

**DAVIDSON COUNTY  
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES**

*Dale Moorefield, Director*



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**Davidson County Department of Social Services  
Board Meeting Minutes  
January 22, 2019**

**Board Members Present**

**Mr. Andy Morris, Mr. Richard Wagner, Mrs. Jane Murphy, Mrs. Karen Watford**

**Others in Attendance**

**Mr. Dale Moorefield, Mr. Scott Craver, Ms. Katrina McMasters, Mrs. Elizabeth Huff, Mrs. Susan Craig, Mrs. Caroline Hedrick, Mr. Chuck Frye**

**Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order at 4:15 p.m. by Mr. Andy Morris. An invocation was offered by Mr. Morris.

**Oath of Office**

Mrs. Karen Watford was sworn in for her three-year term of the Board of Social Services and is filling a Commissioner appointed position. Mr. Keith Bidy presided over the giving of the Oath of Office.

**Adoption of Agenda**

Mr. Richard Wagner motioned to approve the Agenda and Mrs. Jane Murphy seconded the motion. The Agenda was approved unanimously.

**Approval of Minutes**

Mrs. Jane Murphy made a motion to approve the minutes of the December 14, 2018 meeting. Mr. Richard Wagner seconded this motion. The minutes were approved unanimously.

**Public Address**

There was no public address.

## Management Report

Mrs. Caroline Hedrick reviewed the Agency's expenditure report for preliminary December 2018 expenses. Fifty percent of the fiscal year has lapsed. Explanations were given for line item overspending. Overtime continues to be over budget; however, lapsed salaries from unfilled positions will sufficiently cover this overage. The increase in contracted services was largely due to a lump sum Northwoods maintenance fee being paid during the month. Mrs. Hedrick shared that both State and IV-E foster care expenses are starting to increase; however, this is an area that is difficult to budget due to the mix of children in DSS custody. These funds are uncapped; therefore, federal and state funds will continue to be received with DSS paying the local share. Total salary and operating expenses were at 48%, uncapped public assistance expenses at 48%, and capped public assistance expenses at 29%. Overall spending was at 46% year to date. Mr. Wagner inquired about funding for the house renovations for the Adult Services Unit office space. Mr. Moorefield responded that renovations are continuing and we are currently waiting for the air quality test results before additional work will progress. The original renovation estimate was \$100,000 and will come from Performance Based Budgeting (PBB) funds; however, there could be additional expenses due to mold remediation issues. Rent for the space at the Family Services location has been included in the current year budget.

Mr. Dale Moorefield reviewed the Vacancy Report. There are a total of 15 vacancies as of the Board packet printing. Hiring recommendations have been made for 3 positions and offers are currently pending. Mr. Moorefield reviewed reasons for staff vacancies with the Board. Interviewed candidates for some positions have accepted positions in other counties or elsewhere due to the timing of job offers.

Mrs. Elizabeth Huff shared the Medicaid/Food and Nutrition Services (FNS)/Fraud Board Report. Program accuracy was good for the month of December and this is an indicator of how workers are doing. On a monthly basis, lead workers pull three cases per worker per month, and then conduct second party reviews. Errors identified allow the Agency to provide focused training, as well as, resolve issues prior to audits and monitoring. Medicaid and food stamp accuracy was above 98% and the Agency is doing well with processing Medicaid and SA applications. Recertifications are annual for those receiving benefits. Adult Medicaid recertification processing timeliness dropped to 92.5%; however, this is for adult cases (MQB which DSS pays a portion of Medicare premium) and all of these recertifications are due in December and not staggered throughout the year like other recertifications. The bottom of the report shows caseload size and trends of increases/decreases in applications. Over \$2.5 million federal dollars per month come into Davidson County through food stamps. With the current Federal shutdown, recipients have already received benefits through the end of February. Fraud collections equaled \$22,925.84.

Work First applications and inquiries have remained steady. Caseloads dropped slightly in December, which is a statewide trend. Four benefit diversions were made. As a part of HB 630, the participation rate was to be released monthly by the state; however, no data has been made available to the Agency since September.

Child Care Subsidy spending increased for the month of November and is hovering between 75-78%. No reversion information has been communicated from the State thus far. The desire is to do outreach to reach those who qualify for subsidy. Numbers of total children served, etc. continues to be unavailable and it is understood that queries in Data Warehouse are being rewritten to pull NC Fast data. Data Warehouse is an archival system.

Mrs. Huff gave an overview of emergency programs. General assistance funds have not been utilized thus far. Over the last month, 126 CIP applications were received which decreased compared to last month. This is mostly contributed to the availability of LIEAP funds, weather, and seasonal employment. Share the Warmth funds are generated when the community rounds up on their Piedmont Natural Gas bills. The first month of LIEAP benefits was issued in December with 519 applications and over \$112,000 of benefits. LIEAP applications will be taken through March 31 unless funds are exhausted prior to this date. Work First Emergency Assistance (WFEA) processed 9 applications for utilities requests. Overall, 781 unduplicated clients were provided with emergency rent and energy assistance totaling over \$144,000.

Mr. Scott Craver reviewed the Child Support Collections report. The program is at 47.46% of the collection goal with over \$1 million in collections for the month. He shared that collections will increase in February and March due to tax intercepts. Across the board, numbers have increased compared to the past month. Paternity is cumulative and usually ends around 107-108%. Mr. Craver shared a "shout out" for Quintana Manning for lump sum \$16,645 collection.

Ms. Katrina McMasters reviewed the Child Protective Services (CPS) Case Management Report. Reports decreased during the month of December with 125 of 215 reports accepted. The decrease may be contributed to the short month and a steady decline is normal for the end of the year. Of the reports accepted, 110 were for neglect, 10 for physical or emotional abuse or moral turpitude, and 5 for sexual abuse. The increase in physical and sexual abuse reports could be contributed to the addition of the forensic team. Other CPS units completed 102 family assessments and 23 investigations reports. The program closed 86 assessments, resulting in more cases open with 205 at the end of December. Fourteen investigations were closed with 28 open at end of the month. In home services received 14 new cases and closed the month with 107 cases, which was a record high. CPS did move an assessor to an in home services position due to the increased influx in this area. The trend seems to be that more cases will be in home, so more staff are needed in this area. Family outreach has declined due to the reassignment of that staff members function to help with cases due to vacancies. Six reports were transferred to another county; however, 20 were received by Davidson County DSS from other counties. Human services personnel were the high reporters for the month with law enforcement being the second highest reporting source. Ms. McMasters gave an explanation of the forensics unit, which was created in August. This unit is primarily working with Dragonfly House at this time.

Mrs. Susan Craig shared the Permanency Planning Report. There are currently 187 children in care. For the first six months of the year, 50 children have been taken into custody. The State recommends that one worker's caseload should be 15 children. The current number of children in custody justifies two additional workers, so with there already being 3 vacancies, the Agency is in need of 5 permanency planning social workers. The Agency has entered into a contract with Vanguard Professional Staffing for experienced, contracted social work staff. With the behaviors that children have and the trauma they have encountered, more therapeutic placements are needed which are difficult to find locally. This increases the amount of time it takes for staff to find placement and increases staff travel once placement is secured as visits are farther from home. There are currently 102 children in traditional foster homes and 40 children with relative placements. Over the next few months, the number of licensed foster homes will decrease as foster families are completing families through adoption. MAPP training class will start in February. There are 23 adoption assistance cases waiting for adoption completion.

Discussion was held regarding hiring processes and State caseload recommendations. Vacant positions are budgeted and job postings have been posted as "open until filled". If all vacant social worker positions were filled, the Agency would still need a significant number of social workers to be at State standards. Preservice training must be completed before an employee can carry a caseload, so as of now, it will be April before a new employee can take a case. NC's Modified Child Welfare Policy Manual has continually been updated which increases visit frequency requirements. Changes to the manual are rapidly taking place. Multiple positions will be requested in the upcoming budget and Mr. Moorefield will request for some on-hold positions to be reclassified. Salary and work hours play a significant role in applicant decisions regarding employment with Davidson County. Of 48.33 positions allotted for permanency planning and CPS in October, 36 positions were filled. The Board shared that it is disturbing that employees are carrying such high caseloads and are subjected to this amount pressure, as well as, citizens not being served to their full needs. Continued discussion will take place at the next meeting.

Adult services reports received and accepted decreased. Each report requires intensive work. There is an average of 51 cases open for the year as compared to 42 for the same period last year. Wards remained constant and 3 slots are still available for the Hope for the Future contract. For the month of December, a total of 221 clients were seen.

## **Old Business**

A motion was made to move Agenda item H.4 Agency Security to G. Old Business in order to allow law enforcement staff time to present and then to resume their duties. Mr. Richard Wagner motioned and Mrs. Jane Murphy seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

## **Agency Security**

Mr. Moorefield introduced Lieutenant Frankie Young and Sergeant Randy Holbrook from the Davidson County Sheriff's Department who completed an assessment of the Lexington Governmental Center and Thomasville Colonial Drive locations. They shared that Thomasville security needs to be revamped. Security concerns identified include:

- Minimal presence of law enforcement in both locations. Sergeant Holbrook shared that while the current deputy in Lexington completes walkthroughs of the building and assists as needed, she is paid through the tax department and most of this position's time is allocated to being at the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor tax office and providing bank escorts. He expressed that it is hard to fill deputy positions and the Sheriff's Department is currently 20 positions short. Lieutenant Young had shared contact information for Allied Security; however, Mr. Moorefield has not been successful in reaching the contact person.
- Multiple entrances at both locations. There are two sets of main doors used to access the Lexington location and they recommend one entrance for public and one for staff. Staff need to close exterior doors and not leave them propped open. There are 8 entrances to access the Thomasville location. Entrances need to be minimized and escape bars need to be installed on other exterior doors. Bus riders also sit inside the building entrance on cold and wet days while waiting for DC Transportation. Mr. Morris voiced his support of minimizing entrances to the buildings and shared an example of Chapel Hill Hospital reducing their entrances from 42 to 2 and no one enters unless they have an access card. He expressed that our staff are just as important as the medical providers at Chapel Hill.
- Top door magnets do not provide as much security as secure door latches. It was recommended that Lexington change to a secure door latch. Maintenance has already

began the process of obtaining quotes for electric strike latches; however, there is no projected timeline for replacement latches to be installed. Thomasville has secure door latches installed.

- Better monitoring of security cameras is needed. Sergeant Holbrook suggested to place security monitors in the Lexington switchboard room so that the person in this area can call 911. Cameras may be reviewed by DSS and Senior Services administrators in Thomasville. Security monitors need to be located where one person can view and they should not be viewable by visitors.
- Installation of panic buttons in both locations is needed. Panic buttons need to have good batteries and call out lists need to stay updated. Mr. Moorefield recently walked through with First Defense Security and approximately 11 wireless panic buttons will be installed. Quotes are also being obtained for panic buttons for staff who are in the field.
- Staff need to go through security training. The video "Run, Hide, Fight" was recommended. Mr. Moorefield shared that the HR Department is working on active shooter training for staff.

The assessment completed was a minor assessment; however, there is a detailed assessment that can be coordinated and completed. The Board unanimously voiced their approval of conducting a detailed assessment and Mr. Wagner offered to escort law enforcement during the assessment.

Mrs. McMasters shared a recent incident at Colonial Drive and the amount of time it took to review security cameras.

Mr. Moorefield expressed that any changes to the buildings would need to be approved by the County as we operate in county space. He shared that he has been attending the facilities committee meetings over the past few months and it was recommended that the glass walls in the Lexington first floor lobby be replaced with solid walls. This was not approved, as it was not aesthetically pleasing, so he was charged with investigating the cost of bulletproof glass. Level 3 glass, which would stop a 44 mag bullet, is recommended for governmental areas and this was quoted at \$80.00 per square foot for a total cost of \$29,000 for all areas. This was not approved by the Facilities Committee and their directive was to replace the blinds in these areas. Mr. Frye shared that the perspectives of the committee are different than that of the DSS Board and he invited the Board to meet collectively or individually to share their concerns with the Facilities Committee and/or other officials. The next committee meeting is February 5, 2019. The Board expressed that building security needs to be discussed among all building occupants.

## **New Business**

### **Employee Recognition/Retirement**

Mrs. Sharon Lovengood will be retiring effective January 25. She has been employed by DSS for 18 years. Mr. Moorefield shared that Mrs. Lovengood has worked in income maintenance and lastly in office support. He described her as cheerful, jovial, very flexible, and that her easy going demeanor helped to welcome and set the stage for good interaction as they transitioned back to Income Maintenance Staff for interviews.

### **Medicaid Transportation Mileage Reimbursement**

Annually, the IRS adjusts medical mileage reimbursement and effective January 1, 2019, the rate increased from \$0.18 to \$0.20. A motion was made by Mr. Richard Wagner to approve the increased rate for Medicaid Transportation direct mileage reimbursement to \$0.20 per mile and Mrs. Jane Murphy seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously. This new rate will become effective immediately.

### **Record Destruction**

Thirty-two additional Interstate and Out of County Home studies have been recommended for disposal as the three year retention period has expired. Mr. Andy Morris motioned to approve the destruction of these records and Mrs. Jane Murphy seconded the motion, which was approved unanimously.

### **Program Focus – Emergency Assistance and LIEAP**

Mrs. Elizabeth Huff gave an overview of the Emergency Assistance Programs. The Crisis Intervention Program (CIP) is a federally funding program and must be used to assist individuals and families who are in danger of losing their heating or cooling source and the health or well-being of a household member would be in danger if the crisis was not alleviated. The assistance limit is \$600 per year and can be used for repair of a unit if they were to lose their heating or cooling source. Application turnaround time is within 48 hours and payment is made directly to the vendor. Mr. Moorefield shared that many times, referrals are also made to The Salvation Army or an area church as we would work together to meet the needs of the family. If someone just cannot pay their bill, they they would be evaluated for other programs, and consideration is given to not providing assistance if the situation is likely to repeat again soon. The Low Income Energy Assistance Program (LIEAP) runs from December 1 – March 31 each year. It is not an emergency need program, but income based. Households including a person aged 60 or older or an individual receiving disability benefits and services through the NC Division of Aging and Adult Services are eligible to sign up for assistance from December 1 - 31. All other households may apply from January 1 - March 31 or until funds are exhausted. Mrs. Huff shared that through January 15, 2018, 1,071 applications had been taken as compared to 1,039 applications taken thus far for fiscal year 2018-2019. The priority population applications have declined slightly this year. The average payment is \$245. LIEAP is an entitlement program. If an application is made and the applicant is monetarily eligible, they are qualified. Payments are made directly to the vendor. This funding is capped; however, and if all funds are not utilized, the Agency has the option to reallocate funds in order for other counties to receive additional funding. Depending on the time of year, there are 4-5 programs for which clients are evaluated. These programs include CIP (heating or cooling related), Work First Emergency Assistance (rent, utilities, and water related), and General Assistance (prescription drug related). In recent years, general assistance funding use has declined due to Medical Ministries having resources to offset prescription drug needs.

### **Date of Next Meeting**

Tuesday, February 26, 2019, at 4:15 p.m., first floor of Social Services in Lexington, Conference Room D. A department walkthrough will be scheduled for DSS Board members in March so that they can become more familiar with staff and department facilities.

### **Adjournment**

Mr. Richard Wagner made a motion to adjourn the meeting and Mrs. Jane Murphy seconded the motion. The motion to adjourn was approved unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 6:07 p.m.

Minutes submitted by Dale Moorefield