



COUNTY OF LUZERNE  
PENNSYLVANIA  
ESTABLISHED 1786

## Luzerne County Children and Youth Services

**Date/T:**

**November 13, 2019 Advisory Board Meeting Minutes**

**In Attendance:**

**John Finn, Robert Childs, Barry Finn, Dennis Gochoel, Francis Scarnulis, Anna Wilder, Susan Roskos**

**Absent: Anthony Bartoli, John Bonin, Ciro Cinti, Martin Dartoe, Maggie Farrell, LeDonne Kelly, Mary Agnes Kratz, Larry Marchetti**

**Children and Youth: Ceil Bartolai, Janice Bonner, Chris Dalessandro, Ellen Dymond, Lisa Fox, Kelly Gaughan, Deanna German, Caitlyn Holland, Nicole Litostansky, Georgine Meyers, Robin Ritsick**

**Office of Human Services: Lynn Hill, Adam Wiernusz**

**Welcome** – Chairman Finn welcomed everyone to the November meeting.

**Approval of Minutes** – October meeting minutes approved by Member Scarnulis, seconded by Member Gochoel, all in favor.

**Director's Report** – Deputy Director German noted there were 24 caseworker vacancies at the agency. A new worker started yesterday.

The annual inspection is complete. The exit interview is on Monday.

The Adoption Celebration was held last week. Several board members attended and talked about their experience at the event. There were over 100 people in attendance, with 17 families that were celebrated. The agency had 84 adoptions this past year. Media attended, a magician entertained everyone, and there was a dreamcatcher craft. Gary Baker was the speaker and did an amazing job. We had some local legislators that attended as well as Judge Rogers.

The agency is in the final stages of the RFP process and proposals were reviewed. Contracts will be sent out to the providers that were selected.

The Foster Children's Holiday Party is on December 15<sup>th</sup> at 1pm at the VFW in Kingston. All Advisory Board members are invited. So far fundraising efforts total is \$875.00. Thank you to all the donors!

The agency also gives out gifts during the holidays to kids involved with our agency. There was a decrease in the number of businesses that partner with the agency. If any Board Members know of any businesses that would be willing to donate gifts, please contact Deputy Director German or Ms. Meyers.

A few staff attended the Life in Limbo Simulation Training. Deputy Director German would like the instructor to do it again and see if we can open it up to Board Members and foster parents. It simulates what foster children go through.

OHS Director Hill introduced the OHS Fiscal Officer, Adam Wiernusz, and the CYS Fiscal Officers, Chris Dalessandro and Caitlyn Holland. Mr. Wiernusz discussed reporting, revenues/expenses, W-9s and the focus of accuracy and getting CYS back on track fiscally. Mr. Dalessandro noted that there were accounting issues before he came on board but everything has been reviewed and coded properly. There is a budget meeting with the County on Monday at 5pm. CYS should be speaking around 7:30pm/8pm. Anyone can attend the budget meeting at the Courthouse. The agency will have fiscal updates at the monthly Advisory Board meetings.

### **Old Business**

1. **Fundraising** – Member Wilder and Member Gochoel are making a plan for next year. Chairman Finn noted that in the past fundraising has been good but has dropped. He would like a TV station to get involved with CYS as a community service to sponsor the Foster Children’s Holiday Party and Adoption Celebration events. Member Roskos mentioned that there are privacy issues that we will need to keep in mind. Next year fundraising efforts will need to be around \$5500 in order to keep the event going.

### **New Business**

1. **Membership** – Member Song is concerned with the attendance of the Board. Chairman Finn noted it is an ongoing issue and he is not sure how to fix the problem. Recruitment was discussed. ABC applications will be sent out to all Board Members and there will be applications at the meeting for anyone to take to hand out. Board Members not fulfilling their obligation as per the ByLaws will be notified. Member Song would like everyone to target the right recruits to join. She suggested attorneys, colleges, churches, community businesses, etc. Member Song would like the Board Members to turn things around, get active and be invested in order to assist staff. Time to make changes and improvements. This month’s challenge to all Board Members is to find one person to give an ABC application to.

**Final Questions/Comments** – OHS Director Hill asked for all Board Members to share why they joined the Board and what motivates them to continue serving on the board. OHS Director Hill asked that Board Members, when out in the community, to advocate for the agency, fundraising, recruiting foster parents and advocate for the children and CYS team. OHS Director Hill suggested breaking down the CYS 101 at each meeting and going into detail. If anyone ever has a question, there are CYS staff that attend the Advisory Board meetings and they cover every unit.

Member Song asked that the Board pick 3 initiatives to work on next year. The first is for everyone learn more about how the fostering process is done and what to do to increase foster homes or help foster children. Another initiative is to recruit board members. The last initiative is to have a more robust fundraising.

Member Roskos would like to have a staff wish list to see what are the needs of staff that the Board can help with.

The Advisory Board sees a need to understand the foster care system and what happens when a case comes in.

Chairman Finn suggested having a meeting at LCCC and having foster children going to LCCC talk to Board Members.

All of this will be discussed at the next meeting.

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

**NEXT MEETING: Wednesday, December 11, 2019 at 12:00pm.**