

**DAVIDSON COUNTY
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES**

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**Davidson County Department of Social Services
Board Meeting Minutes
January 28, 2020**

Board Members Present

**Mr. Richard Wagner; Mrs. Karen Watford; Mrs. Jane Murphy;
Mrs. Minnie Dukes; Mr. Todd Yates**

Others in Attendance

**Ms. Trish Baker; Mr. Scott Craver; Mrs. Elizabeth Huff; Mrs. Susan Craig;
Ms. Katrina McMasters; Mrs. Caroline Hedrick; Ms. Sheri Woodyard;
Mrs. Lexa Eagle; Ms. Daniele DeAngelis**

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 4:18 p.m. by Mrs. Karen Watford. Mrs. Watford welcomed Mr. Richard Wagner back to the meeting. She also stated that the Board is glad to have Trish Baker on board and with us at the meeting today.

Adoption of Agenda

Ms. Baker requested that the Agenda be amended to at G.1 under Old Business – Social Worker Stipend. She also asked to add H.2. under New Business – Upcoming Budget Time Line and H.3. – Contract for Training. Mrs. Watford wanted to add G.2 to Old Business – Security at Colonial Drive. Mr. Todd Yates made a motion to approve the amended Agenda for the meeting. Mr. Richard Wagner seconded the motion. The amended Agenda was approved unanimously.

Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the December 13, 2019 meeting were approved unanimously at the December 20, 2019 meeting. Mrs. Jane Murphy made a motion to approve the minutes from the December 20, 2019 meeting and the Closed Session meeting minutes for the same date. Mr. Yates seconded the motion. All minutes were approved unanimously.

Public Address

Public address was held, with one person speaking.

Board Member Comments

Mrs. Watford led a discussion regarding electing a new DSS Board chair. She feels we should probably wait until the July meeting when a new Board Chair will be elected to make any changes. Mr. Wagner shared information from the State NCACBSS (North Carolina Association of County Boards of Social Services) Meeting. NCACBSS is the group that puts on the Social Services Institute in August every year. This group meets four times per year. He shared a newsletter that he received from the meeting. He will also be sharing the newsletter with all of the other counties he represents as well. He suggested that this newsletter be shared with DSS staff. He described how the committee works and how they can help the DSS Board set up the training classes that are required two times per year. Their goal is to have all counties working the same. Mr. Wagner will share information with the Board in order to get them up to speed about training and the requirements.

Mrs. Watford stated that the Board wants to be an effective Board, but not invasive. Most of the Board members are new to the Board. The things she wants to work on are - what is the DSS Board's role, how do they work together with the new director, how can they be more effective. She stated that the Board is responsible for completing and evaluation of the new Director after nine months and this will be something they will look at.

Mrs. Watford also shared that the Agenda was discussed with Ms. Baker and whether it should remain as it is now or be changed in some way. She suggested to Board members that they read page 107 in the Social Services Handbook which related to the order of business; page 91 that relates to the monitoring of programs; page 120 that relates to Board effectiveness. Mrs. Watford stated that the Board wants to be of better service to DSS. This new comment segment of the Agenda will provide a platform to present ideas and convey feelings to the Board and them to the DSS people present. It takes time to learn the ins and outs of DSS. The Board wants to know the needs and the bad things and they want to be able to help solve problems. They want to know what is working and not working; how we are working to solve our own problems. The Agenda should be Board driven. There was discussion about eliminating the Management Report unless there are problems that need to be discussed. The thought of the Board is to address problems and help solve them as quickly as possible if it is within their power. Mrs. Minnie Dukes discussed the fact that it is okay for the Board to be served with "heartache". If they are able to help, they will or possible help find solutions to the issues. If you have something to share now, please do. If not, come back next month with the problems you would like discussed and any ideas you may have to better the Agency. The floor will be opened for this discussion next month as well.

New Business

Management Report

Mrs. Caroline Hedrick shared that 50% of the year has lapsed and percentages for spending remain about the same. Overtime areas of spending were identified. We are underspending the budget overall. There are no concerns at this moment. The new budget process has begun. There was discussion as to why our numbers are not current. This is an item for next month's agenda - to find out why finance closes books so late and see if this can be fixed.

Ms. Trish Baker shared the vacancy report. She explained possible new hires and interviewing going on. There was lengthy discussion about the possible reasons why people do not stay. There was discussion about the possibility of shadowing or lab scenarios. There

was a suggestion that the Board would like to be involved in seeing cases and getting involved in what employees are doing. We will gather meeting schedules for next board meeting.

Ms. Elizabeth Huff shared that accuracy is missing for November and December due to no numbers being taken because of the change in the make-up of each unit. Ms. Huff shared the new dynamics of the units. Some of the workers had to be cross trained. They also have had one on one training with the lead workers. Even with the changes, the workers have done an awesome job of approving applications timely. Numbers have dropped in Medicaid recertifications, which is very concerning. The eligibility requirements were explained in regards to the new law suit that caused the changes. There were 1741 reviews due for January. We tried overtime, but that did not work. We have now taken some workers off of intake and they are working on the recertification lists only. As of this morning, we are down to 447 reviews due. Questions about application processing and the numbers of applications being taken and why were asked and answered. There was discussion about Open Enrollment and how it affects the Agency. We are hoping to have all reviews completed by 5 pm tomorrow. Ms. Huff predicts they will probably extend half the number due for recertification. Mrs. Yates suggested considering allowing workers to come in on Saturday and work. Ms. Huff shared that the workers are not as productive with no over sight. She also shared that recertifications are completed for Medicaid once a year. There was discussion about the make-up of the Income Maintenance Units.

In the Work First area, Ms. Huff shared that the numbers are still the same as last month. The Goodwill contract has been reviewed by Ms. Baker and Ms. Huff. This is a large contract with Goodwill to pay for job coaching, training, teaching to complete resumes, etc. Work First participation has dropped so much over the years so they are not helping as many of our recipients with these services. It appears we are carrying the brunt of the expenses for the Goodwill Career Center in Lexington. The new budget will possibly look very different. There was discussion about how this will be looked at for future years. This program is funded with MOE (Maintenance of Effort) moneys and could be moved to other areas and spent differently.

In the Child Care area, the spending coefficient is below 100% at 98%. The Agency received a letter from the State allowing us to begin serving the children on the waiting list as long as we are underspending County dollars. There are only 56 children left on the waiting list. Letters have been sent to the families letting them know to come back in to apply for child care assistance. Ms. Huff estimates that approximately 1/3 will come in for services. We are in a good spot as far as Child Care Assistance is concerned.

Emergency Assistance remains about the same. The mild winter is causing a lot less spending. Crisis Intervention Program (CIP) applications are down as well as Low Income Energy Assistance Program (LIEAP) applications. We have reverted some funds back to the State - \$200,000 in CIP and \$55,000 in LIEAP. More moneys were requested by the State for reversion from LIEAP. Ms. Huff discussed the logic for not reverting more money.

Mr. Scott Craver shared that Child Support Enforcement is on pace to meet the State goals set for them. The number of cases has dropped each month since July. Some of these cases needed to be closed because they were lingering. The other reason is that the Lexington Office has been down staff in the establishment area.

Ms. Katrina McMasters shared that CPS currently has 3 vacancies. She stated that the division is in the best place they have been during her tenure as far as staffing. Our numbers are growing in some areas and decreasing in other areas. We received 198 reports in December. We had 122 reports accepted for the month. Seven of those went to another

county due to conflict. A breakdown of case types was shared. The abuse cases went up in December. The Forensic Team handles these tougher cases. The goal is to close as many cases as received. We currently have 161 cases open for 12 workers to manage. Individual workers' abilities contribute to how quickly they are closed or what the circumstances of the case may be will contribute to the quickness of the closing. There was discussion about the reasons why cases stay open longer. The Quality Assurance, which was created last year, may be a position that could be used to help with training. There was discussion regarding how to find a solution for these issues and one is in progress now. Ms. McMasters shared visitation responsibilities for workers for each child and parent. Four children taken into custody in December. Questions were asked and answered about the screening process for reports being accepted or screened out.

Mrs. Susan Craig shared that she has 45 staff. A breakdown of staff was shared. Some of her staff will be on Fox8 news this evening, promoting the need for foster parents. We have one vacancy in the Permanency Planning area which will be filled as of February 10, 2020. We have a Face Book page for Foster families face book page. Davidson County DSS – Foster Care and Adoptions. It was discussed that this should be an information only page. There was also discussion about the length of the name of the page. Is there any money available to boost the page or would it even be allowed?

In the Adult Services area the number of reports taken and accepted were down. There are two vacancies in this area, one social worker and one Community Social Services Assistant. We are still interviewing for the CSSA position and hope to have it filled next week. A job offer has been made and accepted and she will begin work on February 17, 2019. The staff are enjoying the newly renovated space in the old Willie M House, now known as the Adult Services Building.

Old Business

There have been several safety issues at the Colonial Drive location. A decision will be made tonight at the Board of County Commissioners meeting tonight regarding more security for the Colonial Drive area. Three options are being considered. Whatever decision is made will be put out for bid. Panic buttons have been discussed in the past. The Sheriff's office does not feel panic buttons will work. They feel a guard is a better option. Mr. Craver met with Casey Tarleton and Rob Wilson with EMS last week. The Colonial Drive building is not just DSS staff, but several other departments. Duke Power has taken over the outside lighting for the building and an outside camera has been added as well as one in the lobby area. Before there were cameras in the hallways only. Some of the doors will be closed for entrance, but open for exit. Three of the seven doors will be closed for entrance. Deputies have been coming through and the bushes have been cut today.

Mrs. Jane Murphy made a motion to move the meeting into Closed Session at 5:50 pm. Mr. Todd Yates seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously. The meeting moved into Closed Session pursuant to NCGS § 143.318.11(a)(1) to prevent disclosure of confidential information and NCGS § 318.11(a)(6) for a personnel matter.

Closed Session

No action was taken during closed session.

The meeting returned to Open Session at 6:13 pm.

Mr. Wagner made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:16 pm. The motion was seconded by Mr. Yates. The motion was approved unanimously.

Date of Next Meeting

The next DSS Board Meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, February 25, 2020 at 4:15 at the Governmental Center, **Fourth Floor**, Conference Room D, Lexington, North Carolina.

Minutes submitted by Patricia Baker