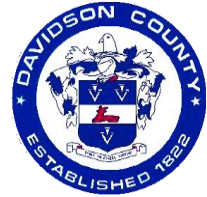


**DAVIDSON COUNTY
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES**

Patricia Baker, Director



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

Board Members Present

Ms. Karen Watford; Ms. Minnie Dukes; Mr. Todd Yates

Others in Attendance

**Ms. Trish Baker; Mr. Scott Craver; Ms. Susan Craig; Ms. Katrina McMasters;
Ms. Elizabeth Huff; Ms. Sheri Woodyard; Mrs. Lexa Eagle; Ms. Laura Hedrick; Ms. Melody Clark;
Ms. Brandi Hall; Mr. Jonathan Gutierrez; Ms. Brooke Hedrick; Ms. Lisa Beck**

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 4:00 p.m. by Ms. Karen Watford.

Adoption of Agenda

Ms. Minnie Dukes made a motion to approve the Agenda for the meeting. Mr. Todd Yates seconded the motion. The Agenda was unanimously approved.

Adoption of Minutes

Mr. Yates made a motion to approve the regular minutes of the June 23, 2020 meeting. Ms. Dukes seconded the motion. The minutes were unanimously approved.

Public Comments

There were no members of the public in attendance for comments.

Board Member Comments

No comments from the Board.

Introduction of New Fiscal Officer – Susan Bryan

Ms. Trish Baker introduced Mrs. Susan Bryan, New Fiscal Officer for DSS. Ms. Bryan has worked for DSS before, has owned her own business, with the Clerk's office among others and has a broad base of accounting and business experience. Mrs. Bryan expressed that she was glad to be back. The Board welcomed her to DSS.

Recognition of Employee of the Month and Announcement of Employee of the Year

Each Employee of the Month that was present was introduced to the Board and Ms. Baker shared the month of award. Ms. Baker shared how hard these individuals work and that she appreciates that and their commitment to the Agency. Ms Baker stated they are examples of all the work that is being done in the Agency. Ms. Baker announced the Employee of Year – Lisa Beck. Lisa is in clerical in the Services area and she received two wonderful nominations. One nomination shared. Ms. Beck was congratulated for her achievement and the Board thanked all of those in attendance for their hard work.

Management Report – Submitted in Writing - Highlights

Ms. Elizabeth Huff shared that the year-end for Income Maintenance was on target as had been the situation for the entire year. There were some drops in some areas of the division, but the workers still remained above State standards and have done a tremendous job, even faced with all the obstacles brought on by vacancies, teleworking and COVID. Fraud collections were down due to COVID, which caused tax intercepts and recoupments from existing FNS cases to be stopped. Work First ended about the same as last year. There were fewer inquiries and 19 individuals obtained employment this year. Child Care Subsidy was overspent by \$1.00. There is no waiting list at this time. Due to COVID, parent fees have been waived and the State is paying providers at the rate they were paid in March in order to help keep the day cares open. Emergency Assistance is way down, due to the hold placed on eviction and payment of utility bills. Ms. Huff explained how CIP works and the new one-time payment from COVID funds. The request for a waiver for North Carolina's FNS extension was approved by USDA.

Mr. Scott Craver shared that Child Support reached all five State goals. They had over \$1.2 million in collections in June, bringing the yearly total to more than \$13 million. He stated they have done a great job with the circumstances from this past year.

Ms. Katrina McMasters shared the CPS totals as compared to last year. The average number of reports received for the year were down slightly as was the number of children coming into the custody of the Agency. The goals in program improvement were better this year, indicating that workers have gotten better at case management. Workers are able to spend more time with the families they are working with in order to help alleviate the issues being experienced by the families. An explanation of reports accepted and not accepted and how that was determined was provided. The Family Outreach position duties will be moved into Income Maintenance area. Most all area averages ended much like the previous year. Ms. McMasters shared that CPS is ahead of State requirements in most areas. She also shared that Court continues to be an area to work on. CPS now have five vacancies and they will be working to fill those.

Mrs. Susan Craig shared that Permanency Planning continues to work hard. The number of children in care has gone down from last year – from 192 in July of last year to 181 at the end of this fiscal year. They have had court on Wednesday and Thursday for the past several weeks. The complexities have increased, especially with school age children. The number of foster homes has increased this past year.

Mrs. Craig report that in the Adult Services area, they are starting to see an increase in accepted reports. This group continues to work hard to make sure that our wards in facilities are being seen through visual technology visits. The information and referral calls are up and we are providing more information to help families navigate in these difficult times.

Mrs. Susan Bryan shared that the figures presented on the report are through May. Postage is up due to more being mailed due to less people being seen in the office. Over time is up as well

as travel. The Agency vehicles are being used more often at a lesser cost. Ms. Baker shared that Mrs. Bryan has had a great crew helping to get her started in her new duties.

Ms. Baker shared that we have 11 vacancies on the report, but two additional have been received in the past two weeks, both were in the CPS area. The Clerical Support position remains unposted and the Social Worker III licensing position has now been posted. We are still looking good overall as far as vacancies.

Old Business

Status Updates – SB 808, HB 918, SB 708

Last month's discussion was about the legislation that was pending – SB 808, HB 918 and SB 708 and how it might impact DSS. The update is that the Governor vetoed HB 918, a bill that was supported by Representative Jarvis. This bill would have impacted the Permanency Planning area tremendously and would not have been good for DSS. SB 808 – Medicaid funding bill – was approved and the Director's Association was able to have an impact on the requirements set forth in the bill. DSS will make a good faith effort to complete recertifications that have been extended within in 60 days after the State of Emergency is lifted for North Carolina. SB 808 also allocates funding for Child Welfare and getting NC FAST up and running for that area. SB 708 was vetoed by the Governor, which would have given the General Assembly access to Confidential DSS records.

New Business

Mrs. Richard Wagner, after much deliberation and with much sadness, submitted his resignation via emailed letter from the DSS Board. Ms. Baker contacted the Social Services Commission and this will have to be posted to the public and no one will be approved until the Commission meets in Raleigh. It is not known now when that will be.

Record Destruction

Ms. Baker shared that the Agency has identified records as outlined on the attachment provided that meet the record retention criteria for destruction. She asked for the Board's approval for destruction. Mr. Yates made a motion to destroy the records as described. Ms. Dukes seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

Court Update

Ms. Sheri Woodyard is now in session two days per week, on Wednesday and Thursday. Danielle De Angelis is going to court on Thursdays and Sheri is able to remain in the office to work. She feels the backlog of cases is diminishing due to hard work and cooperation toward getting cases heard timely. Scheduling of cases is to continue, which helps DSS staff, but when attorneys do not come to court on time it causes the scheduling to fall behind. We are getting a lot done in court and orders are being processed. Mr. Chuck Frye, County Attorney, has contacted Ms. Holly Groce, DSS attorney in Davie County, and she will be doing TPR's to free up some of Ms. De Angelis. They continue to work through the cases that have pended the longest. Safety issues in the court room are being addressed but some are not wearing masks as they have been asked to do. The Clerk's office now has some shortened hours for meeting the public. Juvenile court has been able to function well and get what they needed on their court days.

Director Updates

Ms. Baker gave an update on COVID-19. The COVID-19 Emergency Assistance program is up and running but has not had as strong a response as we felt it would be. We have only issued \$11,500.00 in payments. There have been 82 applications with only 23 being approved. UIB may be reduced at the end of July and it is anticipated the program may pick up at that time. We have begun the process of working with employees who have school age children to try to accommodate their needs with remote learning and shortened weeks in school. Income Maintenance staff had biggest impact due to the lack of laptops. We expect to have 30 laptops to help meet the needs of that staff for teleworking. It appears this will be sufficient based on the survey replies received. The Services staff were also asked about their needs. At this time, it seems that we are in a good spot with our technology needs. Teleworking is making the workplace look very different. The State continues to issue weekly updates and guidance pertaining to COVID. We are also doing a good job of keeping PPE stocked and employees getting what they need. It is business as usual and then some in the Agency.

Ms. Dukes made a motion to move the meeting into closed session at 4:54 pm. The motion was seconded by Mr. Yates. The motion was unanimously approved.

Closed Session

Closed session ended with a motion from Mr. Yates and a second from Ms. Dukes at 5:30 pm and returned to open session at 5:30 pm.

Return to Open Session

Mr. Todd Yates made a motion to excuse Ms. Jane Murphy as she is on vacation. Ms. Karen Watford seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

No action was taken during Closed Session.

Date of Next Meeting

The next DSS Board Meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, August 25, 2020 at 4:00 pm at the Governmental Center, fourth floor, Commissioners Meeting Room, Lexington, North Carolina.

Adjournment

Ms. Minnie Dukes made a motion to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Mr. Todd Yates. The motion was unanimously approved and the meeting was adjourned at 5:31 pm.

Minutes submitted by Patricia Baker