



COUNTY of LUZERNE
PENNSYLVANIA
ESTABLISHED 1786

Luzerne County Children and Youth Services

Date/T:

November 14, 2018 Advisory Board Meeting Minutes

In Attendance

Author: **John Bonin, Ciro Cinti, Martin Dartoe, Maggie Farrell, Barry Finn, Dennis Gochoel, LeDonne Kelly, Mary Agnes Kratz, Larry Marchetti, Fritz Scarnulis, Eileen Song, Joshua Wilder, Susan Roskos**

Absent:

John Bonin, Joe Sperrazza, Rosella Fedor-Purcell, James Geiger, Rita Mauriello, Sue Strassman, Ruth Betty Baltimore

Children and Youth:

Ceil Bartolai, Janice Bonner, Ellen Dymond, Lisa Fox, Kelly Gaughan, David Gaugler, Deanna German, Emily Intelicato, Nicole Litostansky, Georgine Meyers, Robin Ritsick, Joanne Van Saun

Welcome – Chairman Finn welcomed everyone to the November Advisory Board Meeting. He introduced new members: Charlene Aben, Anthony Bartoli, Martin Dartoe, and Mary Agnes Kratz. Everyone around the room introduced themselves.

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

Director's Report – Director Van Saun introduced herself and asked her staff to introduce themselves. Currently there are 19 casework vacancies. There has been relief from our staff of not being as burdened since the vacancies have reduced over the past few years.

There was a news article in regards to C&Y. Director Van Saun discussed the status of the fiscal department with everyone. She also explained how reporting is done. The latest report has been submitted timely. She will be presenting the C&Y budget to County Council on November 19th. Her priority is getting the agency to move in the right direction.

Director Van Saun discussed data related to the legal department. PFM did a study on how to improve practice. Jackie Carroll is the interim Supervisor for the legal department. She will develop processes and procedures as well as help our new attorneys in the child welfare system. This will improve the outcomes for children in care.

Fran Gutterman, Clinical Consultant, assisted with developing field screens. Field screens determine which clients actually belong in the C&Y system and which families just need referrals to other community providers so they can be better served. She is also assisting to enhance the skills of the leadership team.

Deputy Director German discussed the Quality Service Review (QSR) which is an intensive review of agency records. Teams went through records and interviewed people involved with the case. Overall it was a positive experience and we look forward to the exit interview. The agency will have the annual inspection after Thanksgiving by the Regional Office. The Regional Office will inspect resource records, personnel records, intake records as well as QSR records. The QSR is about quality and the inspection is about clerical such as when letters were sent out and dates documents were signed for instance.

The Annual Adoption Celebration will be held on November 30th. Invitations have gone out. This event will take place at the Holiday Inn from 10am-noon. This is the 25th year of the celebration and Joanita Salla will be the guest speaker. There will be a magician for entertainment. A grant has been applied for. Deputy Director German thanked Susan Roskos for her efforts on planning this event.

The Foster Children's Holiday Party will be held on December 8th at High Point Baptist Church. Deputy Director German thanked Attorney John Rogers and the Advisory Board members for all their help with the event. There will be a balloon guy, face painting, piano player and Santa. All Board Members are invited to the event.

Deputy Director German discussed that administration wanted to assist staff and boost morale. Director Van Saun reached out to another county and discussed emergency bags for staff. The agency utilized the visitation grant to purchase draw string bags and emergency supplies for each caseworker. Bags contain first aid kits, flash light, black light, shoe booties, power bank, ice pack, hand sanitizer, and gloves.

Many community organizations have donated items for our children and families. Recently SCI Dallas notified the agency that they are doing a suitcase drive, a local Back Mountain church is conducting a fleece blanket drive and a local radio station is doing a coat drive. Everything will go to families in need and foster children.

In conclusion, Deputy Director German noted that the OHS offices had a Halloween Decorating contest in which the agency won first prize for their "Neverending Meeting" theme and the agency also had 2 winners in the costume contest.

Chairman Finn also had the Executive Committee introduce themselves to everyone at the meeting. New member, Mary Agnes Kratz, introduced herself to everyone as well.

Chairman Finn introduced David Gaugler, Resource Unit Supervisor, who discussed the upcoming Foster Children's Holiday Party. The event has food, entertainment, pictures with Santa, and each child receives a gift. The Advisory Board raises funds for this party as this event relies solely on donations. This year Attorney John Rogers and his firm contacted the agency and are sponsoring this event. Due to their generosity and assistance, the event will be improved and each child will receive a \$20.00 gift. Chairman Finn asked Advisory Board members to seek help for this event from business owners they deal with. Member Wilder has a letter that can be sent to businesses so please see him for more information.

Old Business

1. Member Camoni noted that in the previous month's notes it states that Representative Toohill will expedite the Civil Service process for test taking. Chairman Finn noted the main concern was the Fiscal Officer position but it will now be a position through the OHS department and no longer be a C&Y Civil Service position. Director Van Saun noted that PFM's recommendation was that all fiscal departments come under the umbrella of one OHS Fiscal Director. The posting went up through OHS, a number of applicants have applied and soon the interview process will begin. C&Y will still employ the Fiscal Officer and the position will answer to the C&Y Director but will also answer to the OHS Director. Member Camoni noted C&Y is understaffed and underpaid and wanted to know if the budget proposal would speak to this. Director Van Saun noted that workers are represented by Teamsters and Supervisors are covered by the MOU. There are 18 non-represented staff in the agency. The 18 will receive a 3% raise this year. The contracts for Teamster members are negotiated when the contract period ends. The agency employee salaries are reimbursed at 80%, therefore the County only pays 20% of C&Y salaries and benefits. The 18 non-represented staff went without a raise for 8 years up until this past year. Vice Chairman Kelly noted that the Management team went without a raise which is a long time without even a cost of living increase while healthcare costs went up. Many people leave the agency due to the low pay. The agency lost 4 employees to state jobs which had a starting salary of \$10,000 more than what they were making at the agency. Casework staff have programs like CWEL and CWEB available to them to assist in their education. Chairman Finn noted that some members of County Council are already aware of this issue. He suggested the Advisory Board Members support Management staff as Board Members feel this is a necessity. Board Members discussed creating a fact based letter regarding budget issues, support of staff and management. Director Van Saun noted that she is advocating for her staff. Board Members would like information from Director Van Saun and are considering creating a letter focusing attention on personnel. They will develop talking points, supporting data, and constraints. Each OHS categorical is funded at different percentages by the State and Federal government whereas other County departments are only funded by the County. The Advisory Board will select a few Members to form an Ad Hoc committee to gather information and create a letter. Member Dartoe discussed breaking down information in details and perhaps a Powerpoint for a solid presentation.

New Business

1. Member Wilder noted that committees are filling up. In December he would like each committee to meet after the regular Advisory Board Meeting for approximately 15 minutes.

Final Questions/Comments – Chairman Finn reminded everyone of the Adoption Celebration and Foster Children's Holiday Party events coming up. He wished everyone a Happy Holiday and noted he will not be present for the December meeting as he will be on vacation.

Adjournment - Motion to adjourn made by Member Cinti, seconded by Member Scarnulis, all in favor.

NEXT MEETING: Wednesday, December 12, 2018 at 12:00pm.