

**Tioga County Department of Human Services  
Advisory Board  
June 15, 2022  
12:00 noon**

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**Board Attendance:** Jim Bodine, Commissioner Roger Bunn, Jack Eckman, Kristin Hamilton, Commissioner Mark Hamilton, Ben Largey, Timothy McBride, Sara Rice, Seth Watkins

**Guest Attendance:** Kimberly Alfieri, Jenny Bowen, Christa Hilfiger, Meagan Kolk, Holly Lamonski, Nichole Luckovich, Mellissa Parsons, Michele Regalbuto, Trisha Tanner, Diane Weed, Samantha Weiskopff, Colleen Wilbur, Mary Wilson

**Remote Attendance:** Jim Schu, Sue Sticklin

**Call to Order:** Vice-Chair Seth Watkins called the meeting to order with the Pledge of Allegiance and a moment of silence.

Sara calls on the board to vote in a new Advisory Board member, Holly Lamonski. Holly works at Area Agency on Aging and she will fill the Local Representative for the Elderly position. Jack made a motion to accept Holly to the Advisory Board. Tim Seconded. 11 Ayes, 0 Nays. Motion Carried

**Secretary's Report:** Sara Rice asked the Advisory Board to review the minutes from the March 2022 Meeting. Sara asked if there were any questions, concerns, discrepancies. No voiced concerns. Jack made a motion to accept the minutes as presented, Tim Seconded. 12 Ayes, 0 Nays. Motion carried.

**Treasurer's Report:** Sara Rice states at the end of May 2022 the Advisory Board balance is \$8,970.96. Majority of the spending was to reimburse a foster family for Christmas gifts in the amount of \$1100.00. Tim made a motion to approve the treasury report as presented, Jack seconded. 12 Ayes, 0 Nays. Motion Carried.

**Agenda Items:**

- Michele Regalbuto began by discussing the Drug Endangered Children's Alliance. The alliance's first meeting was 5 years ago on December 15, 2017 and we meet one time monthly. The alliance is comprised of 100 different disciplines, like Attorneys, Commissioners, Police Officers, Principals, and Medical Professionals, from Tioga County. Because our alliance has been so successful, we were granted a large sum of money, \$74,000, from our block grant to put into the county. This money has gone towards prosocial activities, promotional materials, and trainings. Some of the prosocial activities that were organized and paid for with this grant are family movie nights at the Victoria Movie Theatre in Blossburg, day pool passes for the local town pools, Willy Nilly art classes in Elkland, Music in Me toddler classes, Arts in the Parks event in Blossburg, rollerskating nights in Tioga, karate classes, and yoga classes to help promote a calming mind and to ease anxiety. We posted these activities on the DEC facebook page to promote these events. A portion of this money also went to every school in the county for them to use as needed. This money went into each of the schools business office account. When a principal is aware of a need, that principal will then put a memo request into their business office. Promotional materials were purchased to bring awareness to DEC like t-shirts, promotional gift bags to hand out to children, and Little League

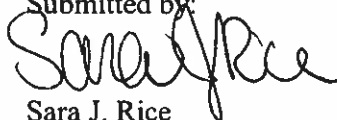
sponsorship banners for each of the school districts. We are also hosting a Mental Health Awareness fair at Clark Wood Elementary, having a Trauma Informed training, provided a breakfast for the alliance from Arise Café, and paid for some activities at the Family Service Child Abuse Prevention event. 250 teddy bears were purchased and distributed to all the police departments, fire departments, and EMS in the county for Handle with Care for Kids. Michele states she would like to see more of the alliance members attend the activities. There has been a lot of positive reception with the DEC Alliance and the relationship it is creating.

- Children & Youth hosted an event on May 21<sup>st</sup> for Child Abuse and Foster Care Awareness. The event has not been able to take place the last two years due to COVID. This event is completely free to the public and there were over 300 people in attendance. We have had a long list of providers and businesses contribute to this event by monetary donations or being at the event. At the event there was a photo booth, dunk booth, petting zoo, face painting, and other activities and games. Appreciation was expressed for attendance and participation. Trisha states that a booth was also set up at the Children's Health Fair and we also will have a float in the Laurel Parade. Commissioner Bunn questioned how many foster families there are currently. There are about 40 foster families, the majority of them being kinship homes. Tioga County is above average at about 56% for kinship homes. No further questions.
- At the beginning of the year, the National Nypum Program notified us that it would be ending. They offered the county to keep the mini-bikes, we just cannot call the program Nypum any longer. The Wellsboro Foundation graciously accepted the bikes and they are going to transfer them back to the county. This year the mini-bikes program will not run due to needing a county staff employee to manage the program. We need to look at what changes will need to be made and who will manage the program. We will plan to run the program in 2023. No questions were raised.
- Mary Wilson gave an update regarding Plans of Safe Care. Plans of Safe Care is a program where medical professionals are required to report to Childline any substance-affected infant. It will come through Children and Youth, then an ESP caseworker will respond within 24 hours to have the family engaged. This does not have to be an illegal substance, it can be a prescribed medication as well. We offer our services making the family aware of other programs available like housing, food, and making sure the infant is developing appropriately through early intervention. We are getting consistent referrals every month and our engagement efforts have been going very well. Over 50% of the families have engaged in services. Unsuccessful engagements included two "unable to locate" and one incarceration. Only five were refusals. The average length of engagement with services is six weeks. Three of the families are currently open with ongoing C&Y services and only one infant entered emergency custody. Bradford County is asking us how we are engaging these families.

When we arrive to the residence, we let them know that we are here to celebrate the birth of their baby and we are also here because their medical professional is aware that the infant is substance-affected. We try to start a solid foundation to the relationship by taking a gift to each family that includes a blanket, a board book, and a binky clip. Bradford County is now also trying to implement these ideas. We have not needed to spend a lot of funds for this because we only bill for the actual hours the staff person is spending on Plans of Safe Care. Mary directed the advisory board to a handout with all the statistics on it. Commissioner Hamilton asked up to what age they receive referrals for Plans of Safe Care. Mary states up to 1 year of age however most of the referrals we get are from the hospitals directly after the delivery. Commissioner Hamilton had asked Mary if they could accept prenatal referrals. Mary affirms that they can and have. She states they have received three referrals for Plans of Safe Care Prenatally. We had a case where a mom was in a shelter, pregnant. She engaged in our Plans of Safe Care program and now they are doing great and have housing. We also worked with someone that was pregnant and incarcerated. The most important piece to Plans of Safe Care is going in with the right attitude and the approach that this child is a gift.

- Nikki Luckovich states that we have grant funding through BHARP for a Systems of Care Management Position. This position has been vacant and there is also a BSU vacancy. We would like to consider combining those two positions to make it a full time entry level management position. In doing this, we would not have to use any additional funding. In funding that we have received, we would like to create calming rooms in schools for children and youth and make calming backpacks in which Cindy Harding offered the housing employees to put together. No further questions.

Roger motioned to close the TCDHS Advisory Board Meeting, Sara seconded. Meeting Adjourned at 12:54 p.m.

Submitted by:  


Sara J. Rice  
Secretary/Treasurer of the Advisory Board  
Administrator of TCDHS

