

**DAVIDSON COUNTY
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES**

Dale Moorefield, Director



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**Davidson County Department of Social Services
Board Meeting Minutes
August 28, 2018**

Board Members Present

**Mr. Andy Morris; Mr. Richard Wagner;
Mr. Steve Jarvis; Mr. Lance Barrett; Ms. Jane Murphy**

Others in Attendance

**Mr. Dale Moorefield; Mr. Scott Craver; Ms. Katrina McMasters; Mrs. Susan Craig;
Mrs. Elizabeth Huff; Mrs. Caroline Hedrick; Mrs. Lexa Eagle; Ms. Sherri Woodyard;
Ms. Paige Lawson; Ms. Kim Danch; Ms. Vickie Bennett; Mr. Randy Blevins**

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 4:12 p.m. by Mr. Andy Morris. An invocation was offered by Mr. Morris.

Adoption of Agenda

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

Approval of Minutes

Mr. Wagner made a motion to approve the minutes of the July 24, 2018 meeting. Ms. Jane Murphy seconded this motion. The minutes were approved unanimously.

Public Address

There was no public address. Mr. Dale Moorefield took this opportunity to introduce the Child Support staff in the meeting, Ms. Kim Danch, Supervisor in Lexington; Mr. Randy Blevins, Supervisor in Thomasville; Ms. Vickie Bennett, Establishment Agent; and Ms. Paige Lawson, Enforcement Agent.

Management Report

Mrs. Caroline Hedrick reported that 8 % spending for this Fiscal Year has now lapsed. She also shared a Budget Amendment with the Board. This report gives our first full month of

spending for the new budget year. Overtime is at 13 percent above where we should be; the vacant positions and allowing time for training of newly hired staff are obvious reasons for this. CPS area is 41 percent of the overtime; 32 percent is in Permanency Planning; and 22 percent is in the Adult Services area. A Rentals and Buildings budget line item has been added in the budget for the lease agreement with Family Services of Davidson County for space for the new Forensic Team in CPS. The increase in the telephone line item is due to the purchase of 6 new phones for the six new positions approved in the new budget. Our spending in contracted services is at 10 percent. Departmental supplies increased due to having ordered enough extra supplies to carry the Agency in the absence due to leave of the person who normally does the ordering. Travel expense is up. The Travel line item was cut at final budget, but we have to make visits and investigate reports. TRIP funds have also been added as a new line item. We are at 7% spending in operations, 6% spending in public assistance and 7% spending for the overall budget so far.

Mr. Moorefield gave a report regarding the vacancies in the Agency. There are four positions in Family and Children's Medicaid/FNS. Mr. Moorefield explained all of these vacancies in detail. He also explained the vacancies in Child Protective Services and Permanency Planning. He informed the Board that the vacant Social Work Supervisor III position was created when a supervisor stepped down into a worker position within our new forensic unit. He reported that a recommendation is very close in regards to the vacancy in the Administrative/Fiscal unit and that interviews for the Office Support III position in Thomasville are complete as we are trying to fill positions with good staff.

Mrs. Elizabeth Huff reported that in the Income Maintenance area, they have already improved in accuracy and processing times from last year in the first month of the year. The number of Medicaid applications for the month of July was 684. The total number of cases is up a little from last year in both Medicaid and Special Assistance. Food and Nutrition Services is at 829 applications for July, which is right on target. Benefits issued and total number of cases is down some. It is anticipated that caseload counts may go up in January due to the ABAWD waiver exemptions becoming available for some by then, as January 2019 will complete these folks first cycle through ABAWD ineligibility.

Mrs. Huff reported that in the Program Integrity area, nearly \$28,000.00 was collected and \$4,111.29 will come back to the County as reimbursement. She also reported that the PI worker who had been out of work on leave has returned to work as the other Program Integrity investigator has gone out on leave.

Mrs. Huff reported that in the Work First area, they had 19 applications and 13 inquiries. The total number of cases open is 215 and they have already put three adults to work this year. No Benefit Diversion cases were completed in July. Mrs. Huff briefly explained the Benefit Diversion piece of the Work First program.

Mrs. Huff reported that in the Child Care area, our allocation for this year is just over \$6.4 million. Our current spending coefficient is 75 percent at this time and our Agency is beginning to serve the children on the waiting list. The first to be considered for assistance will be those parents that are employed full time; then part time employed; then those involved in secondary education; then all others requesting assistance. The Agency will be mailing out letters today to the first group. In working through the Waiting List, the workers no longer make appointments; they see the applicants as they come in to present and request assistance, based on the letter they received letting them know we can now serve their Child Care Assistance needs. The Agency's Childcare Subsidy spending will go up as well as the coefficient once these children are served. An explanation of spending at holidays and

summer vacation for childcare was given. The State is now using a “blended” rate, which causes less fluctuation in payments.

In the Emergency Assistance area, Mrs. Huff stated that we have used more CIP than the other emergency programs. Use of CIP must be because of a life-threatening situation. WF-EA would possibly be used if the applicant has already used all of their CIP allowance for the year.

Mr. Scott Craver reported that Child Support Enforcement has started very well for the year. They currently show a 3.4 percent increase in collections over last year at this same time. Mr. Randy Blevins also shared that one of the agents collected over \$25,000.00 from one non-custodial parent. The parent needed his passport released, on which Child Support Enforcement had placed a hold.

Ms. Katrina McMasters reported that Child Protective Services ended the month of July with a bang, accepting more reports in July than the average received for the previous fiscal year. Even with the high numbers and the changes that are taking place, the team is doing really well. Of the reports received, eight were physical abuse and two were sexual abuse cases, which means the forensic unit is up, and running. The numbers are low now, but this affords the ability to build this team slowly and get them trained. The total number of assessments open is down more than 30 cases as compared to the previous year. The average caseload per worker should be 10 and we are now getting closer to that number. There are 31 open investigations. The number of children involved in each investigation has increase because of larger sibling groups. The number of new in-home cases went from 15 to 32 in the month of July. We are staying involved in cases longer to help parents follow through with what is expected. Ms. McMasters provided an explanation of numbers of workers and their caseloads. Family Outreach services are staying steady. Nine children came into DSS custody in July. Ms. McMasters also shared that the Forensic Team will be relocating to the Family Services building within the week and our community partners are excited about this team to be supervised by Kim Craver.

In the Permanency Planning area, Mrs. Susan Craig reported that the reason for the name change is that this area is to find permanence for children through adoption, foster care and relative placement. Ten children actually came into care in July, nine through CPS and one from the Division of Juvenile Justice. They found permanence for two children. We currently have 84 children in foster homes; 42 children with relatives and the remainder in group homes or treatment facilities. We currently have 36 foster homes. MAPP class just ended last Thursday night and staff is working on getting them licensed. The number of Adoption Assistance cases continues to rise. We currently have 71 children in care under the age of 5. These are younger, very vulnerable children.

Mr. Steve Jarvis mentioned the MOU that was discussed during the June Board meeting, stating that there were a few counties that had not signed it and no funding had been withheld at this time. Director Moorefield reminded that was not the promise he received from DHHS back in June. There was more discussion and there are rumblings that the MOU’s may be amended.

Mrs. Craig reported that in the Adult Services, the look of the management report has changed, having made the print bigger and easier to read. The total number of wards in the care of DSS for July was 88 and we continue to do a lot a referral and information assistance.

Old Business

Mr. Morris asked about the new space for CPS, which will be located at the Family Services building. Mr. Moorefield let the Board know that the lease has been signed. IT service is in place and they will be moving at the end of the week or the beginning of September. They are currently being housed at Health Department temporarily. Mr. Moorefield also shared information regarding the Davidson House renovation. He has received confirmation from Mr. Dwayne Childress, Support Services Director, that the crew to complete the renovation has been mobilized today (August 28, 2018) to start work at Davidson House. He anticipates 6 to 8 weeks to complete the renovation. Adult Services will move into that space. The second floor front desk renovation is nearing completion, after waiting for this to happen for almost two years. The final touches of detailed carpentry work are nearing completion. Mr. Moorefield also reported that there will be no office space available at Davidson Works, as the County Manager has confirmed that space there is to be used by another agency.

There was also discussion about Rhea Dugan's presentation to the Board in July. This discussion will be shared with all supervisors at the quarterly meeting on Thursday 8/30/2018. Mr. Moorefield has not had an opportunity to check on salary ranges in comparable size counties.

New Business

Child Support Awareness Month/Program Focus

August is Child Support Enforcement Awareness month. In the past four years, Child Support Enforcement has met all of their State set goals in two of those years and they were very close to meeting most of the goals this year, hitting only 1 of the 5 despite collecting more than \$13,152,572. Mike Newby is the attorney for CSE. Mr. Craver stated that they have very effective staff in getting paternity established and child support agreements signed. The agents go to court twice a month for each unit. Establishment cases are heard during one of the court dates and enforcement cases are heard on the second court date. Mr. Craver shared a document with the Board giving stats for CSE. The agents and clerical staff do a good job of handling over 6000 cases. There are 2 CSE units in the Agency and 3 agents in the Thomasville unit handle interstate cases. There are establishment and enforcement agents in both locations. The Agent I positions are the primary support for the Establishment worker in each unit. The data shared goes back to the days when CSE was privatized. Our Agency brought CSE under its wing in 1999 and since that time, over \$200 million has been collected through the work of the CSE agents. The cost effectiveness comparison was also shared.

Mr. Randy Blevins stated that Congress passed legislation in 1975 to try to recoup public assistance funds being paid out due to the absence of one parent from the home. Shortly after that legislation was passed, the system was opened up to others outside of public assistance. More tools have been provided over the years to try to collect from the non-custodial parent in cases.

Ms. Vickie Bennett shared that establishment agents carry approximately 350 cases. These agents must deal with both parents, custodial and non-custodial. Sometimes the parties involved are not truthful. Every case in establishment is different. Gathering good information is of the utmost importance. Voluntary Support Agreements (VSA) can be signed in the DSS office. If that offer is refused, the case is taken to court for establishing an order. About half of the non-custodial parents sign the VSA; the remainder are taken to court. There are 30 to 35

cases in court each month for this and sometimes the non-custodial parent can “hide” and “play games”, which makes the job more difficult.

Ms. Paige Lawson shared that once a case is established, it comes to enforcement. Enforcement is just what it sounds like, enforcing the order. Delinquency reports are provided and worked when the non-custodial parent (NCP) has not paid. She stated again that it is easy for the NCP to hide. Law enforcement cannot search a residence for them if they are told they do not live there. Custodial parents may not cooperate well either. The first court date is usually continued in order for them to get an attorney. An Order for Arrest and going to jail is a last resort, because if an NCP is in jail, they cannot work and earn the money needed to pay their Child Support. Enforcement agents also file motions to modify orders. Orders can be reviewed every three years. An NCP can file a motion for review as well. The agents prepare cases for the attorney. When money is taken in court, it is sent through the Clerk of Courts office.

Ms. Kim Danch shared that she works with law enforcement and NCP’s who may be in jail. Typically, there have 5 to 7 NCP’s each month willing to “make a deal” so, they can make purge payments and be released from jail. Collecting the money for the children is the most important thing. Developing and maintaining relationships with law enforcement, judges, and attorneys is very important as well. Ms. Lawson participates in Project Re-entry and goes to the local prison to share information with the NCP’s there and to let them know that CSE is not their enemy.

Mr. Craver stated that these units do a great job. Less than five percent of NCP’s have jail time. CSE is almost always willing to work with the NCP to get them out of or keep them out of jail.

There was discussion about filing fees and service fees by the Sheriff’s Department. Out of county service is usually more involved and we do have to pay for that service.

The Board thanked the staff and told them to keep up the good work.

Annual Personnel Report

Mr. Moorefield went through the Annual Personnel Report with the Board. There have been several moves during the year, with staff being promoted and making lateral moves. The breakdown of percentages of race and sex for employees with DSS was shared. Mr. Moorefield explained the probation period for both new hires and those making moves within the Department. The turnover rate was discussed. It is higher this year at 16% (up from 9% the previous year), but still low when compared to other DSS’s. Retirement of DSS employees is not counted in the turnover rate. The promotions and separations were discussed in detail. The reasons for employees leaving were also discussed in detail. Mr. Moorefield explained that exit interviews are done with each employee when they leave unless an employee is terminated or just walks out and Director Moorefield shared each person’s reason for leaving.

We currently we have 205.5 positions in the agency. Retention of our employees has become a concern. We do have employee morale booster events, but those do not take the place of monetary compensation with the stress of higher and more complex caseloads. Our employees do get overtime pay when other counties around us do not pay overtime. In some counties, those employees that work extra hours have been made exempt employees and we do not have that practice in place. Employee incentives offered in other states was discussed.

Our County already has a tuition reimbursement program in place to support ongoing educational pursuits of staff.

Mr. Moorefield shared that the Social Services Institute holds New Board Member training as part of their annual conference. This will be held in October and the session for this training is from 11:30 am to 5 pm on the first day of the conference. Mr. Moorefield offered the opportunity for Ms. Murphy to attend and she stated that she would. The conference will be held in Hickory, October 17th through 19th, 2018.

Mr. Wagner requested that information on the security of the Department's personnel be addressed at the next meeting.

Date of Next Meeting

Tuesday, September 25, 2018, at 4:15 p.m., first floor of Social Services in Lexington, Conference Room D.

Adjournment

Mr. Wagner made a motion to adjourn the meeting; Ms. Murphy seconded. The motion was approved unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 5:53 pm.

Minutes submitted by Dale Moorefield