

**DAVIDSON COUNTY
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES**

Dale Moorefield, Director



Lexington DSS Office
P.O. Box 788
913 Greensboro Street
Lexington, North Carolina 27293
336-242-2500
FAX: 336-249-7588

Thomasville DSS Office
211 W. Colonial Drive
Thomasville, North Carolina 27360
P.O. Box 788
Lexington, North Carolina 27293
336-474-2760
FAX: 336-472-6635

Lexington Child Support Office
P.O. Box 788
913 Greensboro Street
Lexington, North Carolina 27293
336-242-2242
FAX: 336-242-1236

Thomasville Child Support Office
211 W. Colonial Drive
Thomasville, North Carolina 27360
P.O. Box 788
Lexington, North Carolina 27293
336-474-2609
FAX: 336-474-2620

**Davidson County Department of Social Services
Board Meeting Minutes
February 26, 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. Susan Craig;
Mrs. Caroline Hedrick; Mrs. Lexa Eagle; Mrs. Sheri Woodyard; Ms. Iva Holland**

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.

Mrs. Sheri Woodyard requested that an addition be made to the Agenda at D.1. – Confidentiality Agreement for DSS Board Members.

Adoption of Agenda

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

Approval of Minutes

Mr. Wagner made a motion to approve the minutes of the January 22, 2019 meeting. Mrs. Murphy seconded this motion. The minutes were approved unanimously.

Public Address

There was no public address.

Mrs. Woodyard was asked to draft a confidentiality agreement for the Board to review and sign. This confidentiality agreement pertains to discussion of DSS clients or family members. She let the Board know that disclosure of confidential information is a Class 1 Misdemeanor. She reviewed several different agency's agreements and drafted one specific to DSS. Mr. Dale Moorefield, DSS Director and Mr. Chuck Frye, County Attorney, have reviewed the document and approved it. Mrs. Woodyard asked that the group read over it and then sign it. The Board was informed that all employees sign a confidentiality agreement when they are hired. Each member signed the

agreement and these were given to Mr. Moorefield to be placed in each Board member's file for safekeeping. An explanation about the validity of speaking with employees about case specific information was given. It was agreed that the Confidentiality Agreement should be signed at each new term or with each new Board member when the Oath of Office is given.

Management Report

Mrs. Caroline Hedrick shared the expenditure report. 58% of the year has elapsed. No major changes where overspending is occurring. Postage expenses are expected to go up due to the postage increase implemented by USPS. An explanation regarding the increase in spending in supplies was also given. Foster care spending is up due to the numbers of children in care in our Agency. A comparison of last year's spending versus this year's was also provided. The budget amendment that has already been submitted to the BOCC was shared with Board as well as the reasons for the amendment. Overtime expenses were discussed and the reasons being increased caseloads and vacancies.

Mr. Moorefield shared the vacancy report. We have six vacancies in the Income Maintenance area. There is one vacancy in CPS due to retirement; one is the CSST vacancy and has already been posted. There are two Permanency Planning Social Work vacancies. It was noted that the vacancies are down from the month of December. There was a discussion regarding the pool of applicants being received. There was also discussion of how those not chosen for a position are addressed and it was noted that a couple of offers made recently from CPS and the applicants had already accepted other positions.

Mr. Moorefield also shared the Income Maintenance management report. He drew attention to the accuracy and processing of applications and the fact that these are being processed very timely and accurately, in the high 90's percentage which is above state standards. There was an explanation given regarding unusual FNS benefits issued information that was listed on the report. Mr. Moorefield shared that the FNS issuance information on the original report was inaccurate and he shared that the correct information shows \$5,138,487 issued in January as both January and February issuances went out in January due to preparations for dealing with the potential Federal Government Shutdown.

In the Work First area, the rolls are down and this is no surprise. The amount of work required for the small benefit is very demanding now and fewer people are willing to meet the criteria. Many of the cases are child only cases, where a grandparent or caretaker relative is receiving financial assistance for a child living with them that they are caring for.

In the Day Care area, in December \$442,000.00 childcare subsidy was issued which covers 957 children. We are still not able to get completely accurate numbers for spending and the numbers of children being served. Per State reports, we are at approximately 80% spending coefficient and we continue to serve the clients as they are coming in for assistance. We have been operating without a waiting list since September 2018.

In the Emergency Assistance area, the Low Income Energy Assistance Program (LIEAP) will continue through March 31, 2019 or when the money is exhausted. We have completed 1705 approvals and have expended almost \$420,000; our balance of funds remaining is nearly \$230,000, and we volunteered to reallocate \$55K funds to other counties.

Mr. Scott Craver reported that in the Child Support area, the numbers are steady. January collections increased slightly and this is probably due to the beginning of the tax intercept season. February and March will be bigger months for collections because of tax intercepts. Mr. Craver shared that our County had two large collections that resulted in Shout Outs from the State Child

Support Office. Kendra Walters had a collection of \$9720.00 from a non-custodial parent and Paige Lawson had the number one collection in the State of \$30,078.90 from an inheritance.

In the Child Protective Services area, Ms. Katrina McMasters reported that a record number of referrals were received in the month of January. We received 309 reports, with 156 being accepted for investigation. The two intake workers did a phenomenal job of managing these referrals with assistance from the Family Outreach Social Worker and the Supervisor; 142 referrals were for suspected neglect and 14 suspected abuse cases. CPS had another record month for closing cases as well. The four Forensic Investigators have 9 cases each, which is about all they can handle. There are 558 children involved in our CPS investigation and in-home cases. We are also receiving multiple reports on the same children and the age ranges are 0 to 18.

Mrs. Susan Craig reported that in the Permanency Planning, 14 children found permanence in January. We had 24 families interested in becoming foster parents as MAPP training started last week. We have taken custody of 16 children so far in February putting us at 189 children in care. There was discussion of why a foster home may not have children in their homes. New foster homes are very important to provide safety for children in care and some current foster homes close due to finalization of adoptions and reaching their limit for care. Being a foster parent today carries a lot of responsibility due to the significant needs of the children in care.

Mrs. Craig reported that Adult Protective Services is also very busy. The number of reports received in January increased by 23 for a total of 47 reports. We accepted 27 reports for investigation. The number of wards has stayed the same, but there is so much more involved than just having guardianship of adults. We help families go to court when they need to; we are not always appointed as guardian, but time and energy is used to help the families that are appointed as guardian to provide them with services and referrals to be effective guardians for family members. There are group homes for our adults, some go in facilities; some go with family members and some go into family care homes. Where the ward goes depends on the needs of the ward.

Old Business

Agency Security

Mr. Moorefield referenced the information in the Board packet. The Sheriff's Department completed their safety assessment for our buildings/work places. The recommendations are for the Lexington and Thomasville offices. They recommend that signs be posted letting people entering both buildings know that they are under constant video surveillance. In regards to exterior windows, lamps that are on inside an office create a better silhouette of the person inside. The assessment recommended that the magnetic locks on the tops of the doors in the Lexington Office be replaced with latch bolt strike locks in the middle of the door, which are more secure. Mr. Moorefield understands that the County has already begun working on this. Another suggestion was that more cameras be placed in the buildings, specifically in the stairwells and elevators in Lexington. It was recommended that these cameras be monitored and the County switchboard operator was mentioned for this purpose. There are cameras in the Lexington office being monitored by the Sheriff's Deputy on duty on the third floor, but that individual cannot see the cameras on the second floor. Panic buttons were also recommended and they feel we need 10 across the Agency. These buttons notify law enforcement and give an exact location of which button was activated to indicate an emergency. The devices being considered could not be set off by simply leaning on them or brushing up against them. The assessment recommended that there be a single public entrance designated in Lexington and that this would limit entrance into the building. This would be harder to accomplish in Thomasville due to that building having seven entrances. The County Manager received a copy of this assessment. The BOCC has not seen

this assessment. The Sheriff has offered to do this for other Departments in the County. There was discussion of possible options and quick actions. Mr. Moorefield wants to purchase the panic buttons as soon as possible. Mr. Moorefield asked how to proceed in regards to seeking approval for security guards. He feels we only need two. The quotes he has received are for around \$50,000 per guard per year. This request should go in the budget we should ask for two. We would have monitors available for the security guard. The County Manager and Commissioners would be responsible for the limitation of one entrance. The Board asked that Director Moorefield make the appropriate requests.

New Business

Employee Recognition/Retirement

Ms. Iva Holland has given this County 28 years of dedicated, dependable, committed, and determined service. She came into the Agency as a part time employee and was soon promoted to a full time, permanent position. She is a professional and patient team player who has a mastery of working through difficult situations with struggling families and she will be greatly missed. She has been in the middle trying to work with parents and kids teaching them to work through their difficulties for hopeful reunifications if possible. Iva stated that it has been an honor to work with DSS. She stated she had little self-esteem when she came to work here, but that has increased tremendously over the years. Iva thanked the Board for the opportunity to work for this Department. The Director and the Board thanked her for her service.

Record Destruction

Eighty-eight Child Protective Services records have been identified for record destruction. They may be purged/destroyed per Records Retention and Disposition Schedule policy. Mr. Moorefield asked that the Board consider approving the destruction of these records; some of which date back to 1995.

Mr. Wagner made a motion to destroy the eighty-eight records as identified. Ms. Karen Watford seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously and the records will be destroyed per policy.

Service Area Demands

In preparation for our Agency budget requests slated for next month, Mr. Moorefield stated he wanted to keep the Board abreast of the current demands for the services areas. The combination of increasing caseloads, added State mandates, the complexity of working with families suffering from substance abuse and mental health issues and the implementation of NC FAST into the services areas are all pressing our line staff and management. All of these things will require more from staff and more visits with families. We will be working under House Bill 630 as well. The date to go live for NC FAST is May 20, 2019. NC FAST has slowed down the process in other areas and this is expected it to happen in the Services area as well. It already happens in the pilot P4 NCFAST counties. We will need additional staff to handle the increasing demands of complex caseloads, additional demands in policy, and transitioning to a less efficient NCFAST case management system, in order to provide safety for our residents. Even though it is not a good time in the budget process, we will be asking for 11 positions this year and 10 positions next year. Mr. Moorefield has already asked for 5 positions to be reclassified to help soften the blow of requesting this many positions. The positions requested bring revenue into the County, from 25% to 75%, depending on the job and functions accomplished. We also need supervisors and management personnel to handle the demands of the Agency.

Mr. Scott Craver shared there is no perfect way to do this. Everyone in the room will have input regarding these needs and the Board's support and input is welcomed. There has been no answer from the County Manager's Office and Human Resources regarding the 5 positions to be reclassified yet. There was discussion about the current vacancies and if that number was included in the request for new positions. The money has already been allocated for the 11 vacancies and the requests are for 11 completely new positions. The proposed approximate numbers are for 1 program administrator, 5 supervisors, 14 Social Workers, and an office support position in our services areas to be added in the next two years. We do bring money back into the County through state and federal reimbursements, but the most important factor is providing safety for our most vulnerable people in Davidson County. There was a lengthy discussion about adding another attorney as well. Mr. Chuck Frye joined the meeting briefly and added to this part of the discussion. The changes in procedure over the past years were discussed. The time in Court is tremendous. Court involvement will become more mandatory with the new modified manual and NC FAST. There could be a possibility of contracting attorney services more.

The bottom line is the safety of human life being paramount and the State mandates just cannot be ignored. The intention of this discussion is to seek the support of the DSS Board and have advocates for us with the BOCC. The reimbursement from the needed positions is key.

Mr. Craver shared the two-year plan in a handout provided for the Board. There is an unmeasurable cost of making a mistake and we do not want it to be from a lack of staff to get the job done. We want to provide high quality services. We are struggling mightily to provide what families need currently due to our understaffing and limited ability to get the many requirements of Social Work done. This is the result of growing and more complex caseloads, social worker turnover, and new demands coming from policy and soon from the NCFAST system. Program Administrators and Supervisors are stretched to the maximum now. Our APS supervisor is supervising 9 social work staff in Adult Services. The State standard says they should supervise 5. The Licensing/Home Finding supervisor is currently supervising 12 people, which includes the CSST staff and contracted employees. The proposal is for a Support Supervisor for CSST staff, another Permanency Planning Supervisor, another CPS supervisor, another Adult Services Supervisor, and an additional Program Administrator as well as creation of an Intake only unit that would handle intake for CPS, APS and Permanency Planning. At the present time, supervisors have to carry cases due to lack of trained staff. Leadership and support is of the utmost importance for quality work and case decisions and our Supervisors are struggling to give their staff what they need. Overtime is quite frequently needed to get the job done in providing safety and burn out of staff working long hours in a mentally fatiguing job is a great concern.

Mr. Craver shared examples of things that are happening to warrant the requested positions. These requests were very well thought through and discussed thoroughly before the requests were submitted to the Director by our Program Administrator. The proposed two-year plan gives DSS an opportunity to see more how managing the workload will be with additional social work staff/supervision and we can better adjust going forward into the future. Most counties are being affected by the changes that are happening and what is coming. There was discussion about the effects being experienced across the State. Mr. Moorefield shared with Rep. Steve Jarvis earlier in the week through the DSS Director's Association that we are concerned moving forward with NC FAST, due to the issues already being experienced in pilot counties. Staff is stretched thin now and if we do not have the people to do the work, there will be serious issues and a greater possibility of people getting hurt or dying because we did not have the staff to handle the work. Mr. Moorefield feels he should be asking for these positions and he is asking the Board to support our needs in the form of one on one contact with the Commissioners, possibly in public address at BOCC meetings, email, etc. He encouraged the Board's advocacy of our agency needs with the Board of County Commissioners.

Board Updates

The Davidson House renovations for our Adult Services staff will be recommencing soon as the facility has passed the air quality test. There will be 9 large offices, kitchenette/conference space, two bathrooms and a basement, which cannot be used for office space. We would like to use the basement for storage of closed files and other items. The projected date for completion of the renovation and move in is late June/early July 2019.

Mr. Steve Jarvis, member of this Board, has expressed interest in changing the meeting time for this Board due to conflicts with his schedule as a State House Representative for District 80. A discussion was held regarding terms and attendance. It was determined that Friday is not a day that could be considered as an alternate date. Discussion touched on the need for the Agency to have a 2nd sitting County Commissioner on the Board especially at a time of requesting additional staff with the upcoming budget request. Discussion also agreed that we need membership that can attend the meetings on a regular basis. Director Moorefield mentioned that the Davidson County Board of Commissioners would be the appointing authority for this Commissioners appointment to the Board.

Plans were made to have an Agency walk through with the Board members on March 26, 2019 prior to the regular DSS Board meeting on that same day. It should take about 30 minutes in Thomasville, then to Family Services and then to the Governmental Center. Plans are to start at 1:30pm in the Thomasville office. The walkthrough will be for DSS Board members to become more familiar with staff and Department facilities.

Date of Next Meeting

Tuesday, March 26, 2019, at 1:30 p.m., beginning in Thomasville at 211 W. Colonial Drive and ending on the fourth floor of the Governmental Center in Lexington, Conference Room D.

Adjournment

Mr. Wagner made a motion to adjourn the meeting and Mrs. Murphy seconded the motion. The motion to adjourn was approved unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 6:35 p.m.

Minutes submitted by Dale Moorefield