

**LANCASTER COUNTY CHILDREN AND YOUTH AGENCY
CITIZENS' ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MINUTES**

February 21, 2023

Board Members Present: D'Arcy Crocker, Angela Eichelberger, Cathy Ginder, Kurt Miller, Phil Berkheiser, Meredith Dahl, Patience Buckwalter, Brian Klugh, and Commissioner Trescot

Staff Present: Crystal Natan, Executive Director, Robin Boyer, Intake Director, Betsy Frame, Permanency Director, Kelley Zipp, Family Support Director, and Lindsey Brenna, Executive Secretary

Community Present: None

Excused: Amy Campbell, Quality Assurance Director, Stacey Spangenburg, Carrie Bair, Kathryn Walker

Call to Order: Board Chair D'Arcy Crocker called the meeting to order at 8:11 A.M. The meeting was held through Lifesize, a virtual link and in person.

Approval of Board Minutes: Brian Klugh motioned to approve the November 2022 minutes; Phil Berkheiser seconded.

Old Business: None

New Business:

We need a chair and vice chair nominated for advisory board by May.

Director's Report:

Crystal Natan talked about the report she sent out, it is a combination of all the departments in the agency. Crystal Natan talked about our continued staffing problems, and the commissioners approved to extend the hiring bonus until June 2023.

Crystal Natan explained how the hiring bonus works and what happens if the employee leaves before their two year commitment is up. We also have a higher starting salary. Crystal talked about how Caseworkers, Clerical, and fiscal staff are covered under the union and union negotiations will be beginning soon for this year. This new union contract will take effect in January 2024.

We have 32 casework positions open, 4 clerical positions, and 1 screening specialist position currently open.

Crystal talked about how we have had an increase in the last five or six months of new employees needing to stay on probation due to not understanding the job. Applicants coming in are very inexperienced and struggling with how to address families. It is overwhelming to these new caseworkers.

Robin and Betsy are going to work on reorganizing staff, and being more intentional with helping staff understand the job.

Robin Boyer talked about what happens when a caseworker is put on extended probation. It affects the whole unit. Robin talked about how supervisors are having to meet with new employees almost daily to give them tasks to complete. She stated how it is becoming frustrating to families. Robin talked about how these new caseworkers are struggling to even set up voicemail.

Robin talked about her intake department meeting and they went over how to write a letter.

Robin gave many examples of situations she has been dealing with new staff members. Betsy Frame talked about the struggles of people not being able to follow simple instructions.

Crystal Natan talked about how supervisors cannot trust caseworkers to follow through. She talked about how a caseworker did not even have her voicemail set up on her agency cell phone.

Crystal Natan talked about how in the supervisor meeting they broke out into groups and talked about what they should be doing the first week, second week with a new employee.

Amy Campbell and Crystal Natan talked with Millersville University about apprenticeships in the future to help familiarize students with Human Services. There is a follow up meeting in a few weeks.

We recently hired two caseworkers who were interns this past year.

Robin Boyer talked about the 30 hour Jr. internship with Lancaster Bible College has been a wonderful program and we have seen very solid applicants.

Kurt Miller said this is not just a Lancaster County Problem with new caseworkers, this is a problem across the state.

Crystal Natan will be discussing the anxiety and training of new caseworkers at the next CWRC meeting. She talked about all the different simulations available to new caseworkers as part of their training now.

Crystal Natan stated she has a PCYA meeting this afternoon and different training components will be a part of this meeting.

Crystal Natan talked about our Drug Exposed Infants program, she talked about how many of our clients are poly-substance users, we assess and investigate in the beginning phase, under reasonable efforts law we have to provide next steps, Crystal talked about how we use the drug screeners to help keep clients accountable. We have one caseworker who is primarily responsible for meeting with these families. Sharlene King will go to the hospital and work with the team at the hospital to help keep these infants safe. Sharlene King is equipped to do drug screens in the field since she has such a unique caseload. Sharlene is performing a lot of screens each week. Clients are not always forthcoming or honest with their struggles with their drug use. It is very high stakes when you are dealing with infants.

Crystal talked about how we have had a lot of fatalities, or near fatalities with infants the past few months.

Crystal Natan talked about the Joining forces for children program. Robin talked about the video clip that will be aired on tv to bring awareness to illegal substance use in the home and how it affects the whole family.

Crystal talked about the case about the murder and assault of the young girl in Columbia. This becomes a child abuse fatality; we do currently have a caseworker assigned to and she will be working closely with law enforcement. This case will be going to MDT tomorrow. Bea Robaina is the caseworker assigned to this case. Crystal talked about how Bea is a seasoned caseworker, but it still makes an impact on the caseworkers and those involved with the case.

How do we respond to prevent these kinds of tragedies?

Crystal Natan talked about there has been an increase in sexual offences and sexual victimization of children. We are looking into why these numbers are going up.

Kurt Miller asked if these could get overturned, Crystal explained how the system works and what happens when the client appeals.

Crystal and Robin explained how a charge can be unfounded or overturned.

Crystal said 15 to 20 percent of these cases get appealed.

Robin explained how the cases are substantiated, she said a lot of this depends on the attorney who sits in on the cases. Robin talked about how the hearings are now very child friendly, they are not children and youth oriented, these hearing officers normally deal with welfare fraud. Children are asked horrible questions when on the stand at one of these hearings. Robin said a lot goes into these appeals.

D'Arcy Crocker asked Robin more on the process. She asked if the children are required to attend these hearings.

Kurt asked what it meant if the case is overturned. Robin responded that we would keep the family open for services, just the perp will not show on the indicated registry for ChildLine.

D'Arcy Crocker is moving the meeting forward.

Robin talked about what complex cases are. She said a lot of these cases are dealing with mental health crisis's, normally juvenile probation is involved. Robin said a lot of these children are sitting in the ER and then transported back to YIC and YIC is not set up for children with significant mental health problems. There is a process being developed to help the children involved in these complex cases.

There is a bulletin, and we are required to loop the state in with these cases.

Crystal gave the example of a child in Betsy's department who has diabetes and mental health issues and no one will take this child. She's been in and out of YIC, she was finally placed in a facility in Virginia. Then insurance decided not to pay for her care so it went for fee for service. Fee for service is probably not going to pay once she is discharged. Crystal explained how just the insurance part is complex.

Not many facilities want to take kids with these complex issues.

Crystal said we are trying to work with YIC to be more treatment oriented.

D'Arcy Crocker asked if the difficulty in finding placement is the complex cases or the lack of rtf homes?

Crystal responded that this is a large part of the problem, rtf homes would not be aloud to say no to a complex case or a certain case. Some of these places are being choosier and they do not have medical care, especially the children who have diabetes.

Some rtf's have closed because there is not enough help.

Robin explained that it is hard to find placements with children with cognitive disabilities.

Betsy Frame explained if we are not truthful with the facilities or rfp's we will start loosing placements.

D'Arcy Crocker asked if there has been an increase in anger and aggression?
Betsy Frame responded that the children are even angrier and more aggressive now than they were a few years ago.

Crystal stated the system is in crisis.

Crystal mentioned the Homebuilders program, they are being very picky and selective on who they are accepting.

Robin explained that the one case they were looking at accepting and because the safety plan was expired, they could not be accepted into the program.

Kelley Zipp explained that if the family does not answer one phone call they will drop that family. Crystal mentioned she feels like she should be a part of these discussions.

This is a new group working on this program in our community. This is an evidence-based program and very strict.

RFP for the Triple P program, and the RFP for Homemaker program which follows the model of the PEP (parent empowerment program). We had to put this through RFP process to change the model. We are looking to change this to a full-time model instead of a part time model.

Kurt Miller explained that in some other counties the case aide provides the homemaker programs services.

Crystal explained that Amy Campbell and herself worked on the homemaker's program.

Crystal explained that these families can have more than one program at once.

Crystal talked about act 148 funds. Crystal said we use 48 million in state dollars and 20 million in federal dollars. The goal would be to use more federal dollars than state dollars.

Kurt Miller asked if there has been talks about the supreme court about the Indian Child Welfare Act?

Crystal Natan said she has not heard much, she said she thinks more talks will happen once a ruling is made.

Crystal explained we try to worry about these sorts of things once a ruling is made.

Angela motioned to adjourn the meeting Kurt Miller seconded.

Upcoming Events: None

Announcements: None

Public Comment: None

Meeting was adjourned at 9:39A.M.

NEXT MEETING: May 15, 2023
8:00-9:30 a.m.
via Lifesize and In Person
Join the meeting: <https://call.lifesizecloud.com/6014008>

Respectfully submitted,

Lindsey Brenna