

**Franklin County Children Services (FCCS)  
2019 3.10 Mill Replacement Levy Proposal  
HSLRC Meeting Minutes  
March 21, 2019**

The Human Services Levy Review Committee (HSLRC) meeting was called to order by Zak Talarek on March 21, 2019 @ 11:10 am.

**ROLL CALL**

HSLRC members present: Jesse Hemphill, Jim Bowman, Michael Curtin, Rose Handon, Ph.D., Jerry Friedman, and Zak Talarek.

HSLRC members absent: Jean Carter Ryan.

A committee quorum was present.

Office of Management and Budget (OMB): Rachel Buske and Dayna McCrary.

**REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES**

Ms. Buske stated that the first item on the agenda would be the approval of the March 7<sup>th</sup> minutes, but the minutes were not available so this item was tabled.

Ms. Buske explained to the committee that the packet in front of them included hard copies of the following items:

- the agenda
- the committee contact list
- the revised timeline
- the levy election results chart that shows past HSLRC reviewed levies
- a draft of the follow-up questions for Children Services that either came out of the presentation or were requested in the guide that were not included in their factbook
- a chart with historical revenue and expenditures for FCCS from 2014-2018, as well as the approved budget for 2019
- a chart with total expenditures from 2014-2018 compared to the approved budget for each year, and the percent of budget expended
- a document with charts compiled by the Public Children Services Association of Ohio. It shows the impact of parental drug use on child removals. The first page is for overall drug use and the second page is for opiate only and then you can compare Franklin County to the state average as well as to other counties.

Ms. Handon asked if the budget came from FCCS or OMB and recommended that future documents be more specific as to the source.

Mr. Talarek explained that it was the budget approved by the Board of Commissioners. Mr. Talarek and Ms. Buske stated that future documents would specify the source.

**HSLRC DISCUSSION OF LEVY REQUEST**

Ms. Handon stated that FCCS had done a fairly good job but had not addressed some important issues such as what are they doing now and what have they done differently from the last levy, particularly in light of some of the important external and environmental issues that influence their work. She stated that she did not know if her colleagues feel the same or not.

Mr. Curtin agreed that it was a fair assessment. They were very well prepared for the meeting and it was a major download of information. Just from a presentation standpoint, he would have preferred to be able to ask questions as the presentation went along. He also noted that the presentation did not discuss the biggest challenges facing the agency.

Ms. Handon stated that the issue is that the challenges facing the community are different five or ten years later. She noted that professionals can put their heads together and talk, but need to focus on how they are preparing caregivers to deal with these issues and parents to deal with their own addictive cycles and things of that nature.

Mr. Curtin explained that he was surprised they asked for a replacement rather than an increase because of the avalanche they are dealing with in terms of the drug epidemic and staff turnover rate. It is always eye opener to a newcomer.

Mr. Talarek explained that FCCS asked for a replacement of their own volition. For previous levies OMB has had more interaction in terms of working through scenarios but not in this case.

Mr. Talarek explained that the committee role previously has noted that when FCCS last asked for an increase, they had nine months of cash and an increase was not justified so the recommendation was going to be to keep it as a straight renewal.

Ms. Buske explained that a replacement would increase taxpayer costs by about 28%. The renewal cost is \$84.53 per \$100,000 versus \$108.50 per \$100,000 for a replacement, in part because the replacement would not include state rollbacks. The renewal would collect about \$85.7 million in 2020 and the replacement would collect about \$94.6 million.

Mr. Bowman remarked that a replacement actually would increase revenues even though it sounds like it would not.

Mr. Curtin noted that the message he felt was sent to agencies was that it is not sustainable to continue to ask for increases when you look at the growth of the property tax burden in the county relative to income.

Mr. Talarek speculated that after the Zoo asked for an increase to the permanent levy and it was so soundly defeated, everyone was cognizant to the fact that there's only so much taxpayers will support and that as these requests came it is important to really look at whether the request is justified. FCCS in their last levy request in 2014 was the first one after the Zoo and they had done great things with alternative response and the caseloads have been flat and then in their levy request they asked for an increase. The committee did not believe an increase was necessary and encouraged FCCS to be proactive in its approach to stem the tide of abuse and neglect and implement cost saving initiatives.

Mr. Bowman asked about performance measures from the last levy.

Ms. Buske explained that the request did not include sufficient performance data and that OMB will request that information before the next meeting.

Mr. Friedman stated he was pleased to see that they were at least programmatically trying to address the turnover issue. He cited an article that illustrated that more than half of all caseworkers in Cincinnati have PTSD. He stated that the steps that FCCS is taking around retention bonuses and trying to move some of the more serious cases to the longer-term employees who are better able to deal with some of the complexities than the folks that have been there two months are good, but he would like to see more information on the impact these initiatives have had. With so many programs going on, he is concerned that they are fragmenting their approach and he doesn't have a sense of how the programs work together from an administrative perspective. He wondered if they have a way to evaluate which of these programs are really working. The larger issue is are they really maximizing the potential for Medicaid reimbursement?

During the last levy review the committee had suggested that they might talk to the folks over at the Board of Developmental Disabilities because they have been very affected in terms of utilizing local and state dollars in terms of leveraging additional those services dollars as well as administrative dollars.

Mr. Talarek explained that FCCS has been able to increase its federal revenue significantly from 2014-2018 (he referred the committee to the handout). He listed this as one of the things that has been a positive for the agency because in the past they defaulted to charging to the levy because it was easy. This has allowed FCCS through the budget process to add approximately 100 FTEs in part to make caseloads more manageable.

Ms. Buske informed the committee that in 2019 alone, FCCS added 41.52 additional caseworkers.

Ms. Handon mentioned that she has questions about managed care, including Buckeye Ranch, because those organizations are having problems with turnover as well. She would like to see how managed care is evaluated. It was initially designed to save dollars, but the question is how are the managed care organizations performing now and is it time to reevaluate. Is managed care saving money?

Mr. Friedman agreed that this is an area of concern that he would like to understand better.

Mr. Bowman acknowledged that he would like more information about the Family First Prevention Services Act that moves funding away from congregate care.

Ms. Buske explained that the federal government wants to limit the use of congregate care and for most cases they will fund 2 weeks of congregate care except for in cases related to treatment and a few other exceptions.

Ms. Handon reiterated that the new legislation illustrates why a performance evaluation of managed care agencies is very critical.

Mr. Bowman asked if there are other managed care agencies.

Ms. Handon and Mr. Talarek confirmed that the National Youth Advocate Program (NYAP) is the other managed care agency.

Mr. Friedman asked if the shift to managed care occurred because of the waiver and Ms. Handon said that it did.

Ms. Buske explained that the ProtectOHIO Waiver allows FCCS to receive funds upfront as opposed to waiting until kids are in the system. With upfront money, FCCS was able to devote more resources to prevention services that would hopefully keep kids from having to be taken into custody.

Mr. Friedman asked if there is the possibility of renewing the waiver.

Ms. Buske explained that there is legislation proposed by Senators Rubio and Feinstein to extend the ProtectOHIO waiver if Ohio delays the implementation of the FFPSA. The FFPSA is an attempt to move towards more preventative services; basically what Franklin County is already doing.

Mr. Talarek stated that it is his understanding that the new federal law almost mirrors what FCCS is doing now. The issue may be a timing issue where FCCS was getting funds in the beginning of the year and now they may not get it until the middle of the year or next year, which would be a cash flow issue.

Mr. Friedman asked that FCCS provide the committee with a compare and contrast summary of what they were able to do under the waiver and what they will be able to do under the FFPSA. He also wanted more information on the \$2 million in Medicaid savings discussed in the presentation.

Mr. Talarek stated that based on the description in the meeting, FCCS has been paying the medical cost directly out of the levy and they worked with the Ohio Department of Medicaid to charge Medicaid for the medical expenses. This wasn't built into the levy forecast and staff should include it in calculations.

Mr. Friedman noted that Don Brown is a very good resource. He did the state's IV-E plan in terms of maximizing the draw down in federal dollars. He may be able to share his insights on where there might be some opportunities.

Ms. Handon wondered if there is a plan to get out of state placements back into the community. Are there opportunities to network and collaborate with sister counties or sister agencies across Ohio to bring children closer to their home states and to their families? The longer they're out of state, the longer they're going to be detached from family, and they are such a high cost ticket. Why not bring that money here.

Ms. Handon explained that high cost kids are usually institutionalized, but out of state could also be kinship or adoptions which would be with families. Some kids are in psychiatric settings for emotionally disturbed behavioral health issues. Some kids have sexual abuse issues that prevent them from being inside family or community settings.

Ms. Handon warned that child welfare needs a healthy workforce; taking care of sick families is very troublesome. She wondered if there is any sustainable programming or outreach to increase the tenure for a caseworker coming on board.

Ms. Buske noted that the tenure for intake caseworkers has increased.

Ms. Handon stated that the question is how is the agency positioned to take care of the sickest families. This is the cost that they're asking for because they are going to need a lot more resources to really meet the dynamics needs of families.

Ms. Buske indicated that there is a list of initiatives they have implemented and one of the questions for FCCS is how are these initiatives impacting retention and what are you seeing in exit interviews?

Ms. Handon stated that retention is important otherwise FCCS will constantly be in a reactive mode.

Mr. Friedman pointed out that one of their strategic focuses (page 20) is to increase the percent of newly hire caseworkers or remain with the agency for at least twelve months. He also mentioned that they are trying to provide some incentives and bonuses for longevity.

Mr. Talarek explained that FCCS has supplemental payments and rates for people with more experience who may be able to find better solutions for kids.

Ms. Buske stated that it would be helpful to look at additional metrics related to tenure. They are trying to ensure newer people don't have caseloads that are too big. If you look at the data stratified, what happens if someone stays for two years or more?

Ms. Handon stated that she would be interested in seeing data on maltreatment while in care.

Mr. Friedman stated that FCCS did not fully explain what they are doing to reduce it.

The committee discussed the community surveys conducted by FCCS in terms of the scope and the frequency. There was also a question of whether the surveys include client feedback.

Mr. Friedman wondered if the advisory committee has taken the lead on soliciting feedback. Also, how do they evaluate their outreach efforts?

Mr. Friedman wondered if they have any consumers on the advisory committee. They talk about community involvement, but it's really more outreach than getting feedback. Well since we're at it, with regards to their outreach activities, how do they evaluate outreach, whether or not it's affective? They seem to be talking about targeting it.

Ms. Handon noted that FCCS had several community dialogues including one in April 2018 with Community Partners and concerned citizens at the Glenwood Recreation Center to discuss the impact of opioids. Ms. Handon stated that she would like more information on other community dialogues.

Ms. Handon wondered if the committee walked away from the presentation knowing from a fiscal point of view, that the cost of care and the cost of conducting services is equal to where it was five years ago.

Mr. Talarek stated he does not believe so. FCCS has not had to draw cash over the last five years other than 2018. FCCS has increased its cash balance from the previous levy when it was decided to renew because an increase was not justified. Placement costs have been flat; FCCS has added staff; increased kinship placements; increased alternative response. From a longer-term perspective, what cost savings has FCCS implemented and what else can FCCS do? FCCS is planning to move to the state IT network and there should be cost savings associated with this move.

Mr. Bowman noted that this is the issue the committee has had with all the levy agencies. What is the cost per unit of service and what are the performance measures for those services? Is the agency achieving results? Has the cost per unit of service gone down? Are they achieving results?

Mr. Talarek stated that FCCS should be able to provide more information about placement costs by type.

Ms. Handon noted that, even with the managed care agencies, there's a unit of cost for those managed care agencies which is how they get their allocations, you can define that.

Mr. Friedman asked if that is disbursed on a monthly basis.

Mr. Talarek believes that it is disbursed monthly and they do have incentives payments tied to them achieving better outcomes. He thought some of the incentives are tied to the Child and Family Service Reviews (CFSR).

Ms. Buske explained that there are federally mandated performance measures that they have to provide.

Ms. Handon stated she would like to see the unit cost of FCCS managed care.

Mr. Friedman noted that there is also another managed care concern: are there tiers of capitation based on an assessment up front as to the complexity of the case?

Ms. Buske stated that she believes that this was built in years ago.

Mr. Friedman asked if the legislature penalizes agencies that seek a replacement instead of a renewal.

Ms. Buske explained that the law changed so that the state no longer contributes the 10% for property owners and the 2.5% for owner occupied properties for replacements and increases. The state will only provide the rollback for renewals. A replacement levy will increase costs for taxpayers.

Mr. Curtin questioned whether or not the committee can recommend a renewal with an increase.

Mr. Talarek explained that the last Franklin County Office on Aging levy included a renewal and an increase.

Mr. Curtin asked if FCCS keeps data on cohorts of kids in custody and geographical location. It would be interesting to know about this population of kids: how many are in school and where they are in school.

Ms. Buske confirmed that FCCS should be able to provide information on cohorts of kids in custody.

Ms. Buske discussed the 2 week cap for congregate care and noted that the federal government wants to move towards homes being accredited under the Family First Prevention Services Act (FFPSA). She noted that it takes about 1.5 years to get accredited. This could be an issue for homes that are already doing a good job but are not accredited.

Mr. Bowman asked if the data indicates that foster care has a better outcome than congregate care.

Ms. Handon indicated that there is historic data determining that institutional care is not good care in the long run for families and children. Kids do better in foster care.

Mr. Friedman found a summary of the FFPSA that he will send to the committee. It talks about requirements and exceptions.

### **QUESTIONS FOR FCCS STAFF**

Ms. Buske read the list of questions compiled thus far and asked the committee to list any other questions for FCCS.

Ms. Handon asked about whether or not FCCS can demonstrate actual cost savings due to the implementation of differential response.

Ms. Buske notified the committee that OMB will send the questions developed at the meeting to FCCS and that FCCS should respond in writing prior to the next meeting. (See Appendix for the list of follow-up questions for FCCS)

Mr. Hemphill noted that the next meeting would be on April 4, 2019.

Mr. Bowman asked for more information on FCCS board meetings and reports.

Ms. Buske updated the list of questions to include a request that FCCS provide their most recent annual report. She informed the committee that she attends the monthly FCCS Board meetings. She has a copy of their strategic plan and sees contract rates and summaries before the Board votes on them.

### **NEXT STEPS-OMB**

Ms. Buske announced that OMB will compile the questions and send them to FCCS. Once FCCS sends their responses the packet will be sent to the committee. FCCS will be back on April 4, 2019 for a follow-up discussion with the committee.

### **CLOSING REMARKS**

**FCCS will meet again with the HSLRC on Thursday, April 4, 2019 for further discussion related to the levy request.**

A motion was made and seconded to adjourn the HSLRC meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:31 pm.

## **Appendix - Follow-up Questions for FCCS**

### **HSLRC Recommendations**

1. Please provide an update on your progress on the HSLRC recommendations from the previous levy review (see below).
  - Identify and implement cost savings or efficiencies that could be put into place over the next five years.
  - Clearly articulate the goal to reduce the number of abused and neglected children while improving the outcomes of children who enter in the child welfare system in the levy report, including a linkage to service level projections and budget assumptions.
  - Develop and implement a clear, detailed plan for reducing the high caseworker turnover rate.
2. For the recommendation related to caseworker turnover, can you provide additional metrics to demonstrate the progress you have made (i.e. median tenure from today compared to 5 and 10 years ago, stratified by experience; qualitative data from exit interviews; etc.)?

### **Performance Measures and Evaluation**

3. Please provide 3-5 years of historical outcome data as well as your projections during the life of the levy cycle. At a minimum, please provide data related to federally mandated Child and Family Services Reviews (CFSR) measures (please include agency and federal targets). If performance measures were not achieved during the current levy cycle, please discuss the issues and challenges that may have impacted the outcomes. Include any new performance measures the agency will be implementing and the anticipated outcomes.
4. Please provide the annual or quarterly data for the charts on pages 27-29.
5. A strategic focus of the agency is to decrease the number of maltreatments while in care. Please provide data on maltreatment while in care. Please provide information on how FCCS works to reduce the occurrence of maltreatment while in care.
6. Please describe how FCCS conducts evaluations of its programs to determine if they are meeting their objectives and performance targets.

### **Revenue and Expenses**

7. Why was the 27th pay period not accounted for 2020 in your budget?
8. Placing a levy on the ballot in an odd election year requires the agency to pay for their portion of the levy expenses to the Board of Elections. Where is this accounted for in the budget?
9. During the presentation you mentioned that you anticipate an increase in Medicaid revenue of \$2 million and an increase in State revenue of \$3 million. Are these amounts currently built into your projections?
10. Please provide more detail on the \$2 million increase in Medicaid described at the presentation.
11. Please explain what FCCS is doing to maximize Title IV-E and Medicaid reimbursements. Please explain how FCCS is using local and state funding as a match.
12. What are the anticipated cost savings of moving to the state IT network? Are these amounts currently built into your projections?

13. How is a unit of service defined? What is the estimated cost per unit of service?
14. What is the average cost of kinship placement per day or case? What is the average cost of foster care per day or case? What is the average cost per day for each type of group care setting?

### **Staffing**

15. Please provide a 5 year history of staffing and current staffing levels. This should reflect all staff, not just caseworkers.
16. Please provide a current FCCS table of organization.

### **Programmatic Information**

17. Please provide more detail on the increased use of alternative response during the last five years and how that has reduced expenses.
18. What else has Children Services done differently since the last levy request in response to changing needs of parents and children?
19. Please provide data on age cohorts of children in custody.
20. Does FCCS collect and analyze data based on census tract and/or school districts? If so, please explain how these data are used.
21. How frequently does FCCS conduct community surveys? Who does FCCS involve in this process (i.e. consumers, caregivers, Citizen Advisory Committee, etc.)? What is the survey methodology that is used?
22. How frequently does FCCS engage in community dialogues? What have been the themes of past dialogues? How does FCCS determine which zip codes to target for community hubs?
23. Please provide more information regarding opiate education programs related to children in the system. What is FCCS doing to prepare the community at large, as well as caregivers, to deal with drug addiction (including their own addiction issues)?
24. FCCS has stated that approximately 4% of placements are out-of-state. What is the fiscal/programmatic impact of out-of-state placements? What is the average cost per case?
25. How does FCCS work to get (non-kinship) out-of-state children back into the county? Does FCCS work with other counties to bring out of state children closer to the county?
26. What is the case mix for group care placements?
27. Please provide a report card on the success of managed care. How do the performance and outcomes in managed care compare to placement services. Has managed care led to cost savings?
28. Please compare and contrast the requirements between the ProtectOHIO waiver and the Family First Prevention Services Act (FFPSA).
29. Please explain how FCCS is preparing for the implementation of the FFPSA.
30. Please provide a report card for the responsible fatherhood program.

### **Agency Reports**

31. Please provide a copy of the most recently completed community survey.
32. Please provide a copy of the most recent annual report provided to the Children Services Board.
33. Please provide a copy of the CFSR Ohio Statewide Assessment from 2017.