

**Greene County Children and Youth Services**  
**Advisory Board Meeting Minutes**  
**March 8, 2022**

**Call to Order:** The regular meeting of the Greene County Children and Youth Services Advisory Board was held in the Fairgrounds 4-H Building, Upstairs, Waynesburg, PA on Tuesday, March 8, 2022. The meeting convened at 9:00 a.m.

**Members Present:** Roberta Boyd, Siara Johnson, Janette Kline, Commissioner Betsy McClure, Gary Moser, Rachel Rodriguez, and Kristin Szewczyk.

**Members Absent and/or Excused** Pam Marisa and Sam Silbaugh.

**Non-Board Members Present:** Alisha King, Brianna Vanata, Gene D'Antonio, Mark Starostanko, and Beth Booker

**Approval of Treasurer's Reports:** Treasures Report was approved. Commissioner Betsy made the Motion and Kristin Szewczyk second the motion.

**CYS Administrator – Mark Starostanko:** With the money received from Chris Ramsey for “For the kids” fund, we were able to purchase a washer and dryer for a family and keep kids in the home. Currently have 73 children in care. We just finished the kinship policy with the American Bar Association and OCYF and due to unveil that in the next month or so. We are going to really work for providing kinship homes. A Kinship home is a relative related to the child or family, to have the least impact or trauma to the child. This Policy is a federal mandate and was a process. We had to go through the American Bar Association, Miss Epstein, Jenn Caruso of the Training Center, and also our own OCYF and several of our own people. We had hours of going back and forth, and even when it was finished, we had to review it, word it better. Commissioner Betsy asked what will this mean for our agency? It means we will be able to keep children with their family unit instead of Foster Care with strangers. It was a federal mandate that we are working on to alleviate the cost of congregate care out of county placement. We do have data that show every placement of a child they regress six months in their education, so if we can keep them in the family structure it's less impactful for the children. Commissioner Betsy asked What does this means for our budget? Mark said it will allow us to be more flexible in our budget. It's eliminating the cost. So, the cost will be significantly lower. Mark said that him, Commissioner McClure and Cara Cox from HR had about a month or a month and a half process of addressing several candidates for the Deputy Administrator. We had two different interviews. Interview one was a more general interview and interview two was more in-depth and narrowed it down to three individuals. Those individuals were asked four different scenarios. We put them to the test. What are you doing? How did you do it? What's your first step? What's your next step? We came to a decision within the past two weeks, and decided the individual will be in house. This Individual is Beth Booker. She wasn't even on the job and completed the task last Friday. We had two emergencies one was out of our control. Where we potentially had to place children, and the other was a child pulled the fire alarm in the Fort Jackson. So, we were dealing with making sure everyone got out. It was a pain staking decision because I want o make sure right people are in the right places. We do have employees' leaving the agency. Myself, Commissioner McClure and Beth have talk about where we need to work on in order to keep retention. Retention is a big problem across the state. We are actually at a 22% turnover. Some other counties are at 35 - 40% turnover. It just depends where you are at in the state. With that being said we are talking about some different avenues to take some with regards to training. We even talked about having a training supervisor. Somebody who is going to come in a have a unified curriculum. Curriculum related to what they call core training in the state of Pennsylvania. We have put out a large effort in writing grants. Beth had written a grant and I had written a grant. One of the things Commissioner McClure, Commissioner Mike Belding, and Commissioner Zimmerman if there is anything we can obtain from the state, because Greene County receives the least amount of money. We have come along way in recent years to obtain more dollars. One of the things we have been doing is working a lot with CASA. We recently had a birthday party at CASA and ate at Don Patron's for a child, because that's where he wanted to eat. It's a wonderful way to let them know they aren't just a number or a child in care, they are family to us.

**Aaron Houser** from CASA is to request funding from “For the Kids” to help with Child Abuse and Prevention Awareness Month. CASA stands for Court Appointed Special Advocate of Greene County. As director of CASA is his job to train supervisors and volunteers so serve as the Court appointed special advocate for children. One of the targets for CASA is to be the long-term champion/protector for children. CASA is a 501c3 completely independent. April is Child Abuse and Prevention Awareness month. Aaron wants to partner with Greene County CYS for the display on the court house lawn. The budget will be split with CASA. The total cost is \$765.00 which includes pin wheels, banner, the lumber for the banner, and artificial turf, because First Federal has been kind enough to offer their window to mirror our display on the court house lawn. This year using Amazon it will cost \$570.00 for pin wheels. We will need a new banner this year. So, half the budget to the Advisory Board would be \$383.00 and Aaron is asking the Advisory Board to approve up to \$400.00. There is another component WANB has offered an advertising spot of 130 second ads, and the Administrator and I have been talking to see if that something the agency would be interested in. The Banner is through Bee Graphics because they did it before and they gave a discount because their logo was on the banner. Commissioner McClure said that Pam Marisa from Direct Results is on the Advisory Board and will sometimes donate. She actually helped us get \$15,000.00 from KSW. Cost for WANB is \$500.00. Greene County Foster Care already has an Ad for Foster Care so maybe for the month of April they could change the Ad for no cost. Janelle made a Motion for \$400 and Commissioner McClure Second that motion. Motion Carried. The Second Motion would be CASA and Greene County Foster Care join together for the Month of April WANB advertising. Roberta Boyd Motion and Commissioner McClure Second that motion. Motion carried.

**Solicitor’s Report** - Erick Rigby is no longer with the agency. Mark and Brianna will be interviewing for a new solicitor. This is Brianna’s first Advisory Board meeting. We have approximately 97, 98 cases active dependency cases. And as Mark has reported 73,73 in placement. Which is a little higher than the past, but Brianna thinks everyone is doing a really good job. Mark said Brianna has been doing court Prep training with the caseworkers. Getting them ready for court.

**Commissioner Betsy McClure:** Commissioner McClure said she has been very busy in CYS and Human Services. Mark and Commissioner McClure met with the supervisors and then the caseworkers working on the issue of retention. There are two supervisor positions open and a case manager position. Also, a position for a Training supervisor. One thing for the county is working on communication and creating a climate of caring and kindness. So that again retention throughout the county and employees feel that they are valued. With new employees coming in, in Marks case they are hiring brand spanking new graduates from college. We want to work a little bit on training, and not only on training to be a caseworker, but a little bit of life skills in there as well. Like what does this job mean to you? What are the benefits of being a county employee? It all starts in the interviewing process. One of the things we discussed is starting an internship possibly a paid internship with Waynesburg University and Cal U. to start bringing caseworkers in. So its not a shock and they are exposed to it, and they have their clearances. Gary Moser asked “what’s the biggest factor for caseworkers are leaving the agency money?” Commissioner McClure responded saying for caseworkers no they are one of the highest paid in the state. Mark added that Greene County is number four in the state as far as salary and raises. Commissioner McClure responded that supervisors and management are not paid as well. People today are not building their resume. They are leaving their jobs after 2 years and jumping jobs. Also, they don’t care about free health insurance if they are on their parents’ health insurance until they are 26 yrs. old. Gary Moser asked if they caseworkers do exit interviews? Commissioner McClure responded that we offer it, but the staff is not required to do it. Beth added that caseworker burn out is a huge issue throughout the state. When caseworkers have a full caseload then have to take on other people’s work, it becomes a big burden. We had some people out for medical reasons then supervisors help with the cases and then the new caseworkers aren’t getting that one -on- one time they need to be trained properly. That’s why having a training supervisor would be a big help. Roberta Boyd asked about an internship through Waynesburg University. Mark adds that there are internships through the university that they get stipends for. Commissioner Betsy said they also want to work with Southwest workforce. They do a lot with Washington County and since Commissioner Belding and I came on they have come into Greene County and will also pay for internship.

**Beth Booker-** We do have two new foster homes that we certified as of last month. We just received a call about someone who was inquiring about it. I have a foster worker who is carrying a case load so she hasn't had time to focus only on foster care. With warmer weather coming we always go to the Mental Health Fair and Rain Day. We will probably have a function in May for Foster Care recruitment. So we will be out and about. Commissioner Betsy asked "how many Foster Families we have?" Beth Responded saying "we currently have 12 Foster Families. "

**Old Business-** Mark said there is the Secretarial Position we still have open. We did have one that was suppose to start but then declined the position. We do have a fiscal position that is open as well. Gary Moser asked "how are these positions advertised." Mark Responded that they are through Indeed and through the County Website. Commissioner Betsy asked "when the next interview is for the secretarial position?" Alisha King responded "that we are still getting the applications in so in the next couple of weeks."

**New Business-** Eric Greaves left the agency and moved to Human Services upstairs. We are interviewing for a new Solicitor and of course caseworkers.

**Motion by Commissioner Betsy to adjourn the meeting at 9:58 A.M. Seconded by Janette Kline Motion carried.**

**Next meeting is scheduled for scheduled for May 10, 2022**

Respectfully submitted by:

Alisha King, Administrative Assistant

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