week. The quarterly PCYA conference was cancelled for March and June. The next conference is scheduled for October so Joanne and Deanna are waiting to hear if that will be held. The Independent Living team are caseworker that work with foster youth 18 to 21 years old. They have been working hard trying to create a positive experience for the graduating foster children. Usually there is a graduation party for these children but due to the situation with the pandemic it cannot be held. The IL team is looking to have a parade with caseworkers and staff to each graduate's home with a gift, cake, and gift certificated for dinner. There are 12 graduating seniors this year that are all local.

Caitlyn Holland reported that the 2019 fiscal department audit was given an unqualified opinion. The fiscal department is working well from home and everything is working as if people were in the office.

Chairman Song asked about the staff morale currently. Deputy Director German noted that a survey was sent to staff and feedback was very good. Many staff report an increase of productivity, less travel time and they are having contact with others via Facetime or Skype. Morale has been good.

Committee Reports

- 1. Events and Fundraising (Wilder)** – The committee is looking into an online fundraising however a bank account must be attached. A company was found that would send a check but they charge 7%. Option of selling items might not be a viable option this year. Locally source items might take time but could be done with the information tables. Next meeting to gather action items will be in a few weeks. Chairman Song would like everyone to be active in committees.
- 2. Strategic Planning and ByLaws (Gochoel)** – The committee will meet next week. Member Gochoel shared a spreadsheet with expectation dates to keep on track. This committee plans to survey the Board and staff to find out what is going well and how to improve. SWOT is Strength, Weakness, Opportunity, and Threats. Member Gochoel shared plans for strategic goals. Chairman Song noted that Board Members are free to join in other committee meetings.
- 3. Recruiting and Community Advocacy (Song)** – Chairman Song is trying to review the recruiting process. Community Advocacy works best one on one for networking. The committee will need to strategize on the kind of people that should be recruited. A next meeting notice will go out. Chairman Song will reach out to Sharon Lawrence and Council to better understand their process and get information.

Old and New Business

- 1.** No old or new business.

Final Questions/Comments – Chairman Song asked about fundraising. Deputy Director German noted that the agency will plan for something to be done for the children in lieu of the

Children's Holiday Party if it cannot be held. She cannot make a call or decision on the events yet but she will have a backup plan. For example, the agency can have staff deliver gifts to the children instead of the event. The Adoption Celebration might have to be different whereas it might be just the children and their families without the dignitaries which would make it much smaller. Maybe it could be a small, private event. There are many options available. Planning is usually a few months before the event so the committee will need to see what can happen and what needs to be changed.

Adjournment - Motion to adjourn approved by Member Wilder, seconded by Member Childs, all in favor.

NEXT MEETING: Wednesday, July 8, 2020 at 12:00pm.