

**DAVIDSON COUNTY
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES**

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**Davidson County Department of Social Services
Board Meeting Minutes
March 26, 2019**

Board Members Present

Mr. Andy Morris; 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. Tierra Sanders**

Agency Tour

The Agency tour was cancelled due to insufficient notice given to the public.

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 4:26 p.m. by Mr. Andy Morris. An invocation was offered by Mr. Morris.

Adoption of Agenda

Mrs. Jane Murphy made a motion to approve the Agenda as presented and Mrs. Karen Watford seconded the motion. The Agenda was approved unanimously.

Approval of Minutes

Mrs. Watford made a motion to approve the minutes of the February 26, 2019 meeting. Mrs. Murphy seconded this motion. The minutes were approved unanimously.

Public Address

There was no public address. Mr. Dale Moorefield took this opportunity to Introduce Ms. Tierra Sanders from the Department's Adult Services area, who was there to observe the meeting.

Management Report

Mrs. Caroline Hedrick reported that we are 67 percent through year the current fiscal year and we are underspending the budget overall. A budget amendment has been completed and those funds have been transferred to the appropriate line items. Total operating expenses are at 61 percent; uncapped expenses are at 65 percent; capped public assistance is at 59 percent; and overall for Social Services is at 60 percent.

Mr. Moorefield shared the vacancy report. We currently have 9 vacancies; 4 are in the Income Maintenance area. One of the new hires could not report to work due to being unable to relocate because her home sale fell through. We have an open CSST – Part Time position due to the promotion of the person in this position being promoted to full time after Iva Holland's retirement. We still need 2 social workers in the Permanency Planning area and continue to interview. We are also in the interviewing stages for the Office Support III position in the Income Maintenance area. We also have a child support agent position vacant due to the promotion of an agent to the CPS Social Worker I/A/T position.

Mrs. Elizabeth Huff shared the Income Maintenance management report. Workers continue to do an awesome job keeping percentages of quality and quantity of work well above standard percentages and in the upper 90's. The caseload report is still not available as of this morning. FNS benefits for February were only \$148,000 due to the majority of February benefits being issued in January with the early issuance of February benefits in dealing with the potential Federal Government shutdown. Mr. Moorefield explained that FNS issuance is still a little off due to the early issuance cycles from Federal Shutdown contingencies, but FNS should be back to normal issuance cycles in May.

In the Work First area, Mrs. Huff reported there is nothing remarkable. There is some fluctuation in applications and inquiries. The Agency completed no benefit diversion cases during February. According to Goodwill Industries, No one was put to work. Our all parent participation rate is at 36% and the goal is 50%; there are always struggles with individuals to participate in work activities when they have small children because of many barriers. We are at 100% participation for our two-parent families.

In the Child Day Care area, the numbers reported are estimates for January spending. Our spending coefficient is a little better than 80%. Despite this, the State has placed us on a mandatory waiting list due to statewide overspending caused by the waiving of parent fees in the hard hit hurricane areas from this past fall and early winter. The number of children reported by the State being served is 933 families in Davidson County. There was discussion about the reasons why the information regarding Child Day Care expenditures runs so far behind.

Mrs. Huff reported that in the Emergency Assistance area there is really nothing out of ordinary. CIP spending is starting to drop off due to the change in weather with milder temperatures. LIEAP spending is almost finished, ending on March 31, 2019. As of Friday, March 22, 2019, we have spent just over \$473,000. We have approved 1890 applications for an average payment of \$250. We have received 231 fewer applications this year than were received last year at this same time.

Mr. Scott Craver reported that in the Child Support area continues with the theme of not a lot out of the ordinary. Collections in February were just under \$1 million. We are about two thirds of the way through the year and things are very steady across the board in most all areas.

In the Child Protective Services area, Ms. Katrina McMasters reported that as of Monday, CPS is fully staffed for the first time in over two years. We are anticipating the benefit of being fully staffed once all training has been completed. The number of reports received in February was 251 and

we accepted 131 for investigation; 120 of the reports were for possible neglect and 11 were for possible abuse. Workers were able to close 107 cases. The number of children we are working with went down significantly. In-home cases decreased by one for the month as 216 kids are being seen in services. Family outreach will begin working with families again due to intake being fully staffed and trained. There was a huge drop in the number of assists requested from other counties in February. 15 children were taken into custody/care in February and the number for March will be even more. There were 18 Child and Family Team meetings conducted. Educational personnel continues to be the highest number of reporters. Anonymous and parent reports seemed to be up in February as well.

Mrs. Susan Craig reported that in the Permanency Planning, 15 children entered care. There were big sibling groups with children that experienced severe trauma. There are 186 children in care as of the end of February. We have 16 families still in MAPP classes and we are half way through the cycle of these classes. We began a Resource Parent Curriculum last week with the intention of giving foster parents resources to help deal with issues with the children they have in care. There are more and more children with therapeutic needs in our care.

Mrs. Craig reported that in the Adult Protective Services area, 36 new reports were received and 23 were accepted for investigation. Our Agency was appointed as guardian for 6 new wards in February and staff appeared in court for 14 cases. We were not appointed guardian in all cases, but we are still involved with the families and have to appear in court. Court is taking a tremendous amount of time and then the staff helps those that are appointed get the resources they need for their loved ones.

Old Business

There was no old business.

New Business

Record Destruction

Ninety-nine additional Child Protective Services records have been identified for record destruction. In addition, 2,131 Child Support Enforcement records have also been identified as being cleared for destruction. These records closed on or before June 30, 2011. 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..

Mrs. Watford made a motion to destroy the 99 Child Protective Services and the 2131 Child Support Enforcement records as identified. Mrs. Murphy seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously and the records will be destroyed per policy.

There was also information shared about the storage of our files in other areas and the potential to leave those until they are ready for destruction rather than spending resources to scan files that can be destroyed in the coming years.

2019 – 2020 DSS Budget

Our proposed budget for Fiscal Year 2019-2020 shows an increase of \$3,261,380.00 as we project our expenditures to be at \$20,663,005.00. This is an increase of 18.7%. Reimbursements are projected to be higher at \$12,451,258.00, which is an increase of \$1,798,439.00 or 16.9%. County funds in this budget are \$8,211,747.00, an increase of \$1,462,941.00. We are proposing the addition of eleven new positions to the Agency this year and ten positions in FY 20-21. The cost of

the positions for this year is \$693,036.00, of which \$300,888.00 is projected for reimbursement; making the County costs for these eleven positions to be \$392,146.00.

These eleven positions are important to the Agency and our County in providing effective services and increased safety for our most vulnerable people in Davidson County. Our Department is understaffed in the services areas for what we are going to experience in the coming months and the next few years. The combination of increasing caseloads, added state mandates, the complexity of working with families suffering from substance abuse and mental health issues, and implementation of NC FAST into the services areas of our Agency are all pressing our line staff and management. Caseloads are already growing due to increased intakes, while multiple family issues require increased involvement for ensuring safety for our vulnerable children and older adults. It takes more time to help parents get to where they need to be. Staff will be working with a new "modified, modified" manual. All of this is requiring more things to be done with families and all are good for safety. However, the manpower to achieve these mandates is of the utmost importance and our Agency is understaffed in the services area. In addition, NCFast is rapidly approaching and it will likely be less efficient and slow down caseworkers in documenting case management. Mr. Moorefield and Mr. Craver sat in on a conference call today and learned there is a movement to delay and/or stop the implementation of NCFast as it is not going well for pilot counties using the system now. There is legislation currently being proposed that counties may have an option to not participate in NCFast now. The system will not validate data and provide reports and dashboards needed to manage the work. This program is causing much stress to the Agencies involved now it is reported that you will lose staff as they struggle with the frustration of working in the system. Due to all these reasons, the need for staff is great and the Director is requesting additional positions for both line staff and mid-management/supervision in our services areas.

Mrs. Hedrick shared seven pages with the Board regarding the proposed budget and guided the board through a power point presentation regarding our budget and needs for 2019-2020. The Agency's Mission Statement was shared first. We try to be as realistic as possible with the budget; with no over inflation of expenses or revenues. The budget is an average of figures from December 2018 that have been annualized, historical spending trends and County budget estimates that are provided by the State. Significant changes compared to last year's adopted budget were compared and discussed. Explanation was given regarding the larger increases in expenditures. We are also looking to add more vehicles to our fleet of cars as vehicles are aging and we will have additional use of transportation in working our larger and more complex caseloads. Form B-2 was referenced. New Expenses - The Sheriff's Department may begin charging for service of paperwork. There will be extra charges in child support for background checks on staff. There was discussion about the Sheriff's Department charges and when or if they may begin. We can receive reimbursement for these charges if they do occur.

Form B-13 was referenced. This forms outlined changes for contracted expenses. Due to Uniform Guidance, some of the Attorney services will have to be bid out. Hope for the Future has requested a per ward per month increase and that has been included in the budget. LexisNexis will have a 30% increase as well. Some contracts have decreased which will help offset some of the new expenses. The potential new expenses include possible emergency overnight placement for children removed from homes through American Children's Home, as well as an additional contracted social worker from Vanguard Staffing. An inventory management system for IT staff is also included. The Agency also included the Security guards contract at both Lexington and Thomasville offices, as per instructions from the Board in previous meetings.

There was some discussion of numbers of positions approved in past years. Realistic numbers have been used for this budget. There was also discussion about the reclassification of several of our current positions requested that would be useful to addressing the needs in our services area.

There was discussion about where this new budget could be cut if necessary other than the requested positions. It was also discussed that the services our Agency provides are mandated by the State and Federal government and we must provide the human resources/staffing to get the job done. There was extensive discussion about the number of positions needed and the number being requested for reclassification. In some instances with the reclassification of positions, there is more reimbursement drawn down than in our current status of positions. The budget meeting with the County Manager and Assistant County Manager will take place on Wednesday afternoon and Mr. Moorefield will share the results with the Board at our next meeting.

The projected increases for public assistance capped funds were discussed next. These figures are taken mostly from the budget estimates provided by the State. The expenses and revenues in these areas zero out each other, meaning 100% reimbursement.

Permanency Planning expenditures were discussed next. The State gives us some spreadsheets to work with, but it is hard to project as accurately because funding sources are different based on a child's eligibility for services and therefore, the reimbursement is different. The changes that we have seen in the past year are driving the increased projected expenditures. There has already been a 13% increase in the numbers of children in our custody and care.

The public assistance expenditures that have decreased were discussed next. LINKS line item has decreased, but this is 100% reimbursed. The Adoption Assistance line item has decreased by 10% based on past spending. The Special Adoption Assistance fund is money we get up front for adoption promotions and that money will roll forward from this fiscal year to the new fiscal year.

In the salaries and benefits area, Mrs. Hedrick shared all of the points shared previously and in the points in the Director's report. Form B-6 was referenced. This form is a detail by name and full breakdown for each of the new positions being requested. There was discussion regarding the reimbursement received and the possible variances based on the coding by the worker and what positions are approved.

There was an additional lengthy discussion about the NCFAST project and its validity versus the negative outcomes that are taking place in the pilot counties.

Overtime was discussed, giving historical data from past years' spending. With the amount of overtime already paid out this year, we could pay for three positions. If we do not get new positions and the overtime continues, there will be additional worker burnout, which could potentially cause more vacancies and/or mistakes. Mr. Moorefield shared that he has heard county management talk about "looking after staff", and the most effective way to do that is to provide staffing necessary for the workloads that we have.

The total salary and benefits slide was shared. This budget does not include any pay increases from the pay study that still pends, but does include the same increases as have been given over the past few years; \$500 plus 1 ½%. There is also a projected insurance increase included in the benefits line item per employee as well as an increase in retirement benefits being paid on the employee's behalf. There is an overall 11.5% increase in salary and benefits, which does include the 11 new positions that have been requested.

A recap of increased expenditures slide was shared and a breakdown was given by Mrs. Hedrick. Form B-12 was referenced as the revenues slide was also shared. The increase in revenues is calculated using the same figures as with expenditures. Additional slides were shared and explained.

Our Agency is faced with many challenges, many changes and many uncertainties. The work must still be done and additional staff is needed to get it done to provide and guard the safety and well-being of the most vulnerable residents of Davidson County.

Mrs. Murphy made a motion to approve the 2019-2020 DSS budget as presented. Mr. Morris seconded the motion. Mrs. Watford abstained from the vote; so it was 2-0 to approve as Mr. Wagner and Mr. Jarvis were absent from the meeting.

DSS Board Updates and Appointment 2019-2022

Mr. Morris' term is up on June 30, 2019. The Social Services Commission will accept nominations through April 16, 2019. Mr. Morris has made a decision not to resubmit his name for a second term, due to wanting to spend more time with his family. He has stated that he would like to see someone younger than he on the Board and will encourage folks to move onto this Board. The position occupied by Mr. Steve Jarvis ends at the same time. Mr. Jarvis is no longer eligible to serve as a Board member after June 30, 2019. Mr. Jarvis has not been able to attend any of the meetings since becoming a member of the State legislature. Mrs. Murphy motioned to ask the Board of County Commissioners to appoint someone to replace Mr. Jarvis due to his inability to attend the meetings as scheduled. Mrs. Watford seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously. (Mr. Jarvis submitted his resignation to the Board dated March 25, 2019 and it was received via email on 3/30/2019.)

The Board would like to set the tour of the facilities for May 28, 2019 in order to include all who want to tour.

Date of Next Meeting

Our next DSS Board Meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, April 23, 2019, at 4:15 p.m. on the first floor of the Governmental Center in Lexington, Conference Room D.

Adjournment

Mrs. Murphy made a motion to adjourn the meeting and Mr. Morris seconded the motion. The motion to adjourn was approved unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 5:58 p.m.

Minutes submitted by Dale Moorefield