

**JFS Planning Committee
November 26, 2024 @ 9 am
CCDJFS Community Room**

Members Present: Tom Andrews, Mary Ann Kochalko, Chaney Nezbeth, Marie Williams, Tracy Smith, Pastor Brian Brown, Melissa Beadle

Guests: Courtney Amendola

Meeting Called to Order/ Quorum Established

Tom called the meeting to order 9:05am and welcomed members; quorum was not established. Chaney added that today's meeting doesn't require a quorum because there is no voting.

Approval of Minutes

Marie motioned to approve September minutes; Chaney seconded. Motion carries.

Adoption of Agenda

There were no additions to the agenda. Mary Ann motioned to adopt agenda; Pastor Brain seconded. Agenda adopted.

Introduction of Guests

No guests

Reports

a. Ohio Means Jobs –Mary Ann

Mary Ann stated that she doesn't have a whole lot. Jack gave new numbers because the state data collection system wasn't working right. Ignore numbers from the past. The total visit count from July 1st is 3,276 individuals, and they served 1,287 individuals. There are 13 people who have been placed for on-the-job training, 6 people in work experience, and 10 people are getting supportive services. In other news, Suzy said to tell everyone that the door feature for OMJ's safety door will be installed soon. It was recommended at a recent safety assessment.

b. CCDJFS TANF Program Reports –Courtney

Courtney reported that the numbers are more of the same. There was a slight increase in SNAP recipients in August and September. With school starting back up that is common. Recipients for childcare usually stay consistent. In the Medicaid world the numbers stayed the same, however they do increase whenever they have a cost-of-living pool change. For payments – the aged, blind, and disabled (ABD) are always the highest. Other services are waiver passports, and long-term care numbers are consistent. For apps and timeliness – there are so many cases like always. You will see off numbers in timeliness, we are behind in Medicaid because of staffing – it happens. We want to be at 90 and are a little below that. Public Children Services management expenditures are high. Courtney stated that Rachel explained why they increased. With the case management and TANF funding – if they don't hit and use all the funding we have to return the money, so we want to use that. Pastor Brian asked Courtney if they get disciplined in any way if they don't hit their timeliness goal. Courtney said no, if we are down 1 quarter, they won't say anything. If we were down repeatedly, they would mostly likely issue action. Courtney commented that staffing levels in

comparison to clients is nowhere near where it should be. Public Assistance is extremely busy right now. Pastor Brian commented that what Columbiana County is allowed to pay compared to what people can make elsewhere probably makes it hard to retain staff. Courtney stated that the job itself is very difficult. When we do hire someone, it takes roughly 7 months for them to even be working and helping with the caseload because there is so much training. Courtney said it's a process, but we keep rolling. If you see decreased numbers – we are trying. Courtney reported the non-emergency transportation numbers, and there was a significant increase in expenditures for July through September. Courtney wondered why it was so high and thought it was abnormal, and then found what was causing the increase. The reason being there are individuals traveling to Cleveland and Columbus multiple times a week for dialysis. Tom thanked Courtney for this program to get these individuals assistance like that. The highest PRC areas this quarter were the shoe program, utilities, and gas vouchers. Clothing was also high, and housing and rent were high in July. APS statistics – 44 referrals for July, 23 in August, and 37 in September. Then there were 13 investigations in July, 9 in August, and 22 in September. Courtney asked members if there were any questions. No questions.

c. Annual Contract Monitoring Report

A copy of the annual contract monitoring report was distributed to members. Courtney stated that if there are any questions ask Rachel.

Old Business

None

New Business

a. New Terms of Membership – Rachel

A handout with the terms of membership for all members was distributed.

b. Nominating Committee (Need new vice Chair) – Rachel

There was no volunteer for vice chair. Tom commented that they create a nominating committee, and what typically happens is him or Rachel will reach out to members. Chaney mentioned that she is a forerunner in East Palestine for City Manager. If she does get the position she may be leaving the committee. Tom stated that him, Rachel, and Chaney will look into the nominating committee. Courtney stated that members will vote for new officers at the February meeting, and then new officers will assume their role in May.

c. 2025 Meeting Schedule

Courtney asked members if there were any questions with the 2025 meeting schedule. There were no questions.

d. Summer Youth Employment Program: Ended – Courtney

The summer youth employment program was about to end at the last meeting, and it ended. It is a great program.

e. Shoe Voucher Program: Change – Courtney

Courtney announced that the school shoe voucher program is not going to be called 'school' shoe voucher program anymore. It is going to be a year-round program instead of just before school.

Individuals will still be able to apply for the voucher, it is just going to be year-round. Courtney commented that hopefully this spreads out the caseload for the applications. Public Assistance is still working overtime. Tom asked Courtney how they are going to get this out. Courtney stated that it will be in the PRC plan. Tom asked if recipients could get any type of shoe? Courtney said yes, but the voucher is for \$125 so any shoe under that, or they could put that toward a more expensive shoe if they want. Chaney asked what stores the vouchers can be used at? Shoe sensation and Shoe Department. Their contracts have been extended, and they are still good with it. Chaney added that \$125 is a significant amount for shoes. Members agreed. Courtney added that individuals can qualify for the program once every 6 months, which is about how long it takes children to grow out of their shoe size.

f. Case Management – Rachel

Courtney stated that case management was already discussed in the TANF report when she went over the PCSA case management and expenditures.

Members' Comments

Tom projected a PowerPoint presentation and distributed PowerPoint slides to members regarding CARTS and their changes and updates. There was input from the community in a public meeting. The community said they need to invest in technology upgrades. CARTS is not meeting peoples need to get to work every day, because there are not enough drivers, and same day and urgent trips are not feasible. Recommendations are they replace 'the make connection shuttle' with 'Micro-transit Service' and create shopper shuttles. Tom stated that they can improve taking some of these recommendations. Connex starts December 2, 2024, and will continue to expand. Chaney asked what is Connex? Tom said Uber basically. Download the CARTS Connex App on Google play or the Apple store and set up a personal account. Fare is 1\$ and only same day trips can be scheduled. Book your appointment and where you want to go. Tom stated that they are just transitioning to this so they will need to work out kinks as they come. Tom added that individuals can still call in and schedule like before. Connex will have different zones and will expand into Salem, Columbiana, Lisbon, and East Palestine. Marie asked if individuals pay on the app. Yes. Chaney asked if there will be options for non-profits to donate money and pay for individuals to have rides. Tom stated they will have to look into that. There will be free fares from December 2nd, 2024, through January 4th, 2025. CARTS is not an income-based transportation service, but there can be discounts for those needing assistance. Melissa commented that they have an employee who has a sick child and needs to travel Cincinnati – can they use this? Yes, but it is not that cheap. Depending on amount of miles, it might cost a lot of money. Tom added that this is not one of the programs that makes money, and it isn't structured to make money. Call the office with any questions. (330) 424-4015.

Chaney commented that The Way Station started their boys' program for pregnancy prevention at the East Palestine location. There is an upcoming session – which is done differently than the girls program. Right now, the boys' program is a few dates during winter break. And a couple other times a year they will have a few dates. Chaney added that the East Palestine location is looking to purchase property, because they've outgrown the space. They've had a few staff turnover. They hired people working through SNAP program that have been there long term. Courtney added that will be changing. After 6 months at a job placement, they will move their assignment. Chaney asked when that will start. Courtney answered October 1st, 2025, it already started. It will be a big change.

Mary Ann asked Tom to send the PowerPoint about the Connex service, and she can send it to her organization. Marie asked if it is something he wants to share with school districts. If it makes sense, yes. Tom will send it to Marie. Pastor Brian asked if he could make a flyer for it and put it up at his church. Yes.

Pastor Brian commented that he has some updates on the LMA church. They have a clothing shed, but it is not sorted. Individuals can find all kinds of things in there. They do emergency walk ins. LMA is having a Thanksgiving service. The Pastor is spread thin as he is the pastor of 4 churches. There is not a lot of revenue and not a lot of profits. They are putting a bench for a memorial for one of the pastors who died.

Melissa commented that there isn't a lot from the Housing Authority. The program is full at max capacity for funding and vouchers. They're looking to reopen the Housing Voucher program application in 2025. They might change some things, like how to do the application. Trumbull County did it differently. They were on the news with people wrapped around the building waiting in line. Depending on the size of a unit they need, whether it's for a family or not – the wait list time is 6-12 months. They will get moved up in the list if they are a vet or if in a homeless shelter.

Tom thanked members for coming. Meeting adjourned.

The next JFS Planning Committee meeting will be held February 25th, 2025, at 9 am @ JFS