

**DAVIDSON COUNTY  
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES**

*Dale Moorefield, Director*



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**Davidson County Department of Social Services  
Board Meeting Minutes  
August 22, 2017**

**Board Members Present**

**Mr. John Byrum; Mr. Andy Morris  
Mr. Richard Wagner; Mr. Lance Barrett; Mr. Steve Jarvis**

**Others in Attendance**

**Mr. Dale Moorefield; Mr. Scott Craver; Ms. Katrina McMasters; Mrs. Elizabeth Huff;  
Mrs. Susan Craig; Mrs. Caroline Hedrick; Mrs. Lexa Eagle; Mrs. Brooke Hedrick;  
Mr. Randy Blevins; Ms. Sandra Cochran; Ms. Quintana Manning;  
Ms. Vickie Bennett; Mrs. Wendy Burcham; Ms. Christie Guffey;  
Ms. Jenny Scarlett; Ms. Shannon Moore; Mrs. Kimberly Gasque**

**Call to Order**

Mr. John Byrum called the meeting to order at 4:17 p.m. Mr. Byrum offered an invocation.

**Oath of Office – Richard Wagner**

Mr. Richard Wagner was sworn in for his three-year term on the Board of Social Services – appointed by the Social Services Commission. Mrs. Brooke Hedrick presided over the giving of the Oath of Office.

**Adoption of Agenda**

Mr. Dale Moorefield asked that an item be added to the Agenda, H.3. North Carolina Association of County Boards of Social Services Update. Mr. Steve Jarvis made a motion to approve the amended Agenda. Mr. Andy Morris seconded the motion. The amended Agenda was approved unanimously.

**Approval of Minutes**

Mr. Lance Barrett made a motion to approve the minutes of the July 31, 2017 meeting. Mr. Andy Morris seconded this motion. The minutes were approved unanimously.

**Public Address**

There was no public address.

## **Management Report**

Mrs. Caroline Hedrick shared a paper copy of the Expenditure Report. She shared that these are preliminary figures, as the month end paperwork has not been received from Finance yet.

During the first month of spending, we are over budget in the overtime line item and are spending at 25%. In the budget we added 2 additional Foster Care positions that will help combat some of the overtime; however work with families and children in custody must be done whether we have full staff or not, thus the overtime expense. We are overspending in supplies and this is mainly due to one-time equipment purchases at the beginning of the year to equip three new positions in the Agency. The overspending in telephone internal charges is due to an annual maintenance fee for the telephone service. Dues and Subscriptions are being spent at 97%; however, these are annual dues and there should be no additional spending in this area for the year. All other areas are in line with projected spending at 4% overall. Questions regarding overtime were asked by the Board and answered.

Mr. Dale Moorefield shared that we currently have eight vacancies we are trying to fill. All of these vacancies have been posted. Interviewing and selection for the positions is ongoing. Each vacancy was explained. One position in particular interest to the Board was an employee, who vacated the position after just two weeks of service; who just simply walked off the job. The Board asked if contact had been made with this individual and it was shared that numerous attempts have been made to speak with the former employee, but they have not responded. Mr. Moorefield asked each Program Administrator to introduce themselves for Mr. Wagner's benefit as they present their portion of the management report.

Mrs. Elizabeth Huff introduced herself as the Income Maintenance Program Administrator. She gave a brief synopsis of the areas she supervises. She shared the Income Maintenance (Medicaid, Food and Nutrition Services and Fraud) management report in detail, giving explanations and examples for specific areas. This is the first month to capture data for the new fiscal year and the accuracy rate is very good as well as timely processing percentages. Recertification timeliness has started very good as well. Medicaid recertifications are done yearly and Food and Nutrition Services recertifications are done every six months or yearly, depending on the type of income in the home. Over \$2 million in FNS benefits, on average, are issued each month. The total caseload information was shared. We have two fraud investigators in the Agency, who seek repayment of benefits that were over issued due to many different reasons. These workers receive, investigate and establish claims that are received from many different sources.

Mrs. Huff also shared information regarding the Work First program. She shared brief information about how the contract with Goodwill Industries works. She explained Child-Only Work First cases and the criteria involved to qualify for this assistance. The number of applications in July was 28 and there is a total caseload in Work First of 254. She notes that 80% of these cases are child-only cases and no individuals are required to participate in the work programs of child-only cases.

Mrs. Huff also supervises the Child Day Care program. She shared that there is no data available to share at this time, due to this program moving to the NC Fast mode and no reports being available yet. She shared that last year's budget for Child Care was spent at 98.8%, which is exceptional considering that budget amount was around \$5.7 million. This funding serves approximately 1000 to 1200 kids per month.

Mrs. Huff explained the Emergency Assistance program briefly. There are several programs within this area and each has its own eligibility criteria. The spending in July is normal for this time of year. Work First Emergency Assistance spending is at 11%, which is due to not using Crisis Intervention Program funding. CIP funding is only used when there is a heating or cooling crisis.

Mr. Scott Craver introduced himself as the Deputy Director of the Agency, as well as the Program Administrator for Child Support Enforcement. Child Support Enforcement information will be shared in more detail later in the meeting. Child Support is off to a good start; the first month of the new fiscal year shows that collections are \$7000 greater than what was collected last year at this same time. Mr. Craver also shared that caseloads are up slightly.

Ms. Katrina McMasters introduced herself as the Child Protective Services Program Administrator. She gave an overview of the CPS units and their duties. July CPS reports are somewhat down, but the overall average is still up slightly. The number of reports screened out was high this month. Neglect reports are up and abuse reports are down slightly. Sexual abuse reports have been up for the past few months and July is no exception. Ms. McMasters gave an explanation of how different tracks are used and how cases are investigated in Child Protective Services. Out of County assists continue to be high. We have two very large group homes in the County and those create more calls for assists because children from other counties reside in the homes. Family Outreach was explained. We have one worker that makes assessments for outreach and determines what services may be needed in order to possibly avoid a report/investigation being conducted. Currently, CPS Social Workers are working double the case number recommended by the State. They are working to get the caseloads down and continue to meet the needs of the families that we serve. In-Home Social Workers can remain involved with families for up to six months.

Mrs. Susan Craig introduced herself as the Program Administrator for Foster Care, Adoptions, Foster Home Licensing and Adult Services. She shared that 8 children came into the care of our Agency in July. We had 166 children in care at the end of July; however, 11 children were taken into custody during the first week of August and others found permanence and now we have 174 children in care. We currently have 11 children being monitored that we do not have custody of because their custody has been assigned to a relative. We must maintain contact and supervision for one year after this kind of placement. The LINKS program was explained and the types of services offered for our older kids in care. We are currently working with 6 children in this program. Placement requirements for our children were explained. We do have some runaways and some children in detention. The newest addition to Foster Care was explained - Foster Care ages 18 to 21. Individuals in this age group can continue to get services as long as they aged out of foster care at the age of 18. We are currently serving 5 children in this kind of placement. There are two social workers who are working with these children and we expect to see more as word gets around. The children participating in this program must adhere to the guidelines set forth by the State. They can end this arrangement at any time; the Agency must take the matter before the courts to end the arrangement. Mrs. Craig shared that there is a shortage of foster parents nationwide and Davidson County is no exception. Substance abuse issues are causing children to remain in care longer. Adoptions are completed for children who have been released for adoption through our Agency. We also receive requests from the Clerk of Court to complete stepparent adoptions. Out of county and Interstate adoptive home studies are requested from this County as well. Our County may monitor some of the adoptive placements for other counties and other states. The Adoption Assistance program was explained and we currently have 268 adoption assistance cases.

Mrs. Craig shared that in the Adult Services area, this is compared to a combination of Child Protective Services and Foster Care for adults. The number of reports received and accepted for Adult Protective Services were down in July. We received 5 new wards in July. The Clerk's office can give us guardianship without there being a court hearing. We lost 6 wards and the majority of these wards were reassigned to Hope for the Future. Our contract with Hope for the Future was explained. We are trying to maintain in this area with the staff that we have. Demographic information was shared; 75% of the wards in our care have mental health issues. Our Agency is also responsible for Unclaimed Bodies and we work to contact family to claim responsibility as well as work with Medical Schools on body donations. This area also has to monitor facilities in the

County and provide supportive resources for families. Information and Referral calls are a large part of the service provided by this area as well.

There was discussion about APS and CPS reports and whether updates are provided to the persons making the reports. Both areas do provide information to the reporters if they are not anonymous, but no details are given, only that the reports are accepted or not. The CPS and APS processes were explained.

### **Old Business**

There was no Old Business.

### **New Business**

#### **Child Support Awareness Month**

August is Child Support Awareness Month and there will be a proclamation read at the Board of County Commissioner's meeting tonight. The local Child Support Enforcement Office has done an outstanding job in providing services here in Davidson County. CSE had a very successful year and collected a new record of over \$13.2 million in Child Support for the children here in Davidson County. For the second time in the past three years, CSE in Davidson County has met all five goals set by the State. The goals were shared and the percentage by which they were surpassed was given. The breakdown of each unit was also shared; both units have Establishment and Enforcement agents; clerical support and supervision. The Thomasville CSE unit also has Interstate agents that work cases for children whose non-custodial parent lives in another state. There were several agents present for the meeting and each one introduced themselves and shared their areas of expertise. In 2015, Davidson County CSE was ranked 8<sup>th</sup> out of 100 counties in the State for performance. These CSE units have continued to raise the bar each year and have steadily grown each year. The 18-year history of CSE with Social Services was shared. A total of almost \$184 million has been collected over those 18 years. The cost effectiveness of the program was discussed sharing that our County's cost effectiveness is double the average of the State. Recipients of CSE services are charged a minimal fee of \$25 to initiate services and there are those who receive certain services through Social Services that get the service with no fee. The history of Child Support was provided by Supervisor Randy Blevins, dating back as far as 1601. DSS history with CSE was also shared with the Board. DSS took over supervision and running of the program in July 1999, when the County decided to sever ties with a private agency that was collecting Child Support for Davidson County citizens. It began with one supervisor in one location and only a few agents and clerical people. Today, there is a County Attorney (Mike Newby) dedicated to Child Support, two supervisors, two locations, 15 agents and two clerical staff members. Caseload sizes have varied over the years and currently number over 6000. Ms. Vickie Bennett, Establishment Agent, shared the process for establishment of a child support order. There is a lot to establishment of an order and once the order is in place, it is then sent to Enforcement Agents for them to work the cases. Income withholding from the non-custodial parent is initiated by Establishment as well. Ms. Quintana Manring, Enforcement Agent, shared that once the case reaches Enforcement, the majority of the cases pay as ordered or agreed. About 23 to 30 percent of cases in Enforcement require court action, additional work, levies on settlements, accident settlements, levies on lottery winnings, passport denials, tax intercepts, and other avenues of collection. Cases are reviewed and adjustments made every three years. It is sometimes difficult to locate and collect from those responsible in the County. Mrs. Wendy Burcham, Interstate Agent, shared that Interstate Agents complete both the establishment and enforcement pieces of the process to collect the Child Support from Non-Custodial parents that reside outside of North Carolina. She works with other states to get moneys collected for the children that reside here in Davidson County. The other state is asked to enforce the orders and take court action as needed.

This is also a reciprocated service here in Davidson County for other states. She sometimes works with other countries as well. There is increased paperwork with interstate cases as other states have to be notified of changes and they notify us of changes as well. There are some individuals that move from state to state very quickly, possibly to avoid paying Child Support. Mr. Craver shared that the two units work well together. Mrs. Huff shared that cooperation with CSE is mandatory for Work First participants to receive benefits. It is also mandatory for someone who receives Medicaid for themselves as a caretaker for children to cooperate with child support enforcement.

The Board was very complimentary of the job done by the CSE staff and thanked them for their continued hard work.

### **Annual Personnel Report FY 2016-2017**

Mr. Dale Moorefield shared the Annual Personnel Report for fiscal year 2016-2017. During the fiscal year, we had 194.5 positions. As of the beginning of the new fiscal year (2017-2018), we have 199.5 active positions. The breakdown of demographics in areas worked was shared in the report. Our Agency had only a 9% turnover rate for the year of 2016-2017, with 17 people actually leaving employment. That turnover rate for a Department of Social Services this size is low. Nine individuals were promoted from within the Agency and there were nine retirements. There were four in-house transfers. Three of the people that resigned were facing possible dismissal. It has been the trend that most people do not leave our Agency to go to work in another DSS; however three that left did go to another DSS to work, one in Mecklenburg to become a supervisor and work closer to home; one moved to Onslow County; and one went to work in Cabarrus County for more money and could ride share with a coworker while being closer to her home.

### **North Carolina Association of County Boards of Social Services Update**

Mr. Moorefield shared an email that he received from NCACBSS regarding a proposed change of their by-laws. They will vote on these changes on October 19, 2017 at the Annual meeting, which will be held at the Social Services Institute in Hickory. The proposed change was provided in the email along with an explanation from NCACBSS.

No further business was discussed and a motion to adjourn the meeting was made Mr. Steve Jarvis and seconded by Mr. Andy Morris.

### **Date of Next Meeting**

Tuesday, September 26, 2017, at 4:15 p.m., second floor of Social Services in Lexington, Conference Room A, Governmental Complex Building.

### **Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned a 5:45 pm.

Minutes submitted by Dale Moorefield