

Greene County Children and Youth Services
Advisory Board Meeting Minutes
September 10, 2019

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, September 10, 2019. The meeting convened at 9:00 a.m., Pat Lemley, Chairperson presiding.

Members Present: Pat Lemley, Gary Moser, Christine Owens, Commissioner Trader, and Laura Walters.

Members Absent and/or Excused: Donna Neino, Michele Robinson, and Sam Silbaugh.

Non-Board Members Present: Stacey Courtwright, Cheryl Cowen, Sharon Willison, Brandy Yekel, Gene D'Antonio, Rebecca Matchett, CASA, and Jeff Marshall.

Approval of July 9, 2019 Minutes: Correction of July instead of May. Motion by Laura Walters to approve minutes of the July 9, 2019 minutes. Seconded by Gary Moser. Motion carried.

Approval of September 10, 2019 Treasurer's Reports: Motion by Gary Moser to approve Treasurer's Report for the July 9, 2019. Seconded by Laura Walters.

CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocate) Program Director: Rebecca Matchett:

- Rebecca report CASA is a nation-wide Non-Profit Organization. CASA is the voice for the child and making sure that all of the child's needs are met. Rebecca stated that the current advocates have a diverse background such as stay at home Moms, retired educators, and college grads. You do not need to have a background in Child Welfare. Rebecca reported that CASA's #1 goal is reunification for the child.
- To be a volunteer, you must be 21 years old, have references, and most importantly a passion for children. You must also complete a 30-hour training.
- There are currently 15 trained and sworn-in volunteers and 11 are active.
- CASA is currently serving 20% of CYS children. The goal is to serve 100%.
- CASA Volunteers work closely with all involved with the children, including the parent's attorneys, and GAL.
- CYS works great CASA.
- Laura Walters asked if CASA gets involved with the Schools? Rebecca replied yes, they attend all of the IEP meetings and has been very successful.
- Pat asked Stacey how the agency feels about the CASA program. Stacey stated that at first workers were apprehensive, but a meeting was held to determine the transition with the agency and has gone very well. Pat also asked if CASA stays involved when the child goes back with the parents? Rebecca stated that CASA backs out at dependency.
- Gary Moser asked who follows up after dependency. It was answered that CYS stays involved after dependency.
- Pat asked how many hours does a volunteer spend a month? Rebecca replied about 12 – 15 hours a month.
- Pat thanked Rebecca for coming to the meeting.

CYS Director – Stacey Courtwright:

- Stacey reported since this time last meeting, there have been 223 incidents, involving 180 families and 304 children. This is a small increase and very close to the same as this time last year. There were about 50 more children this year.
- The Agency has a turnover in supervisor positions. Stacey stated there are current caseworkers interested in the open positions and casework interviews will be scheduled.
- Solicitor interviews were held on August 20th and a decision will be made soon.
- Stacey reported the Narrative portion of the Needs Based Budget was turned in on August 15th. On August 30th Stacey, Jessica, Brandy, Siara, and Jeff had a phone conference with the State to discuss the budget.
- September 26th Stacey accompanied the Judge to the Fall Round Table.
- October 9th and 10th is the next PCYA that Stacey, Jessica, Brandy, and Patty will be attending.
- Laura asked why the agency has so much turnover. Stacey stated one thing that happens is people have different tolerances. In the interview most of the candidates love children and want to help make a difference, but then six months later the employee is just unable to do it. Stacey also stated the whole training process has changed and now do live simulations that are very true to life and is hoping this helps a caseworker to figure out if it is for them or not earlier in the process. Jeff Marshall stated that caseworkers leave for various reasons. He also stated that ones that are leaving for betterment do not have issues, but ones that struggle with the job will have complaints. Stacey advised that the one Supervisor that left went to school for Forensics and got a job in her field and the other two were unexpected.

CYS Solicitor – Cheryl Cowen:

- Cheryl reported Kevin Freyder had resigned his position with the Agency and will be interviewing for a new attorney.
- Cheryl also wanted to add that CASA has been a Godsend to the agency. She was skeptical at first as well.
- Cheryl reported that she did have all of the contact information for the Attorney she is recommending to do the 501(c)3 for the agency, but was unable to find it. She advised that when she finds it she will forward it to Pat so someone from the agency can contact him. The fee is \$2,000. The attorney does a lot of 501(c)3 applicants and was recommended by the Bar Association.

CYS Independent Contractor: - Sharon Willison:

- Sharon reported that the ABA sub-committees continue to meet every other month and there is a meeting today at noon. Stacey's staff has a training scheduled for October 30th as well.
- Sharon and Stacey continue to work on the policies and procedures and should be completed in the next month.

“For the Kids” Report – Laura Walters:

- Laura reported that there was an original request for \$160.00 for a keyboard, shoes/boots and she is confused on what the outcome was as she did not receive all of the emails and requests that Amy Anderson will send out outcomes of all future requests of whether they are approved or not. Stacey explained that not everyone hits reply all so it starts getting confusing on who is getting what. Brandy Yekel advised that the keyboard was purchased and the Foster Parents bought the child tennis shoes. Brandy also stated that the original boots were not as durable as thought, so a new request went out for more money for the boots. Stacey advised that she just

found out this morning that the request was for a pair of cowboy boots and not hiking boots. She also explained that when the child was taken into custody the child's father would not let him take anything of his so had nothing. It would be another month before the foster parents would be able to get a check from the agency. Stacey feels that for the child's emotional well being the board should buy the boots. Pat still feels that \$160.00 is too much for the boots. Commissioner Trader reported that he feels this matter needs to be reevaluated and voted on again. Pat explained that the "For the Kids' Committee votes for requests. There was then discussion on who was on the Committee and how member got on Committees for the Board. It was decided that Amy would resubmit the request for the boots. Sharon doesn't see any harm in revisiting the request since there was confusion. She also stated that it is her opinion that the Committee should trust and respect the Administrator's request for a child. Pat stated that more information should be included in the requests.

New Business:

- Gary Moser reported that Rich Pekar has a child that needs funds for the Cosmetology Program. The board advised him to submit a "For the Kids" request.
- Laura stated that Pastor Kelley, that was on the board previously and is in good health, would like to be back on the board. Pat advised for him to submit a letter to the Commissioners.
- Gary Moser reached out to Donna Brown, who is on the CTC School Board about being on the board as well. It was also advised for her to send a letter of interest to the Commissioners.

Motion by Gary Moser to adjourn the meeting at 10:37. Seconded by Laura Walters. Motion carried.

Next meeting is scheduled for November 12, 2019

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