

**SUMMIT COUNTY CHILDREN SERVICES
BOARD OF TRUSTEES
OCTOBER 24, 2023 MEETING MINUTES**

Board Members	Board Members	Executive Team
✓ Anne Connell-Freund, Chair	✓ Patrick Bravo	✓ Cassandra Holtzmann
✓ Keith Malick, Vice-Chair	✓ Traci Buckner	✓ Amy Davidson
_____ GinaKaye Maddox, Secretary	✓ Beth Gracey	✓ Darin Kearns
✓ Anna Arvay	✓ Andrew Schuellerman	✓ Liz Mangon
✓ Omar Banks	_____ Katie Stoyhoff	✓ Sushi Tripathy-Moore
_____ Kemp Boyd		✓ Catherine Van Horne

Staff Present: Dawn Boudrie, Jon Hart, Tracy Mayfield, Brianna Motley, Erica Sabados, Laura Sasser, Deanna Shriver, Beth Lowe - Recording Secretary

Others Present: Natasha Averbukh and Hanna Hart - University of Akron students, Thomas Lavery, Willie Poole-Security Guard.

Call to Order and Roll Call

Board Chair Connell-Freund called the meeting to order at 4:30 p.m. and a roll call was taken.

Approval of Meeting Minutes

Board Chair Connell-Freund requested a motion to approve the minutes of September 26, 2023. Mr. Banks moved to approve the minutes; seconded by Ms. Gracey . All were in favor and the motion carried.

Public Comment

Mr. Lavery submitted a request to speak but was not present at the time reserved for public comment on the meeting agenda.

Committee Reports

Citizen’s Advisory Committee (CAC)

Committee Chair Gracey reported that the committee met on October 11, however, there was no quorum, so they were unable to conduct official business.

Nominating Committee

Committee Chair Banks announced that the current term of elected officers of the SCCS Board will expire on December 31, 2023. The Nominating Committee consisting of Mr. Banks, Ms. Arvay and Mr. Bravo, have solicited nominations and self-nominations and a slate for election will be presented at the November 28 Board Meeting.

Resources Committee

Committee Chair Malick reported that the committee met today and approved the minutes of September 26, 2023. As part of the Resources Committee report, Chief Financial Officer (CFO)/Deputy Director Kearns provided the Board a Financial Statement Report as of September 30, 2023.

Resolution 10-2023-24/B

Authorization to enter into an agreement with the Summit County Prosecutor for the reimbursement of providing legal services through the Prosecutor's Child Protection Unit at a total cost that may be less than but shall not exceed \$500,000 for the term of January 1, 2024 to December 31, 2024. Committee Chair Malick made a motion to approve; seconded by Mr. Bravo. All were in favor and the motion carried.

Resolution 10-2023-24/C

Authorization to accept Ohio START (Sobriety, Treatment, and Reducing Trauma) program grant funding in the amount not to exceed \$480,000 upon execution of a new Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Public Children Services Association of Ohio (PCSAO) through June 30, 2025. Committee Chair Malick made a motion to approve; seconded by Ms. Gracey. All were in favor and the motion carried.

Resolution 10-2023-24/D

Authorization to offer Management/Non-Bargaining employees the same health care plans offered to the employees of the County of Summit and to negotiate/execute a final agreement with the County of Summit for the term of January 1, 2024 through December 31, 2024. Committee Chair Malick made a motion to approve; seconded by Mr. Schuellerman. All were in favor and the motion carried.

Resolution 10-2023-24/E

Authorization to contract with Technology Sales of Georgia, LLC dba Zono Technologies for the purchase of a disinfecting and sanitizing cabinet for use with items in relation to the Family Enrichment Center at a cost not to exceed \$25,844. Committee Chair Malick made a motion to approve; seconded by Mr. Banks. All were in favor and the motion carried.

Executive Director's Report


The Board received a Director's Report in their packet and Executive Director Cassandra Holtzmann highlighted the following:

- Her daughter is having a baby and she is looking forward to being a grandparent for the first time.
- She and her husband purchased a home in Summit County and her commute to work will be shorter.
- The Legal Department is currently providing legal services to 1,092 children with Juvenile Court-involved open cases. 898 children are in SCCS custody and 194 are in Protective Supervision. 206 children of the children in custody are in permanent custody (PC).
- There have been 80 to 100 more children in custody this year compared to last year. This most likely is due in part to families not applying for the Kinship Guardian Assistance Program (KGAP) since the monthly benefits are approximately 80% of the foster care board rate. SCCS will continue to research the reasons for higher custody numbers.
- The Ohio Budget Bill modifies the definition of "abused child" and includes 'as an abused child one who has had harm inflicted by a caretaker', where current law, refers to harm inflicted by a parent, guardian, custodian, person having custody or control, or person in loco parentis.
- Cases in Intake Services were initiated timely at an average rate of 99.2% with a year-to-date (YTD) rate of 98.5%. YTD data reflects that cases are completed in a timely manner 75.8% of time.
- When law enforcement investigates a report, SCCS has to wait for them to complete their investigation before an SCCS worker can talk to an alleged perpetrator. To ensure that mandates are met, this will be addressed with the new Akron Police Chief.
- Currently, there are 24 open casework positions: 13 in Intake and 11 in Protective.
- Seven adoptions finalized last month, totaling 54 adoptions YTD.

- SCCS currently has 194 licensed foster homes with 147 Traditional foster homes and 47 Kinship foster homes. Interestingly, SCCS had approximately 350 licensed foster homes in 2003.
- Last month, the Visitation units worked with 170 unique families and supervised 485 face-to-face visits. The units also hosted Trick or Treat October 23-27 where children and families walked around the agency showing off their costumes and receiving treats.
- A Visitation supervisor and security guard were assaulted (shoved) by a parent during a visit recently. The supervisor is seeking a temporary protection order.
- Summit County Council adopted the SCCS Child Abuse and Neglect Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). County Executive Ilene Shapiro signed, and the state has formally approved the MOU. Appreciation was extended to Legal Counsel Jon Hart and Chief Legal Counsel /Deputy Director Catherine Van Horne for their efforts updating and obtaining approval from community partners.
- Executive Director Holtzmann and CFO/Deputy Director Kearns hosted four one-hour All Staff Budget Discussions to update staff on the agency's 2023 & 2024 Operating Budget and to give them an opportunity to ask questions. Attendance was voluntary, but sessions were well-attended.
- The Operating Budget allows for 365 full-time-equivalents (FTEs), and SCCS currently has 336 FTEs, and only one applicant. Since our mandated work is most important, we will start discussing a possible change to our business model.
- SCCS is pleased to host Senator Vernon Sykes on November 17. He will shadow a social worker, tour the Family Interaction Center and meet with staff and Administrators.
- SCCS took their first Ohio START (Sobriety, Treatment and Reducing Trauma) case in 2019. There have been 18 successful graduates since then including six graduates in 2022 and seven thus far in 2023. SCCS is the third county in Ohio to receive National Certification as a Certified Local Affiliate. The Ohio START cases require high-level social work that encourages family engagement for long term recovery and family reunification in substance abuse cases. Congratulations to the SCCS Ohio START Team which includes Department Director Tracy Mayfield, Supervisor Colleen Stewart, Beth Smyntek, Candy Ross and Peer Mentors Erin Mills & Jessica Okolish.
- Joel Potts, Ohio Department of Children and Youth (DCY) Chief of Government and External Affairs visited SCCS last month and learned of SCCS's needs and challenges to serving the children of Summit County. Kara Wente, the new Director of DCY, is scheduled to visit SCCS in the spring to discuss the same.
- The Winter Wonderland Drive-thru Event for children in agency foster homes and foster families is scheduled for December 8. There will be 14 stations with 10 being hosted by agency departments and four being hosted by outside groups.
- The following article was discussed: Author Amanda Garrett, "Guns, Tears, Fears and Hope", Akron Beacon Journal, October 22, 2023. The Board was reminded that SCCS is committed to the safety, permanency and well-being of all children served and works to reunify families; the agency should not be used as a form of punishment to children as the article suggests.

Adjournment

Board Chair Connell-Freund requested a motion to adjourn. Mr. Banks moved; seconded by Mr. Bravo. All were in favor and the motion carried. There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 5:05 p.m.



GinaKaye Maddox, Secretary
Board of Trustees



Cassandra A. Holtzmann, JD, LPA
Executive Director