

**Human Services Levy Review Committee Meeting Minutes for
Franklin County Children Services
April 4, 2024**

CALL TO ORDER—CHAIR

The Human Services Levy Review Committee (HSLRC) meeting was called to order by Jerry Friedman on Thursday, April 4, 2024, at 11:05 A.M.

ROLL CALL

- HSLRC members present: Jerry Friedman; Michael Curtin; Nana Watson; Rose Handon, Ph.D.; Jim Bowman; and Zachary Talarek.
- HSLRC members absent: Jesse Hemphill.
- County Administration: Joy Bivens, Deputy County Administrator.
- Office of Management and Budget (OMB): Rachel Buske, Budget Analyst 3; and Madeline Gresham, Budget Analyst 2.
- Franklin County Children Services: Chip Spinning, Executive Director; Dan Shook, CFO; Ellen Clapp, Director of Financial Management; Katie Congrove, Chief Legal Counsel; Vanessa Lichtensteiger, Administrative Assistant to the CFO; Tanya McClanahan, Director of Inclusion & Analysis; Raquel Breckenridge, Family Services Director-Permanency; Tina Rutherford, Deputy Director; Scott Varner, Director of Communications & Community Outreach; Leah K. Zuck, Director of Procurement & Contracts Management; Julie W. Murrell, Deputy Chief Legal Counsel; William Gregg (Brad), Director of Evaluation; Paula Davis, Performance Support Director.

REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES—CHAIR

Mr. Friedman stated that the next item on the agenda was the approval of the meeting minutes for the March 7, 2024, and the March 21, 2024, meetings. Hearing no edits or comments, Mr. Talarek moved to approve the minutes, which was seconded by Ms. Watson. All members voted “Aye,” and the motion carried.

FCCS 2024 LEVY REQUEST FOLLOW-UP DISCUSSION—HSLRC & FCCS STAFF

Mr. Friedman stated that the FCCS staff had responded to the questions the HSLRC asked at the previous meeting. He asked if there was an addendum to that report from FCCS.

Mr. Spinning stated that there was nothing to add at this time, but FCCS would be happy to answer any questions or provide clarification.

Ms. Watson asked for clarification regarding a chart that FCCS provided. She stated that the chart was for Case Workers 1-4. Ms. Breckenridge explained that a Case Worker 1 is an entry-level caseworker, and employees typically stay in that position for approximately one year, after which employees could be eligible to move into a Case Worker 2 position. She explained that the employee stays in the same position, but their experience puts them in a higher pay range. She added that after an employee is a Case Worker 2 for one year, they are eligible to move to a Case Worker 3, based on their performance.

Ms. Watson asked for the demographic information for the employees at the executive level at FCCS. Mr. Spinning stated that the FCCS Executive Council, which is their senior leadership team, has eight members. He stated that there are two Black members and two male members, and the remaining members are white or female. Ms. Watson asked for the titles of the two Black members. Ms. Breckenridge identified herself as one of the Black members of the Executive Council and stated that she is the Family Services Director over Permanency. She explained that she is the administrator responsible for the Adoption, Kinship, Youth Transition Services, and Visitation Departments. Ms. McClanahan identified herself as another Black member of the Executive Council and stated that she is the Director of the Inclusion and Analysis Division, which includes the Evaluations Department, Organizational Health Department, Volunteers and Child Enrichment, as well as Educational and Research Supports. Ms. Watson asked if there were any Black men on the Executive Council, to which Mr. Spinning replied that there are not. Ms. Watson asked why, and Mr. Spinning stated that FCCS must do more work on developing staff as they come up through the organization. He added that there was a Black man on the Executive Council for about eight years, but they lost him within the last year.

Dr. Handon asked Ms. Breckenridge and Ms. McClanahan how long they have worked for FCCS. Ms. McClanahan stated that she has been with FCCS for almost two years, adding that she came in as the Director of the Inclusion and Analysis Division. Ms. Breckenridge stated that she has been with FCCS for approximately 20 years, and she started as a Case Worker. Dr. Handon asked how long Ms. Breckenridge has served in her executive position, and Ms. Breckenridge replied that she has been in her current position for a little over two years.

Ms. Watson stated her concern about how the individuals in the Kinship program are screened and asked for an explanation of the screening process. Ms. Breckenridge explained that when a child is in FCCS custody, the first thing that the Case Worker and Kinship Worker do is talk to the family to see if there is an available relative who could care for the child. She stated that once a relative is identified, FCCS begins an assessment phase, including an interview, a walkthrough of their home, and background checks for criminal and financial history. Ms. Breckenridge added that kinship caregivers are not required to have any type of training to care for a child initially. After these initial steps are completed, a decision is made between the kinship caregiver and the case worker whether to place that child in the custody of the kinship caregiver. She stated that if there are any red flags, FCCS will hold off on placement until they are able to confirm whether it is safe.

Ms. Breckenridge added that if a child is placed, they will have monthly visits with an ongoing case worker, and they will be seen by a kinship case worker at least once a month to ensure that the kinship caregiver has all the resources they need to provide for the child. Ms. Congrove added that the protocols that Ms. Breckenridge described for kinship caregivers are the same protocols that FCCS uses for Managed Care entities. She stated that those assessment protocols are set forth in the Ohio Administrative Code. She clarified that there is a different protocol once the agency no longer has custody of the child, stating that the Kinship Permanency stipends only come into play once the kinship caregiver agrees to take legal custody of the child. Ms. Congrove stated that when a child is no longer in FCCS custody, there is no longer a mandated requirement for follow-up. Ms. Congrove and Mr. Spinning explained how the court is involved in the change-in-custody process.

Mr. Friedman stated that it is his understanding that FCCS has contractual relationships with each of the Managed Board and Care providers that are different based on the number of cases they receive. He asked for clarification regarding the number of cases each provider was capped at. Ms. Rutherford stated that FCCS has contracts with three Managed Board and Care providers, and each of their contracts spell out the set number of monthly case assignments to the provider.

Mr. Friedman asked if, during intake and assessment, FCCS is assigning a risk category or intensity of service category for the individuals being moved into Managed Board and Care. Ms. Rutherford replied that the protocols set forth in the OAC are used for all assessments and investigations, and those tools identify different risk factors. Mr. Friedman asked if FCCS does a retrospective evaluation of the distribution of the cases by risk category to ensure that there is an equal distribution of high-risk cases to each of their partners. Ms. Rutherford assured Mr. Friedman that FCCS monitors the case mix very closely to ensure that there is an even distribution of all types of cases among their providers.

Mr. Friedman asked how the contracts with each of the providers are negotiated. Ms. Rutherford stated that there is a case rate, and that rate is negotiated for each contract. She added that these rates are not adjusted based on risk level, stating that there is a flat rate for each case. Mr. Shook stated that FCCS looks at historical and financial data to determine an appropriate case rate. Mr. Friedman asked if there was a reconciliation process at the end of the year for each provider, and Mr. Shook stated that there is an ongoing monthly and yearly assessment to determine if money is owed back to FCCS and to ensure that the providers are not in the red.

Mr. Friedman asked if FCCS pushes people to enroll in Medicaid, because the majority of the people they serve are eligible. Mr. Shook stated that they partner with Franklin County Department of Job and Family Services to get eligible individuals enrolled.

Ms. Watson asked if the FCCS staff is representative of the population of children it serves. Mr. Spinning provided an overview of the number of Black case workers at FCCS, stating that the number of Black men working as case workers is disproportionately lower than the number of Black boys that they serve. Ms. Breckenridge added that other areas of the FCCS staff are more racially diverse, so where they fall short in linking youth to case workers of the same gender and

race, they connect children to other staff and outside mentorship opportunities to provide those relationships.

Ms. McClanahan acknowledged that there is a gap in this area and FCCS has made intentional efforts to bridge this gap. She mentioned the Black Male Infinity Group and stated that the Black men who work at FCCS need the support of the community, as well as the internal supports that allow them to be retained at the agency. She added that FCCS is using these efforts to recruit more Black men to work in their agency. Ms. Watson asked if FCCS has worked with the fraternities in Columbus to assist with this effort, to which Ms. McClanahan replied in the affirmative, stating that this is one of the major ways in which recruiting takes place. She also stated that FCCS is putting a call to action out to the churches in the community to enhance recruiting efforts, as well. Ms. Bivens offered to put FCCS in contact with individuals who are working on Black youth mentoring programs. Mr. Friedman asked if mentors go through a screening process. Ms. McClanahan stated that there is a screening process and background check for the mentors FCCS uses. She added that FCCS also puts the mentors through a training course to ensure the mentors understand the complex needs of the youth FCCS serves. Mr. Friedman suggested that FCCS connect with athletes, including professional athletes, in the community to serve as mentors, as well.

Mr. Talarek asked for an overview of how FCCS has performed with respect to its outcome measures and the Child and Family Services Reviews (CFSR) process. Ms. Rutherford stated that, regarding Managed Board and Care, FCCS works with its partners to monitor where improvements can be made and where collaboration is needed to reach performance measures. She added that cases are randomly selected to be reviewed in state and/or federal audits and that the Managed Board and Care partners are held to the same mandates and standards as FCCS for those reviews. Ms. Davis provided an overview of the state and federal evaluations, noting that FCCS is currently in the middle of its state assessment and is doing well across the board. She stated that they are working on a Plan for Practice Advancement to determine what areas need to be improved. She noted that the state grades all agencies together, so the scores are for everyone, not just FCCS individually. She noted that the next federal review is scheduled for 2025, but the state passed the federal review in 2021.

Mr. Friedman asked if the FCCS calls to action could be communicated in terms of goals and the metrics that would be used to track them. Mr. Spinning stated that FCCS is revising its Strategic Plan, which is lining up with the levy cycle for the first time. He stated that he is hopeful that this alignment will improve their efforts, and more metrics should be available in the fall to assess their efforts. Mr. Gregg stated that the information Mr. Friedman asked for is being worked on and should be available in the coming months. He noted that there is an emphasis on shifting from process measures to outcome measures.

Mr. Friedman asked for the distribution of children that FCCS serves across the county. Mr. Spinning agreed to provide that information, noting that FCCS serves every ZIP code, but some ZIP codes are much more heavily represented than others. He added that FCCS acts as a safety net for other services that the county provides.

Mr. Curtin provided FCCS with contacts and resources for athletic mentorship opportunities.

Mr. Friedman followed up on the question the HSLRC asked previously: if spending reductions are necessary, where would you prioritize reducing? He rephrased to ask what FCCS would do if the levy that FCCS is requesting fails. Mr. Spinning stated that FCCS would need to determine what resources they have and prioritize expenditures. He noted that they would have to live within the means they have and make adjustments to services, likely beginning in the support areas. Mr. Shook stated that FCCS would have to start by looking at the non-mandated services that FCCS provides. Mr. Spinning noted that the two biggest expenses that FCCS has are placement and staff.

Mr. Friedman asked how FCCS evaluates its secondary and tertiary prevention services. Ms. Zuck stated that each contract is implemented with an evaluation section, and FCCS receives regular reports. She added that FCCS also meets with its contracted providers on a regular basis. She stated that FCCS reviews reports and data yearly to determine if partnerships are still needed or if there are gaps in their services.

Mr. Talarek asked, if FCCS is investing in prevention efforts, is a 5% increase too high of a prediction for costs because the prevention efforts should be reducing the number of youths they serve. Mr. Shook stated that the number of youths FCCS serves is leveling out, but the per diem is increasing, so the 5% increase is to account for the increased cost of caring for the children who are in custody each day.

Mr. Friedman asked if FCCS works with families so they understand that the \$500 stipend for foster and kinship caregivers will not make them ineligible for other benefits. Mr. Shook stated that these stipends should not have a significant impact on receiving other benefits. Ms. Breckenridge noted that FCCS links families who get the stipend with other community resources, as well.

DISCUSSION OF LEVY REQUEST—HSLRC

Mr. Friedman thanked the FCCS members for their attendance and began a discussion amongst the HSLRC. Mr. Curtin suggested that for future levy proposals, the HSLRC should ask the requesting agency to provide costs related to the median home value in Franklin County, rather than \$100,000.00. He noted that he agrees that FCCS needs an increase, but the HSLRC is tasked with helping them reach that goal while taking into consideration what else is on the ballot in November.

Mr. Friedman added that the submitting agencies should be asked to provide staff demographic information.

The HSLRC agreed that FCCS needs to provide specific information regarding where cuts would happen if the levy did not pass.

Ms. Buske provided an overview of budget considerations, including a comparison of FCCS projections and OMB projections for 2024. She provided a review of potential levy scenarios. A

robust discussion ensued, and Ms. Buske compiled the questions asked by the HSLRC into the attached Addendum (see pages 7-8).

NEXT STEPS—OMB

Mr. Friedman noted that there will be one more meeting this month regarding the FCCS levy request. Ms. Buske stated that she would set up a meeting with the fiscal staff at FCCS to get some financial questions answered in addition to the questions in the addendum.

CLOSING REMARKS—CHAIR

Mr. Friedman had no closing remarks.

With no further business before the committee, the meeting was adjourned at 1:07 P.M.

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These minutes are a general summary of the Human Services Levy Review Committee meeting on Thursday, April 4, 2024.

Submitted by:

Lauren M. Graessle,
Deputy Clerk to the Board of Commissioners &
Assistant Director of Community Appointments

Addendum

1. Please provide the most recent copies of the CFSR and the State review if they are available.
2. Please provide more detail on MB&C performance metrics vs. performance of FCCS staff for the last few years.
3. Understanding that Managed Board & Care entities take on the costs for the cases assigned, can you estimate the cost savings in Board & Care/Social Services because of using the Managed Board & Care entities?
4. How closely do the Managed Board & Care entities work together or are they competing with each other? Is there a broader model for Managed Board & Care? Are there other organizations looking to expand into this area? Can you provide more information on other jurisdictions that use this model?
5. For Kinship, please provide more information about the other services FCCS makes available for caregivers. Which community organizations does FCCS contract with or refer caregivers to for additional supports?
6. Can you give a basic overview of the root cause analysis you conduct where there are adverse effects to placing children in a specific custody arrangement?
7. FCCS provided information related to Kinship stipends used to develop the levy model (see chart on below). Are you able to quantify the annual cost savings in Board & Care (including congregate care) due to the expanded use of kinship stipends?

Year	# of Stipends Paid	Average Monthly Stipend Payment	Annual Cost
2024	359	\$386.25	\$1,663,853
2025	434	\$500.00	\$2,603,710
2026	510	\$515.00	\$3,154,441
2027	589	\$530.45	\$3,750,196
2028	666	\$546.36	\$4,364,105
2029	743	\$562.75	\$5,019,915
2030	821	\$579.64	\$5,712,884
2031	898	\$597.03	\$6,432,167
2032	976	\$614.94	\$7,200,535
2033	1053	\$633.39	\$8,005,415
2034	1130	\$652.39	\$8,844,279

\$56,751,499

8. Can you provide a heatmap or zip code data related to the number of children in custody (preferably by type), similar to the one on page 19 of the factbook?
9. The HSLRC has requested that OMB staff meet with FCCS staff to discuss some of the assumptions in the Levy Model to further inform the Committee's review of the proposal. There may be additional questions at that meeting or as a result of that meeting.