

**DAVIDSON COUNTY
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES**

Dale Moorefield, Director



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**Davidson County Department of Social Services
Board Meeting Minutes
October 24, 2017**

Board Members Present

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

Others in Attendance

**Mr. Scott Craver; Ms. Katrina McMasters; Mrs. Elizabeth Huff; Mrs. Susan Craig;
Mrs. Caroline Hedrick; Ms. Sherri Woodyard**

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 4:17 p.m. by Mr. John Byrum. An invocation was offered by Mr. Byrum. Mr. Dale Moorefield was lifted in prayer as he recovers from surgery.

Adoption of Agenda

Mr. Lance Barrett made a motion to approve the Agenda. Mr. Andy Morris seconded the motion. The Agenda was approved unanimously.

Approval of Minutes

Mr. Andy Morris made a motion to approve the minutes of the September 26, 2017 meeting. Mr. Richard Wagner seconded this motion. The minutes were approved unanimously.

Public Address

There was no public address.

Management Report

Mrs. Caroline Hedrick shared the September 2017 expenditure report, including justifications for overspending in several line items. The Agency continues to incur overtime expenditures related to increased caseloads in foster care (47% of overtime) and CPS (33% of overtime). Currently 92% of the interpreter budget has been spent due to a client requiring a sign language interpreter. The Agency uses a contracted sign language interpreter for this service as it does not have a sign language interpreter on staff. A fund transfer request has been submitted for approval. As of September 30, 2017, 21% of the operating budget and 8% of the public assistance budget has been utilized for an overall Social Services budget usage of

14%. Mr. Wagner inquired about the use of General Assistance funding and Mrs. Elizabeth Huff explained that these funds are used for circumstances when a client does not qualify for other assistance. Mr. Lance Barrett questioned why overtime expenses were still high in Foster Care. Mrs. Susan Craig responded that the high caseloads contribute to increased overtime. Ms. Sherri Woodyard also described Rylan's Law, which requires a foster care social worker to complete visits that can occur on weekends. When children are taken away from their parents and placed in foster care, Rylan's Law requires that social workers observe foster children interacting with their parents again on at least two visits with a duration of at least an hour per visit. Visits must be at least seven days apart before recommending to a judge whether or not the family should be reunited at that time. Visits must take place no more than 30 days prior to the hearing.

Mrs. Hedrick also shared a budget amendment that will be presented at the County Commissioner's meeting for approval. The amendment does not request additional funds, as funds will be transferred within the current DSS budget. The amendment includes requests to: 1) transfer \$12,500 from Bonus/Christmas and Longevity and Professional Fees to Interpreting Fees and Contracted Services in order to offer additional interpreter services, school transportation for a foster care client, and additional home studies; 2) transfer \$10,000 from County Foster Care and Ward to General Assistance (funds were budgeted in the original budget request, but no funds were included in the adopted budget); and 3) appropriate \$37,916 from revenues and donations received to expense accounts for Special Adoption Fund II, Keith Johnson Fund, Carolyn Phillips Fund, and Grant Funds for Children.

Mr. Scott Craver reported that there are currently ten vacancies in the Agency; seven in Income Maintenance, two in Social Work, and one Office Support position, which is on hold. Vacancies are attributed to one employee leaving to work for a nursing facility, one leaving to work for a hospital, one resignation, and one internal move. The IMC position posting will close this week. A hiring recommendation will be made for the CPS-Investigations/Assessments/Treatment position during the week. Interviews for the Foster Care Licensing position will start on Thursday.

Mrs. Elizabeth Huff shared that worker performance as a whole is meeting state-mandated goals with regards to accuracy and processing times. In light of vacancies, workers have done a great job keeping numbers up. SA Medicaid percentages will increase once vacant positions are filled. With the SA Medicaid position vacancies, one worker is maintaining 354 cases with 13 new applications per month for the program. No drastic decreases or increases in the number of cases or applications have occurred.

Work First Family Assistance (WFFA) remains constant. The drop in WFFA applications taken during September is most likely due to the office being closed for a holiday. Fewer adults were placed in the workforce; however, this is expected to increase over the holidays. Mrs. Huff shared that benefit diversions increased and explained that this is actually good. She explained that normally when a client is eligible for WFFA, they can receive three months of benefits in one lump sum, which helps to get the client through a crisis without requiring longer-term assistance.

Mrs. Huff expressed that the State is struggling with providing Child Day Care information and reports are received by the Agency after the fact, whereas, interim reports could be generated prior to NC FAST. The spending coefficient as of July is at 105%, but no data is available for August and September. She added that late information will hopefully not affect our ability to turn things around as we go further into the year. She shared that the Agency may need to implement a waiting list at some point to bring spending back into line.

In the area of Emergency Assistance, AFDC-EA spending may be higher at this point in the year due to CIP funding not yet available. CIP is used for extreme temperatures that cause life-threatening issues. Overall, energy numbers are constant. LIEAP funding will be available in December for the priority group (seniors/disabled). The Agency will advertise funding availability by posting notices, releasing public service announcements, and sending flyers to vendors. Libraries will announce the program starting in December. Much advertisement is through word of mouth. The primary cost of advertising is for paper advertisements. In January, the general population will be served. LIEAP is an entitlement program and applicants will be screened for eligibility based on income level, number of people in the home, and heating source. Payments are made directly to vendors. The funding allotment is formula-based.

Mr. Scott Craver shared that Child Support numbers are steady and comparable to last year. Collections are slightly behind by half percent as compared to last year. Monthly, the state produces a list of the top 20% collections and Michelle DeVisser from the Thomasville Office was recognized for a \$9,800 lump sum collection.

Ms. Katrina McMasters reported there were 218 Child Protective Services (CPS) reports received in September with 108 reports accepted. Numbers are where expected for the current period. Educational personnel are currently the primary reporter of CPS reports. Abuse cases are on the rise. The unit is tracking cases involving infants and long-term cost projections. Ninety-seven cases were assigned as family assessment. Ms. McMasters shared that she is proud of her staff closing 109 cases in September as this exceeds the yearly average. Workers are trying to understand risk compared to safety in order to warrant taking a case to the next level. During September, there were 41 open investigations with 21 closed. In-home numbers remain steady with 84 cases as of month end. Family outreach referrals have decreased. CPS continues to have cases from other counties where Davidson County is required to assist. Five cases were taken to court, which resulted in 10 children coming into custody. Mr. Jarvis inquired about 2017 statistics for child fatalities under age one. Mr. Craver explained that the Health Department actually helps to track this data and will continue to be shared with the DSS Board and discussed at the CCPT/CFPT meetings.

Mrs. Susan Craig reported that there were 166 foster care children in custody of DSS at the end of July and 179 at the end of September. She explained that the needs are higher when the child is initially taken into care. Other areas remain constant compared to prior months. Seven children are in independent placement through Foster Care 18-21 and this number is expected to rise. Mr. Steve Jarvis asked about out-of-state children. Mrs. Craig responded that Davidson County remains as the custodial county when children are placed with families out of state. The worker visits the children every 6 months and a local worker visits monthly. The Agency has three children residing in Arizona and the state requires relatives be licensed. This family is interested in adoption after parental rights are terminated.

Adult Services cases remained steady. Reports received increased to 32 during the month of September, but only 21 were accepted for valuation. One ward was gained as of month end. Susan noted that petitions taken to court do not always result in DSS becoming the guardian. The Clerk of Court will consider a family or friend as guardian before assigning to DSS. Financial assistance was provided for one unclaimed body, but only transportation costs were paid for this case.

Mr. Craver noted that Attorney Chris Watford, who works half time with DSS, is resigning as of October 30. In the interim, Attorney Mike Newby will be assigned to Adult Services and

Attorney Sherri Woodyard will take over Termination of Parental Rights (TPR) during the month of November and December or until someone is hired. The Agency has plans to contract with Davie County DSS Attorney, Holly Groce, during the month of January. The position has been posted. Adult Services cases usually require a one-time court date, unlike juvenile cases. Mr. Craver expressed that the Legal Department does a lot for DSS with writing petitions, writing orders, etc. He commended Ms. Woodyard, Mr. Watford, and Mr. Newby for the job they do for DSS. Additional legal information will be shared with the Board at the next meeting.

Old Business

Employee PBB Bonus for FY 2016-2017

Performance Based Budgeting (PBB) will be paid to 154 DSS employees for a total of \$76,000 being paid out. The majority of the remaining employees did not qualify for the bonus due to not being employed by DSS as of July 1, 2016. Mr. Craver shared his appreciation to the Board for supporting the employee bonus.

New Business

Closed Session – Personnel

Mr. Steve Jarvis made a motion to go into closed session at 5:01 p.m. Mr. Andy Morris seconded this motion. The Board entered into closed session to conduct the Annual Director's Evaluation.

Mr. Lance Barrett made a motion to end the closed session at 5:40 p.m. Mr. Andy Morris seconded the motion.

Date of Upcoming Meetings

Tuesday, November 28, 2017 at 4:15 p.m., first floor of Social Services in Lexington, Conference Room D.

Friday, December 15, 2017 at 11:30 a.m. at First Pentecostal Church located on Hwy 64 East. The Agency Christmas Luncheon will follow at 12 noon and the Board is invited to attend.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 5:40 pm.

Minutes submitted by Scott Craver.