

**Franklin County Children Services (FCCS)
2019 3.10 Mill Replacement Levy Proposal
HSLRC Meeting Minutes
March 07, 2019**

The Human Services Levy Review Committee (HSLRC) meeting was called to order by Jesse Hemphill on March 07, 2019 @ 3:08 pm.

ROLL CALL

HSLRC members present: Jesse Hemphill, James Bowman, Jean Carter Ryan, Michael Curtin, Rose Handon, PhD and Zak Talarek.

HSLRC members absent: Jerry Friedman.

Office of Management and Budget (OMB): Heidi Hallas and Rachel Buske.

Franklin County Children Services (FCCS): Chip Spinning, Shaun Carter, Lara LaRoche, Tina Rutherford, Anne O'Leary, Deborrha Armstrong, Kim Toler and Alice Maddox.

DISTRIBUTION OF THE FRANKLIN COUNTY CHILDREN SERVICES (FCCS) LEVY FACTBOOK AND TIMELINE

The FCCS Levy Factbook and the HSLRC timeline were distributed to the committee.

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

A committee quorum was present.

Jesse Hemphill opened the meeting and introduced himself. Mr. Hemphill stated that the committee is here to understand and hear the presentation by FCCS of their request for a replacement of their 3.10 mill levy, and turned it over to Heidi Hallas.

Heidi Hallas introduced Rachel Buske as the OMB Analyst assigned to FCCS and explained that she will be the main point of contact for the committee and FCCS. Ms. Hallas asked the new members introduce themselves. Rose Handon and Michael Curtin provided a brief introduction.

Zak Talarek placed a motion on the floor to nominate Jesse Hemphill as the committee chair for the 2019 FCCS Levy Review Committee. The motion was seconded by Jim Bowman. The motion passed.

PRESENTATION OF THE FCCS 2019 LEVY PROPOSAL – FCCS STAFF

FCCS staff introduced themselves to the committee.

Chip Spinning thanked everyone for giving FCCS the opportunity to present the levy request. Mr. Spinning asked that the committee hold questions until the end and noted that there should be plenty of time to answer all questions.

Mr. Spinning explained that FCCS is statutorily obligated to assess allegations of child abuse and neglect and assure the safety and well-being of children by partnering with their families to alleviate safety concerns. Ohio law also requires that FCCS provide treatment services and alternative placements when kids can't be maintained in their own homes. FCCS is also mandated to provide services to families to address underlying concerns, promote stability and reunify children whenever possible. All this work is done in collaboration with the community. He stressed that FCCS can't do this alone and when you look at

the mission statement, clearly the agency is working in support and collaboration with the community and really focusing on maintaining families' culture and heritage.

Mr. Spinning explained that when the agency worked on revising its strategic plan, the agency found that the Guiding Principles are still embedded in their work and they govern a lot of agency practices. The four main ones are important (details in handouts), but the focus is that staff members are Child Welfare Professionals. The agency recognizes the value that it takes to accomplish this work. FCCS values every child, looks out for their best interests, honors families, listens to them, hears their concerns and acts as their partners.

Mr. Spinning noted that many of the challenges he discussed during the 2014 levy review, opioids, poverty, and homelessness, are even more present today. The presentation will discuss how FCCS strives to mitigate many of these risk factors. He noted that 2004 was the last time the agency asked for an increase in millage, because they have been able to figure out ways to be as efficient as possible while still improving outcomes for families, by utilizing best practices and other approaches.

A major focus for FCCS is staffing, with an emphasis on training them to ensure they have the skillsets needed to work with families. Secondly, they focus heavily on serving kids at home before looking at placement. When placement is necessary, they try to support kinship placement, and use foster care, congregate care or group care as a last resort. At each higher level, outcomes are poorer for kids the longer they stay in the system. Thirdly, FCCS works to empower families to meet the needs of children after their involvement. These are some of the areas they have to continue moving forward to really maximize federal resources and still improve outcomes.

Ms. LaRoche noted that Franklin County has the largest child welfare organization in the State of Ohio. The Intake and Assessment Department operates a 24/7 child abuse hotline that receives more than 33,000 calls per year. It truly is a hotline. In 2018, nearly 14,000 of those calls were screened in for further assessment related to child safety and risk. There are approximately 250 staff members that are engaging in those assessments. Typically, one out of four families need more long-term continuous support to sustain child safety. This trend has grown over the last ten years.

The agency has a number of new strategies to support families. Ms. LaRoche highlighted the following initiatives:

- The ZERO 2 THREE initiative focuses on practices and interventions for children under the age of three due to concerns related to infant mortality and overall vulnerability.
- The agency inclusive opioid education effort has been a great tool in understanding how to better support these families.
- Finally, differential response has allowed the agency to use two pathways to assess child safety and risk adding more flexibility to the individual needs of families and how FCCS is able to serve families. Since 2014, the agency has established alternative response as the preferred pathway for engaging families, without having to label them with an investigation. FCCS has maximized this pathway to the fullest extent that the law allows.

Ms. LaRoche explained that maintaining a strong workforce is an overarching agency goal. Retention in child welfare is a national challenge and it has been since the beginning of time. It's a difficult job, a stressful job and many choose not to stay in this particular field. She highlighted a few initiatives, including:

- Changing the hiring practice for child welfare caseworkers from quarterly to continuous and anticipatory hiring to fill vacancies as soon as possible. This helps to control the size of caseloads.
- Employing a new practice called Agency Crisis Response Initiative (ACRI) that allows the agency to assign cases to volunteer, trained supervisors during high volume spike periods. She noted that caseload volumes can vary daily from fifty reports one day to 120 reports another day.
- Implementing the Bee Your Best Self strategy that provides access to EAP assistance onsite (rather than having to reach out externally to an insurance provider) to normalize self-care and remove barriers to seeking assistance.

Kim Toler stated that FCCS has provided child welfare caseworkers with mobile computing devices and access to a portable fingerprint machine to greatly enhance their ability to capture pertinent information while engaging in the field with families while also expediting the approval process.

Ms. Toler referred the committee to page 10 of the factbook. When investigations indicate a need for ongoing services, a case is opened and sent to one of the agency's two regions or two managed care partner agencies. Ongoing services provide case management, and supportive services, to youth and families in their home, with relatives or in other community settings with the goal of working collaboratively with the family on case plan needs. On average, nearly three out of four youth who need to be removed due to serious concerns are safely returned to their parents after agency involvement, or placed with relatives or other kin support they trust.

Ms. Toler explained that FCCS has partnered with The Public Children Services Association of Ohio on a program called Ohio Start. Ohio Start forms a team to provide case management to parents who have been identified with opioid use disorder and or concerns. The goal is to increase and expand needed services so youth can return home in an expedited manner or find relatives who can work with the parent during their stay in sober housing. As Mr. Spinning expounded on earlier, kinship is one of the agency's strategic supports to keeping children in family like settings, be it relatives or effective kin when they are not able to return to their own homes (page 11).

The FCCS kinship program is designed to provide a one stop shop for support services, including limited financial support, for kinship families to ensure teamwork and communication between kinship families and the agency. In 2018, the kinship department extended staff hours to work nights and weekends in order to increase efforts to keep children in a family-like setting when an initial removal seems eminent. Last year FCCS placed 1,941 children with kinship caregivers which is an increase of 74% since 2014. The FCCS kinship program works closely with community agencies to meet the specialized needs of youth in kinship settings. Some of the community partnerships include:

- Columbus Parks and Recreation for summer programming
- CDC Head Start for expedited service linkage
- Franklin County Job and Family Services (JFS) (FCCS has a JFS worker stationed at its 4071 location to provide timely review of eligibility for TANF and SNAP programming)
- St. Stephens for an aftercare program for families for kinship caregivers who have obtained legal custody and no longer have an open case with FCCS

Since 2014, FCCS has more than doubled the number of children being placed in family-like setting versus congregate care. Youth transition services provide support for youth ages 16 up to age 21 who are in agency custody (page 13). The mission of youth transition services is to provide the highest quality of services, case management and life skills to every youth transitioning out of agency care and help them prepare for productive independence in young adulthood. Services are individually tailored to youth needs and include programming with education, employment, housing, medical, vocational training and mental health. This program also relies on community partnerships, such as:

- the Workforce Development Board for paid summer internships
- the Jewish Family Center for job mentoring
- My Place Transitional Housing with Buckeye Ranch which are individual apartments for young adults age 18 up to 21, in agency care, who are in need of housing while they are seeking employment or going through vocational training
- the Youth Advisory Board (page 15), which is an opportunity for youth to share their feelings about their experience in care, and to also provide an opportunity to develop leadership skills via participation in various community projects.

FCCS' Therapeutic Arts Program (TAP) (page 13) is an agency program that mentors youth ages 13 up to age 21 who have experienced trauma. Staff assigned to youth in the Therapeutic Arts Program seeks to

empower, build resilience and enhance youth coping mechanisms and well-being via music, dance, art, poetry and spoken word. There is also a project that involves youth growing a garden on the south side of a FCCS building and also learning healthy eating habits.

The Adoption Department (page 12) is comprised of child welfare workers who seek permanent homes for children whose birth families have not been able to recover from the serious problems that brought the children into agency care. In the past five years more than 800 children have been placed in permanent homes. The Adoption Department collaborates with a variety of agencies across Ohio and nationally in order to find adoptive homes for available children. One of the more successful community collaborations is with the Dave Thomas Foundation's Wendy's Wonderful Kids program, which helps us seek out perspective adoptive families for children waiting for adoptive homes. On average during a year, there may be 100+ children waiting to be adopted. A profile of a waiting child can include minority youth over age five, Caucasian youth over age ten, sibling groups who want to remain together, and children with special needs. The agency also provides adoption assistance and post-adoption service.

Anne O'Leary explained their work with the Annie E. Casey Foundation to help FCCS with strategies regarding adolescence that come to the agency's attention through unexpected court orders. An unexpected court order is where FCCS is not at the hearing, so there is not an open case. The Foundation helped FCCS bring together stakeholders from the Juvenile Justice system to find ways to share information to inform decisions. FCCS has increased staff presence in court and has been more effective at providing immediate linkage with services so that placement is the last resort. This has resulted in a reduction of the number of unexpected orders.

Deborrha Armstrong provided an overview of community engagement and community outreach efforts that seek to engage the entire community in ensuring the safety and well-being of its own children. FCCS has created 100 relationships with community hubs, so that staff can go into targeted neighborhoods to identify needs, share information about agency services and resources and discover community resources that may benefit children and families as well as staff.

Ms. Armstrong explained the process of community dialogues that center around important issues relating to child welfare. The agency invites various stakeholders, including Franklin County Job and Family Services to discuss issues such as opioids and share resources that may benefit the diverse population we serve, including immigrants and refugees, to make sure residents are aware of county services.

In addition to educating, FCCS utilizes mentors and volunteers to play an important role in keeping our children connected to the community in positive ways. They work to recruit volunteers and mentors (pages 22-23) and provide the training and support needed. Over the last 50 years, FCCS has had one of the few mentoring programs in the nation housed within the agency. Research shows that children thrive best in supportive environments surrounded by healthy relationships and caring individuals. This is particularly important for children who have experienced trauma and loss, which is the reality for most of the children served by the agency. It also plays an important role in destigmatizing youth who are receiving services.

Ms. Armstrong stated that ongoing outreach efforts disseminate messages in a variety of ways ranging from campaigns, like Foster Franklin County to recruit more foster parents, Safe Sleep and Choose your Partner Carefully. FCCS reaches out through social media and its website, through various publications, and its Speaker Bureau to really be accessible to the community. All of these vehicles are used to reach an increasingly diverse community. One of the largest community engagement efforts is the annual Holiday Wish Program where individuals and groups throughout the county connect to serve over 6,000 children. This particular initiative has opened other avenues of support for the agency including for those who once received services from the agency who come to give back to an agency that once helped them in a time of need. FCCS is often asked to provide expertise or service on various task forces and committees that relate to our mission. These include: The County Commissioners' Poverty Planning Steering Committee, the Autism Spectrum Disorder Residential Partnering Program, and the County Commissioners' Taskforce on Preventing Family Homelessness. The agency recognizes the importance of collaborating with other

professionals, agencies, organizations and individuals throughout the community to gain their support and strategically work together to ensure child safety and strengthen families.

Shaun Carter discussed key findings from their data collection efforts. He started by discussing a heat map that illustrates the geographic location of referrals for 2017 (page 16). Nearly every census track in Franklin County had at least one child referral to the agency. The areas where you would find no referrals are typically areas such as airports and non-residential zones. Additionally, for areas in the central and southern portion of the county, there are higher rates of reported incidences per 1,000 children when compared to the northern region of Dublin, Upper Arlington, Worthington and New Albany. The median number of referrals per geographical area is 110 referrals. Ultimately this graphic shows that the entire county is a partner in holding the ideal that child safety is a community responsibility.

Mr. Carter then explained that assumptions made to plan service levels are based on projections against the child population in the county. From 2009-2018, the child population has grown 9.13%; over the next 12 years it is projected to grow another 10%. For the purpose of this analysis, screened in referrals are limited to child abuse and neglect, dependency, unruly, delinquent and preventive services referrals that are screened in regardless of pathway assignments. Referrals from the community that are screened in for assessment and investigation have been climbing steadily from 12,553 in 2009 to 13,770 on 2018 (page 27). FCCS projects screened in referrals to continue to increase as the county child population grows. Following a linear projection, the trend line accounts for what the data shows from the previous ten years and closely aligns to the county trend of 9% growth.

Mr. Carter pointed out that there has been a dramatic peak in the data between 2017 and 2018. He speculates that this can be attributed to the opiate epidemic as it aligns with the Franklin County Public Health opiate use surge during the same period. The county saw a significant surge in opiate-related overdoses and deaths in 2017 that law enforcement attributed to deadly amounts of fentanyl and carfentanil present in the community. He explained that this led to the development of the Franklin County Opiate Action Plan, which was a partnership between the County and the City of Columbus. Because surges like these are hard to predict, the agency continues to use standard population growth to determine many projections. The increase in screened in referrals might be explained by the increased awareness of residents due to the Franklin County Opioid Action Plan and other regional opioid epidemic response efforts.

Some cases that are screened in for assessment need to remain open for ongoing services and monitoring. These cases are referred to as “ongoing” cases and are assigned to one of FCCS’ two regional offices or to one of its managed care providers (page 27). In the past ten years, cases opened for ongoing services have increased 24%. FCCS believes this is due to the increasing child population and the increasing severity of issues faced. Between 2009 and 2014, cases opened for ongoing services increased at a rate between 22% and 24%, depending on the year. Between 2016 and 2018, that percentage rose to 26% and as high as 28% in 2017. As mention as context from the previous slide, 2017 was a significant year for the community; case openings increased in 2017 as a result of opiate use is a direct precursor to the Franklin County Public Health surge of 2018. The surge was a reactionary step to a community in crisis. Franklin County Public Health asked that other agencies take part in serving as first responders to families in need. Organizations that were impacted directly by the surge were law enforcement, Fire and EMS, Public Health entities, hospitals and Child Protective Agencies. In 2017, 49% of removals related to parental drug use was attributed to opiate use (page 21). Removal due to parental drug use overall is on a steady climb since 2012. Looking back on the trends and following a linear projection, FCCS projections modestly expect a continued case opening increase of approximately 22% over the next ten years.

Mr. Carter then discussed Ongoing Case Service Days by Type (custody and in-home) (page 28). While total ongoing service days is on the rise for all case types, the increase is more pronounced for custody cases which had 68,913 service days in the first quarter of 2016 and 114,710 service days in the last quarter of 2018. That’s a 66% increase.

The rise in custody case service days is tied to the placement of children outside of the home (page 28). Mr. Carter explained that while declining from 2009-2013, placement days have increased by 30% since 2014. FCCS projects placement days to continue this upward trend. In general, youth who need to be removed from their homes to ensure their safety or meet their treatment needs have better outcomes in the family (kinship) or family-like (foster care) settings than youth placed in congregate care (a group home or residential treatment facility). Due to comprehensive efforts on the part of the agency to remove barriers to family and family-like placements, more youth are being placed with kin and less youth are being placed in congregate care settings. In 2015, 17% of placement days were spent in a kin home. In 2018, that percentage rose to 30%. This trend towards family and family-like placements is beneficial not only to youth and their families; it also helps the agency prepare for changes in federal funding which will limit reimbursement for congregate or group care placements.

Employing kinship placements has helped to minimize the trauma associated with removing youth from their home. But there is still more work to do, especially with teens (defined as youth 11-18). While both younger youth and teens have seen an increase in kin-based placement days over time, the increase for teens lags a bit behind and has not been quite as steep (page 29).

Lastly, Mr. Carter discussed the percent of youth not reentering care after one year of discharge. This number is getting better and that is a positive outcome. It means that the number of youth that come back to FCCS within a year is down by 7% since the last levy. This is a positive outcome for children and families and a positive demonstration that many of the strategies discussed thus far are making a difference.

Alice Maddox explained that the income and expense projections in the levy request use the 2019 approved budget as a base. That's the budget approved by the County Commissioners late last year. In terms of strategies to consider, FCCS tries to always maximize federal funds and leverage other non-local funds. FCCS needs to consider financial stability from levy to levy. The last time the agency was before the committee, the consideration was to look at it from levy to levy, so a five-year span instead of a 10-year span. The agency tries to be as flexible as possible with its dollars; trying new things and finding better ways of providing services.

Ms. Maddox explained that the agency wants to evaluate everything that it does, but that this year is different than past years because of the new Family First Prevention Services Act (FFPSA) of 2018. The FFPSA is going to completely change federal funding; they are putting dollars into prevention services. Traditionally federal funds were invested in placement services. So they are putting dollars in prevention services, but they are limiting their support of congregate care placements. As FCCS is moving toward family-like settings, the dollars are following that movement. Still, some children do need congregate care from time to time. Also changing for FCCS is the Title IV-E ProtectOHIO waiver program, which was a forerunner of the Family First Prevention Services Act. FCCS became a part of the waiver program in 1997. With the waiver, FCCS has been able to receive funds upfront, to invest in services and possibly prevent placements. The waiver has had a very positive impact on the number of kids in foster care; numbers dropped drastically because of the investment into prevention services. That program is coming to an end, and Family First is set to start in October 2019. The State of Ohio is looking at delaying implementation by two years. Franklin County has made recommendations that the waiver be extended for two years to coincide with the delay. Senators Feinstein and Rubio have put legislation forward to extend the waiver, which will hopefully allow FCCS to delay implementation until 2021.

The US Court of Appeals for the sixth district decided that kinship placements should be treated like foster homes and it may be necessary to provide a per diem. FCCS will monitor this development and see if it is applied to the State of Ohio.

Ms. Maddox stated that FCCS has two ten year overlapping levies: a 1.90 mill and a 3.10 mill. She noted that both had been in place for a while, so the effective rates for collection are lower. The larger levy (3.10 mill) is expiring this year and the smaller levy (1.90 mill) is expiring in 2024. In between these levies there

will be two labor contract negotiations. Because of the effective rate, the amount that is collected stays the same for the taxpayer. The only opportunity for increased dollars for the agency is with new development.

In projecting this levy request FCCS used about a 1% growth for new development.

Income comes from four areas:

- Levy funds are 67%, which have decreased from 72% in 2014;
- Federal funds are 29%;
- State funds are 3%; and,
- The rest are miscellaneous funds (child support, collaboration with other agencies, etc.).

Ms. Maddox pointed out that the bulk of funds, 96%, come from the levies and the federal funds.

FCCS has been able to maximize federal funds which has allowed them to avoid depleting their carryover. The agency maximizes its cost pool, making sure to charge everything possible, especially administrative dollars, to the cost pool. The agency carefully reviews this every quarter, to ensure they are coding charges to get the best return. FCCS also negotiated to be able to bill administrative costs for their two managed care contracts. The agency has generated an additional \$39 million in federal funds over the last five years.

State funds are only 3% of revenue, but FCCS is hopeful that the state will increase its investment in child welfare. The assumption in the levy proposal is that these funds will increase by about 3% every third year. In the last bi-annual budget, FCCS got about a 25% increase and the next increase might be larger, so they have budgeted very conservatively in that line.

Miscellaneous funds were left level.

Ms. Maddox discussed agency expenses in five broad categories:

- Staff costs (33% of the budget; projected to grow by 2% each year and by 3% each third year)
- Placement costs (51% of the budget; includes foster homes, our group homes, residential agencies, managed care providers, kinship providers, youth and transition, adoption subsidies and respite care; projected to grow by 2.75% each year)
- Supportive services costs (7% of the budget; services to stabilize and help families; projected to grow by 2% each year)
- Administrative costs and Capital costs (9%; administrative projected to grow by 1.5% each year and capital projected to remain level)

Ms. Maddox noted that the agency is very labor intensive and that the 2019 budget increased the number of caseworkers to allow for flexible staffing. The agency believes that it takes a caseworker about two years to develop the expertise to be efficient in this role. Caseloads are stratified by experience and by complexity, not all cases require the same level of resources.

Placement costs are the largest expense in the budget, and they are increasing. FCCS explained that they work hard to find alternatives to placement. These alternatives include the use of a teen rate to encourage foster parents to take in teens, the Court Diversion Program mentioned by Ms. O'Leary, and the use of kinship placements. Ms. Maddox also noted that the agency was recently able to bill some very expensive placements to Medicaid.

FCCS pointed out that agency income and expenses are always quite close. The agency stated that it is not asking for large amounts of money; FCCS has carryover funds that have been built over time. FCCS is asking for a replacement levy, because expenses are starting to be greater than income. FCCS pledges to maximize every dollar that they can get into the county. They will attempt to close that gap (between income and expenses) before 2024.

Mr. Spinning added that, in terms of maximizing Medicaid funds, the agency will continue to attempt leverage these out of state kids to make sure that FCCS is maximizing Medicaid.

Q&A WITH FCCS STAFF

Committee: What does screened in mean?

FCCS response: Screened in means that referrals are accepted for further assessment of safety and risk and based upon the Ohio Revised Code definitions of abuse and neglect. So the agency may receive some calls that don't meet those definitions and so those would be screened out.

Committee: Please explain differential response and its impact.

FCCS response: FCCS uses two pathways: Traditional Response and Alternative Response. Traditional Response involves an investigation coupled with an assessment. Alternative Response is that same assessment, absent the labeling that an investigation requires and then you don't have a final disposition, but you have a full assessment of safety and risk. FCCS has found that when they don't label families as alleged perpetrators, they can establish trust and more rapidly connect families with services. Ultimately the child is safer, because you can rapidly engage them and of course understanding the family story is really a key to have a good understanding of safety and risk.

Committee: Please define kinship.

FCCS response: A kinship definition could mean someone who's biologically related to you or someone who is known to you as a non-biological support, such as someone from your church, maybe a former godparent, could be a biological aunt, uncle, niece, nephew or older siblings. So, anyone who knows the child, you don't have to be biologically related. It's a support to the child. Sometimes the older youth identify their support: their friend's parent, a teacher, a coach.

Committee: So is the cost of kinship cheaper than the typical foster home relationship?

FCCS response: Yes. When the agency places a child in a professional foster home, the agency pays the per diem but built into the per diem are the administrative costs for the professional foster care agency, including their staff who service the homes. To make it a nice round figure, FCCS may pay a professional foster care agency \$90 a day and \$30 might go to the foster parent. When you place a child in a kinship home, you provide support. Sometimes you provide cash assistance; the TANF program through Job and Family Services will provide some cash assistance. Depending on the makeup of the family, sometimes that family unit is eligible for other services through Job and Family Services as a result of that child being placed there. Sometimes a kinship family will qualify for additional benefits when they take in children. With the ruling from the US Court of Appeals Sixth Circuit that was mentioned earlier, even if FCCS has to pay kinship caregivers a per diem, it will be lower than a traditional foster home due to the administrative costs.

Committee: Please discuss the turnover rate with regard to staff.

FCCS response: FCCS has worked hard to address turnover and noted that they have seen articles going back 50 years discussing this issue. As mentioned earlier, the agency has implemented continuous hiring and other initiatives. Just as an example, in early 2016, the median tenure for an intake child welfare caseworker was eight months. Today, the median tenure is approximately 16 months. So there has been improvement over the last two years, but the agency still has a way to go.

Committee: Can you provide the median tenure for five years ago and ten years ago?

FCCS response: The agency responded that they could get back to the committee on this but did note that turnover was significantly higher.

Committee: Does it look different for other caseworker staff versus intake in terms of tenure?

FCCS response: No, it mimics what is occurring in intake.

Committee: Does the chart comparing income and revenue in future years assume that the replacement levy passes?

FCCS response: Yes.

Committee: How does it treat the 1.90 mill levy five years from now?

FCCS response: It's in there. Well, the 1.90 mill, when the focus is on looking five years to five years, the agency and the committee would need to think about that 1.90 mill levy.

Committee: Does the County Auditor's Office provide information on the impact of abatements and TIFs on your levy revenue on an ongoing basis year to year, or if not do you determine on your own what the cumulative impact is?

FCCS response: FCCS has had that conversation with the county to find out exactly what the impact is, but has not received a dollar amount because the Auditor has explained that the differences may not be noticeable. The County Auditor does keep stats annually on the cumulative impact; they are required by state law to do so.

Committee: With the new Auditor coming in, it might be worthwhile attempting to see if they can provide information by agency.

FCCS response: Ok, FCCS will do that.

Committee: One of the requirements that we look at when we evaluate the levy request is maintaining a three month ending cash balance. Is that scheduled?

FCCS response: FCCS is projecting that by 2025, if they go with a replacement of the 1.90 mill levy, they would not meet the minimum cash balance. In 2014, FCCS considered replacing the 1.90 mill levy at that time and also considered an increase. At that time the 1.90 mill levy was renewed. FCCS believed they would have to address the issue with this levy, the 3.10 mill levy, even though it was the larger of the two. The agency has maximized federal dollars but it will be very tight budget.

Committee: With the 2019 projection, just to go back to the starting point of the forecast, the jump in expenses between 2018 and 2019 is roughly 7%. What would be the reason why expenses would increase that much between 2018 and 2019 when the last five years of actual spending has been lower than that?

FCCS response: The two things the agency did in 2019 were to create staffing flexibility and place additional dollars in placement. Again, with placements being 50% of the budget, it is very hard to recover a 50% line item, so the agency always budgets that line item conservatively. Those were the major adjustments in that budget that was above the allowable increase.

Committee: Would it be correct that the forecast is based off the 2019 approved budget, not the projected expenditures which tend to be lower than the budget?

FCCS response: The projections are based on 2019, which is an increased budget, but the annual increase for each year after 2019 is about 2.45%. The agency is growing at an average of a little over 3% over the

last five (5) years. So, to hit the 2.45% is going to be close and the agency will utilize the 6% increase in the base each year just through normal growth.

Committee: The HSLRC typically give levy agencies recommendations for improvement in addition to whatever millage is recommended to the Commissioners. It would be nice to know how has the agencies performed to those recommendations, to get some feedback. That would be helpful. The committee had talked in 2014 about increasing the millage rate, but part of the concern that the committee had was that the county was just coming out of the recession. Some background would be helpful for the people that are new to the committee.

FCCS response: The agency mentioned again that one of the Governor's platforms is to increase state funding for child welfare agencies. State funding is very low in Ohio. The agency speculates that the increase for Franklin County could be \$3 million.

Committee: Please explain what you mean by closing the gap.

FCCS response: Between now and that time, FCCS will try to leverage other revenue sources that are available.

Committee: Please explain the anticipated decrease in federal funding for 2021 and 2022.

FCCS response: The Family First Prevention Services Act is set to start in October 2019. The FFPSA will reduce federal funding for congregate care placements, unless that placement meets some very specific criteria and will require that some private child placing agencies will need to be certified by an accreditation board that may require a nursing staff, as well as other requirements. FCCS will need child placing agencies to work to meet these higher standards, so that the agency can get a reimbursement.

Committee: Please explain what the Rubio-Feinstein legislation is intended to do.

FCCS response: The Rubio-Feinstein legislation would delay the termination of the ProtectOHIO waiver. This is included in the agency projections. With the delay, the agency is projecting lower federal revenue in 2021 and 2022. Revenue will begin increasing again in 2023.

Committee: Since we're talking about projecting expenses, a reference was made earlier to labor negotiations coming up, which labor organizations are you contracted with; what are the time frames for those negotiations; do they do built-in expected or projected increase in those rates in these charts?

FCCS response: Labor negotiations are built into projections; in years where there is a new contract there is a 3% in salaries for that year and a 2% in every other year. The FCCS labor union is the Ohio Federation of Teachers; negotiations will begin in September 2019. The contract expires on January 1, 2020.

Committee: Please provide the breakdown of union versus non-union staff.

FCCS response: There are about 500 in the union; 280-300 would be non-bargaining.

Committee: As it relates to your placements, does FCCS place children out of state and what does that cost?

FCCS response: FCCS does place some children out of state. Additional costs for these cases include travel (mileage and sometimes airfare). A three hour visit for a child placed in the County sometimes turns into a two day visit for a child placed out of state.

Committee: How many kids are out of state?

FCCS response: Out of state placements are broken into three categories: kinship, adoption and then high end treatment level. FCCS stated that it currently has 97 youth placed out of state, or about 4%.

Committee: Are there children from other counties that are in Franklin County; does FCCS have fiscal responsibility in those cases?

FCCS response: It's jurisdictional. FCCS have kids who are in other counties also that we are solely responsible for in terms of fiscal responsibility.

Committee: Has there ever been a survey done by the agency with the community in terms of community confidence, community awareness, and community feedback about its understanding of Franklin County Children Services?

FCCS response: FCCS conducts a survey every few years. The agency has generally gotten positive feedback. The most recent survey was in July 2018. The agency polled 600 adults in Franklin County. Results included:

- 61% responded that FCCS needs more funding; 22% said that current funding was sufficient.
- 67% of respondents said that FCCS is working to serve more teens by keeping them in family like settings, teaching life skills to those approaching age 18 and helping hundreds of foster children go on to sufficiency in the community.
- 58% thought the message that the agency has placed over 800 children who can't go home into adoptive families in the last five years was a positive message.
- 89% believes that FCCS is making a difference
- 76 % would support increased taxes for FCCS funding
- 75% believes FCCS treats all families with dignity and respect, regardless of family make up, income, race or ethnicity.

Committee: Am I correct in concluding that what the federal government is moving towards is minimizing the use of group placements?

FCCS response: Yes.

Committee: Has that been a constant through various administrations or are we seeing differential approaches based on who's in office?

FCCS response: Most federal child welfare policy has been stagnant for 40 years or something. There has been an interest. They recognize that it doesn't make sense to reimburse agencies for the worst possible outcome as opposed to providing dollars up front to serve families.

This is the first major transition that FCCS has seen. Over the next two years, FCCS will continue to turn the ship a little bit more and more, so when the FFPSA comes online in the agency is in a better position.

Committee: What is an example of a congregate care provider?

FCCS response: Buckeye Ranch.

Committee: Does the agency have anything statistically or a report card on managed care that the committee can take a look at to see if there a difference from managed care and what the cost/benefit is, etc?

FCCS response: FCCS is working to review the contracts. Two contracts back they added a performance incentive into managed care that measures them against the CFSR standards as well as maybe a few extra standards beyond CFSR. The CFSR is the Child and Family Services Review which is a federal audit of the state.

Committee: The Child and Family Services Review is a federal report card on how well child welfare agencies are doing statewide. The three major metro counties, meaning Franklin County, Lucas and Cuyahoga, play a very critical role in how the state is evaluated along with smaller counties. The committee should look at the Ohio report. Globally from a national point of view it is not a good report card, but for the State of Ohio, they are drawing on Franklin County and other counties data to describe what is happening with youth and kids.

Committee: What was the thought process in asking for a replacement versus a renewal with an increase that would bring in the same amount of money, but preserve the 12.5% that the state is picking up?

FCCS response: The agency explained that it believes that the community will be more receptive to a replacement. Mentioned the impact of opiate addiction.

The committee and the agency discussed H.B. 59 that passed in 2013 and dictates that the state will no longer contribute a rollback for replacements and increases. The state had previously provided 10% of revenue for residential properties and an additional 2.5% for owner occupied properties. With the law change, the state will only contribute the 12.5% for renewal levies. Replacement levies or increases will mean that taxpayers pay the entire cost.

Committee: Please provide a report card on responsible fathers programs. Please provide more information on how the agency is educating the community and caregivers about drug abuse and opioids and the impact on children. How prepared is the county to deal with these issues?

FCCS response: Regarding the opioid crisis, FCCS explained that for one of its community dialogs they invited community partners including: Columbus City Council President Zach Klein's office, the Opiate Task Force representatives and others to share resources during their ongoing community engagement and outreach efforts because this is a critical issue and FCCS attempts to share available resources with the community. FCCS added that it held a community event at the Glenwood Recreation Center because the Hilltop neighborhood was one of the areas most significantly impacted in Central Ohio. At the event an individual in recovery was on the panel and the agency talked directly with families impacted by the crisis. The agency also added that it has staff on two of the sub-committees of the Action Plan, the prevention sub-committee and the community outreach subcommittee.

This work has led to the non-responsive card that is an emergency card kept in a wallet that lists potential caregivers if something happens to them. The agency is also training in house for caseworkers, about what is opiate use disorder and mental illness, and then how to work with clients. FCCS is continuing to find new resources. Finally, FCCS works closely with the ADAMH Board.

HSLRC MEETING SCHEDULE – APPROVAL OF THE TIMELINE

Ms. Hallas: The only other item we have is the timeline and there were some questions on the meeting time and location from some of the new members, so I don't know if you want to talk about that.

There was a discussion on the time for the remainder of the meetings, and it was decided to meet from 11am-1pm. OMB agreed to identify and reserve a location.

Mr. Hemphill: For the meetings going forward on the timeline, on the 21st of March the committee will finalize additional questions that we need to convey to FCCS staff.

Ms. Hallas: On April 4th, FCCS will come back before the committee and you'll have the second face to face opportunity, which seems to have worked for the last few levies. It's much more productive because it is more of a dialogue.

CLOSING REMARKS

Mr. Hemphill thanked FCCS and stated he had no further information to share.

The meeting adjournment was moved and seconded. The motion passed.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:13 pm.