

Tioga County Department of Human Services
Advisory Board
June 11, 2025
12:00 p.m.

Attendance: Chad Boyce, Roger Bunn, Amy Coots, Kristin Hamilton, Nikki Luchovich, Trisha McIlwain Commissioner Shane Nickerson, Commissioner Marc Rice, Sara Rice, Sue Sticklin,

Call to Order: Kristin called the meeting to order at 12:03 p.m. with the Pledge of Allegiance and a Moment of Silence.

Secretary's Report: Mary asked the Advisory Board to review the minutes from the March 2025 meeting. No voiced concerns, questions, or discrepancies. Chad made a motion to accept the minutes as presented, Commissioner Nickerson seconded. Motion carried.

Treasurer's Report: As of the end of May 2025, the Advisory Board balance is \$1,631.85. Commissioner Rice made a motion to accept the treasurer's report, Sue seconded. Motion carried.

Mary presented to the advisory board an updated overview of the children and youth department, which is currently undergoing reorganization. Five years ago, the department was reorganized to remove the placement unit and it all became an on-going unit. When a Child Line report came in, our intake unit did an investigation. If ongoing services were warranted and a youth was removed from their home of origin, their case then would go to the placement unit for ongoing services, and if not, it went to an in-home unit. Through a series of leadership meetings over the last year, we have decided that we would like to move back to reinstate the placement unit. The casework for those individuals would be more intentional and focused by reinstating the placement unit. This will allow us to use our resources more effectively. We believe this will also support succession planning, which has not been a big focus in the past. We have several employees in a supervisor/manager position that will be looking at their potential to retire within the next five years. Question- how do you feel this restructuring would affect families and children that are open for services? We are hoping that this change will reduce the need for so many changes with the work staff for each case.

Mary informed the board that the children and youth department has improved meeting structures. When meeting with caseworkers, supervisors in the past have focused on case work and making sure all the "boxes" have been checked off. While this is important, we also need to provide time for our workers to be able to process. A big part of these meetings has been to schedule the day and time for workers to meet with their supervisors and make sure that they get this reflection time.

The children and youth department has had an influx with hiring workers, which is great news. We recently hired two individuals within the past month and we have two more starting next week. The last few years, we have struggled with receiving applications for these positions. Question- How many vacancies do we have currently for the children and youth department? We have four vacancies still after the recent four new hires. We have been at a 28-30% vacancy rate for about two years and slightly below the state average.

Sue Sticklin mentions that many years ago, the caseworkers were never divided into different departments. If you were a caseworker, you would get assigned cases whether it was for children and youth, intellectual disability, early intervention, etc. When it was structured this way, the workers seemed to have a better understanding of what each department's services were. There are concerns that the children and youth workers do not have a clear understanding of other departments' services. Mary mentioned possibly cross-training within the departments, and she

will certainly look into this.


We have been hosting campus days for our employees that are surrounded by a specific topic. We have hosted a day around addiction awareness and another regarding domestic violence. We invite trainers/presenters to our campus that consists of a main event and smaller training sessions that are organized throughout. Our goal for these events is to develop overall team and culture building but also staff are required to have a minimum of twenty-six professional development training hours every year. By hosting these events, the training courses are more meaningful and relevant. During these campus days, we also incorporate staff appreciation tokens throughout the day.


The Pennsylvania Children and Youth Administrators have been having a conversation regarding the Universal Assessment Tool for a long time. It is currently going to replace the risk and safety assessments that we currently do. It's designed that the information from it, will be the family service plan. It is designed to be much more strength-based and have a holistic look at the family. We just stepped into this process, and we are ready to pilot this. We anticipate that Tioga County will be part of this process.

We have a fully staffed foster care unit. We are overall 50% consistent with kinship care placement. Our kinship families are beginning to look more like family supports than relatives.

Kristin made a motion to adjourn the meeting, Commissioner Rice seconded. Meeting adjourned at 1:04 p.m.

Submitted by:


Holly Lamonski
Secretary


Sara J. Rice
Administrator of TCDHS