



Luzerne County Children and Youth Services Advisory Board Meeting Minutes

Date/Time/Location: July 13, 2022/noon/ Conference Room 132 (MS Teams/Conference Call Meeting)

In Attendance: Denise Acosta, Helene Elko, Kathleen McCarthy, Maylan Nicholson, Eileen Song, Tiffany Spearman, Joshua Wilder, Susan Roskos, Dennis Gochoel

Absent: Charlene Aben, Robert Childs, Mary Agnes Kratz, Alex Milanese, Olga Papa

Children and Youth: Chris Dalessandro, Ellen Dymond, Caitlyn Holland, Georgine Meyers

Office of Human Services:

Welcome – Chairman Wilder welcomed everyone to the July meeting. He welcomed the newest member, Tiffany Spearman. Ms. Meyers took attendance and everyone introduced themselves to Member Spearman. Ms. Meyers 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 – Motion to approve the June meeting minutes made by Member Acosta, seconded by Member Nicholson, all in favor.

Director's Report – Ms. Meyers announced that the Administration/Management team are at meetings or off so she will be presenting the Director's Report. Acting Director Gaughan wanted to thank all the Advisory Board members for their support and continued advocacy for the Children and Youth staff. The agency is continuing to work with consultant Bev Mackereth in the form of case reviews and other day to day operations as needed. The licensing inspection will occur the week of July 18-22. The Northeast Regional Office (NERO) will be on site reviewing case records for regulatory compliance. The caseworker vacancy rate has not improved but the agency is hopeful it will improve once the new contracts are signed. Member McCarthy asked what is done with the salaries of the vacant positions. Fiscal Officer Dalessandro responded that the agency is reimbursed for salaries so there isn't money for vacant positions.

Fiscal Update –Fiscal Officer Dalessandro announced that he will be leaving the agency so this will be his last meeting. The Teamsters contract was approved by Council. The agency is starting the 22-23 fiscal year. The fiscal portion of the Needs Based Budget (NBB) is due September 1st. The audit report went well. The agency will be starting the contracting process

soon. If anyone has any fiscal questions, please let fiscal know ahead of time so they can gather the information/data needed to present at the meeting.

Committee Reports

1. **Events and Fundraising** – Chairman Wilder noted that with the change to foster care, there is no longer a need to do a fundraiser for the Foster Children’s Holiday Party. However, funding is still needed for the Adoption Celebration. There is a state grant available. Fiscal Officer Dalessandro is going to check if the Holiday Party money can be used for the Adoption Celebration.
2. **Strategic Planning and ByLaws** - Member Gochoel will be reviewing the ByLaws for any changes. Also discussed was improving the Advisory Board Member onboarding process.
3. **Recruiting and Community Advocacy** - Member Acosta announced that she was promoted at the Kirby Family House to Director and discussed updates on the current status of what is happening at the Kirby Family House. She also announced the Back to School event on August 27th coming up. Walmart will be providing school supplies. Member Acosta also complimented everyone who attend the County Council meeting. Secretary Song noted there was a press release covered by the Times Leader. Next they will be focusing on recruitment of Board Members.

Old/New Business – Member McCarthy noted the importance to be at the Council meeting. She noted there needs to be a plan on what to do next and come up with needs of the agency. Chairman Wilder noted there is an Ad Hoc Committee for staff retention and vacancies that should meet soon and move forward. They need to determine what can be handled in house with Lynn. There is a lot of work to be done. He also stated there were 18 applications for the Director position and he hopes to get someone to work with the Advisory Board. Chairman Wilder will reach out to OHS Director Hill about the role of the Advisory Board for interviews as he would like to participate. Chairman Wilder noted that all are welcome to join the Ad Hoc Committee. There was additional discussion on the union contract and how to determine which matters are urgent. Secretary Song noted that the Board Members need to be advocates in the community so they know how important Human Services is. She also asked if Board Members would like to get together in person to meet each other since meetings have all been virtual. She will send out an email to all.

Final Questions/Comments – Reminder no AB meeting in August. Next meeting is September 14th.

Adjournment – Motion to adjourn made by Member Acosta, seconded by Member McCarthy, all in favor.

NEXT MEETING: No meeting in August. Next meeting September 14, 2022.