

Greene County Children and Youth Services
Advisory Board Meeting Minutes
May 8, 2018

Call to Order: The regular meeting of the Greene County Children and Youth Services Advisory Board was held in the 3rd Floor Conference Room of the Fort Jackson Building, 19 South Washington Street, Waynesburg, PA on Tuesday, May 8, 2018. The meeting convened at 9:00 a.m., Donna Neino, Vice Chairperson presiding.

Members Present: Donna Neino, Michele Robinson, Thelma Szarell, Archie Trader, and Laura Walters.

Members Absent and/or Excused: Pat Lemley, Rich Pekar, and Sam Silbaugh.

Non-Board Members Present: Amy Anderson, Karen Bennett, Stacey Courtwright, Cheryl Cowen, Sharon Willison, Brandy Yekel, and Christine Owens.

Approval of January 9, 2018 Minutes: Motion to Laura Walters to approve minutes of the January 9, 2018 minutes. Seconded by Commissioner Archie Trader. Motion carried.

Approval of March 13, 2018 and May 8, 2018 Treasurer's Reports: Motion to Thelma Szarell to approve Treasurer's Report for the March 13, 2018 and May 8, 2018. Seconded by Michele Robinson. Motion carried.

CYS Director – Stacey Courtwright:

- Since the last meeting in March there have been 218 incidents, 186 families, involving 347 children. The placement list shows 99 children in care, however there is now 104 children due to an emergency over the weekend. There are some serious cases with major vicarious trauma on the staff. Stacey reported that drugs are the biggest problem and the number of children in care are not going to go down any time soon and not sure what they are going to do. The agency is also seeing serious sexual and physical abuses.
- Stacey, George Lagos, and the Judge attended FGDM (Family Group Decision Making) conference on April 16th and 17th.
- Proclamation for Child Abuse Prevention Month was held on April 18th. The agency staff, court staff, Commissioners, an AB Board Member, Sheriff's department, the Judge, and 1 resource family participated in a picture in front of the Courthouse after the meeting.
- The agency has 1 supervisor, 1 Social Service Aide, and several Caseworker positions open and Stacey and HR will be holding interviews in the near future to fill these positions.
- Foster Parent Appreciation proclamation will be held on May 23rd and invitations will be sent out. Stacey asked for ideas on what we can do for the Foster Parents.
- First week of June is Casework appreciation month and Stacey would like it to be Staff appreciation as everyone's role in the agency is important. Also, the second week of June is Provider Appreciation week. Stacey would like to send out a letter of appreciation to them.
- Stacey stated she would like to start showing appreciation and continue building a relationship with all of the local police departments by making up baskets every quarter that would be filled with things such as granola bars. Commissioner Trader stated this can be discussed and voted on under New Business.
- Stacey reported that we participated in Pam Snyder's Kid Fest and it went very well. She wanted to thank Michelle Howard and her daughter, Kristen, Karen's daughter, Sharon and Pat for coming and helping. There were 8 people that took information about becoming a Foster Parent.

HS Administrator – Karen Bennett:

- Karen reported that Mental Health and Drug & Alcohol are busier than ever with complex challenging cases of the transitional youth age (19 -25). These young adults grow up in the system and continue to have severe mental illness. One of the challenges is that their behavior is getting them into the criminal system as well. Karen stated that HS currently has an 18 year old that has been in and out of mental health facilities since she was 9 has recently assaulted a Physician's Assistant and they pressed charges against the client. Karen reported that her staff spends 95% of their time with the 7 transitional youth that they have on top of all the other clients. Karen reported that this is not a Greene County problem, but a statewide and national problem.
- Karen announced that the Behavioral Health Unit at Washington Health South will be closing and merging with Washington County. The space is being used for the new Drug & Alcohol Facility. While, it is wonderful to be getting the new facility it is going to impose problems not have a mental health facility local. Now when a client gets 302 in the emergency room and ambulance will have to transport them. Karen reported that there are currently discussions on how to bring a Mental Health Facility back to the Greene County area.
- On a good note, Karen wanted to brag about how wonderful the School Based Program for Mental health is going. The school districts have been wonderful to work with and this program is for K – 12th grade students that have any mental health issues. Stacey reported that this has also been wonderful for CYS, as now the parents do not need to find transportation and is keeping the children in school. The children may have a session once or twice a week for an hour right at the school. The program started at Central Greene 3 years ago and there are 80 children and 3 therapists, Southeaster 45 children and 1 therapist, West Greene 64 children and 1 therapist, Carmichaels 66 children and 2 therapists, and Jefferson 36 children and 1 therapist. Karen stated that all the schools will also be providing the service during the summer as well.

County Solicitor's Report – Cheryl Cowen:

- Two meetings ago, Cheryl reported about a case where a pregnant mother using drugs was found to abusing her child from the Supreme Court. The case has been appealed and will be heard. Cheryl stated that before it was appealed they were using this case.
- Cheryl reported that Joyce Hatfield-Wise will be leaving the agency in a couple weeks. Kevin Freyder that is currently part time, will be going full time in June. The agency will see how this goes before deciding what route to take with other Attorneys.
- Cheryl stated that she has been trying to think of reasons why there is no participation at events with the Foster Parents. Cheryl thinks that because of how much things have changed and how much trauma these children go through there are so many services that need provided to them. The Foster Parents are so busy running them to all of their therapy, etc that there is just no time. Michele Robinson also stated that it is very difficult to find a babysitter. Cheryl stated that she feels it would be a good idea to incorporate the baskets or something like that to show our appreciation instead of expecting them to attend an event.
- Cheryl reported that if the caseloads continue to rise CYS is going to have to do something. She stated that all of the other counties are taking custody of children and then transferring custody to an appropriate family member in civil court. This is something we never would look at, but may need to use as a tool with some of the cases in the future. Stacey stated that another possible problem is that in the Auditor General Report under the OCYF part they may make a requirement of no more than 10 cases per caseworker. This would cause having to double the staff, so then space would be an issue again. Plus, we have trouble keeping the 22 caseworkers we have now. We will all have to wait and see where it goes.
- Lastly, Cheryl wanted to report that last year CYS had a data breach (not the County system) that affected some of our clients and any future contracts will now have to have a clause showing that they have Data Breach Security Insurance and provide a copy of the policy. This is not just for CYS, but for any entity.

CYS Independent Contractor – Sharon Willison:

- Sharon reported that her, Stacey, Attorneys, and the Judge continue to meeting monthly and has been working very well as far as communication goes and Thursday Hearings go smoother.
- Sharon and Stacey are still working hard on polices. They are also working on putting together an agency brochure and a handbook.
- The ABA will be here a full day on 5/15/18 and are gearing up for full swing with the goal of reducing the time that children are in care. The 15th will be with the Sub-Committees and they will be expanding the committees as well.

“For the Kids” Report – Laura Walters:

- Amy Anderson reported that there were two different requests for beds and mattresses that were approved. The first request has been purchased and delivered and the other is in the process of being done.
- There was also a laptop purchased for a student that has an ill Mother and was going to quit school.

Old Business:

- Laura reported that they have everything that is needed for the 501C3 application and had a few questions. Laura read the missions statement that was created and Chery advised that her and Carol will tweak it. Chery also advised that a By-Law Committee should be made and the By-Laws really need to be changed. She suggested to put it on New Business for next meeting. The Board also needs to register to get their own Tax ID#.

New Business:

- Donna read a letter from Gary Moser expressing interest on becoming an Advisory Board Member. Christine Owens attended the meeting and also expressing interest on being a board member. **Donna asked for a motion to submit the names of Gary Moser and Christine Owens to the Commissioners to request appointment to the Advisory Board. Motion to Laura Walters and Seconded by Michele Robinson. Commissioner Archie Trader abstained.**
- **Thelma Szarell asked for a motion to explore ideas for action providing the baskets to give to the local police departments every quarter. Motion to Laura Walters and Seconded by Commissioner Archie Trader.**

Motion to Laura Walters to adjourn meeting at 10:29 AM . Seconded by Michele Robinson. Motion carried.

Next meeting is scheduled for July10, 2018

Respectfully submitted by:
Amy Anderson, Administrative Assistant
Greene County Children and Youth Services