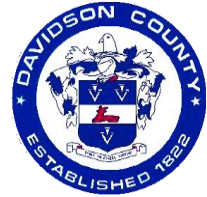


**DAVIDSON COUNTY
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES**

Patricia Baker, Director



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**Davidson County Department of Social Services
Board Meeting Minutes
October 27, 2020**

Board Members Present

Mrs. Karen Watford; Ms. Minnie Dukes; Ms. Jane Murphy

Others in Attendance

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

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 4:04 p.m. by Mrs. Karen Watford. Mrs. Jane Murphy made a motion to excuse Mr. Todd Yates from the October 27, 2020 meeting. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Minnie Dukes. The motion was approved unanimously.

Review of the Agenda – Additions/Modifications

No changes to the Agenda.

Adoption of Agenda

Mrs. Minnie Dukes made a motion to approve the Agenda for the meeting. Ms. Jane Murphy seconded the motion. The Agenda was unanimously approved.

Adoption of Minutes

Mrs. Jane Murphy made a motion to approve the regular session and the closed session minutes of the September 22, 2020 meeting. Mrs. Minnie Dukes seconded the motion. The minutes were unanimously approved.

Public Comments

There was no public comment.

Board Member Comments

Mrs. Karen Watford shared that the County Manager, herself and Mr. Fred McClure, County Commissioner, will be on a Zoom call at 8:00 am on Thursday morning to discuss options and issues with Cardinal Innovations. Information from that meeting will be shared after the call. Mrs. Watford also stated that they are now actively recruiting for a person to replace Mr. Richard

Wagner on the DSS Board. Mr. Larry Potts may have someone that is interested. The State has posted the notice and it must be posted for 30 days. We will not know anything about the person that is chosen until the State Social Services Commission meets, possibly sometime in November.

Management Report – Submitted in Writing

Mrs. Susan Bryan apologized for not having a final report from FY 19-20, as the Finance Department has not closed the books for the last fiscal year. Mrs. Bryan has asked for a meeting with the Finance Officer to discuss and hopefully reinforce how important it is for the books to be closed timely. Overages were reported and discussed. Overall, we are looking very good. Auditors have asked for additional information on COVID spending, even after the audit has been completed and closed. There were questions about some of the spending, which Mrs. Bryan answered. Issues regarding the closing of the books were discussed.

Ms. Elizabeth Huff shared that numbers have remained stable. The summary highlights show the workers' efforts and how well they have taken care of business. Workers are starting to struggle to keep COVID and regular requirements separate.

Ms. Huff reported that in the Day Care area, our Agency is now on a waiting list effective September 19, 2020, due to an increase in spending. Workers continue to maintain application processing times for new applications at 98%.

In the WFFA area, processing time is at 10 days. Assistance in this area is being provided very quickly.

In the Emergency Assistance area, applications are still light and not many people are coming in for assistance.

Ms. Huff shared the Medicaid processing times; application processing times remain higher than the State requirement of 90%. The number of days required to process applications is below the State standard, which means that applicants are receiving their benefits much faster.

Food and Nutrition Services (FNS) recertifications have been processed at 100% timely for the month of September. Issuance of emergency FNS benefits is at 100% as well. Workers are committed to ensuring that parents are able to provide and put food on the table for their families.

Ms. Huff let the Board know program integrity collections are down significantly due to COVID. Investigators continue to work on claims and have maintained 100% of the FNS claims entered within the first 180 days. Ms. Huff stated that she has not received any answers regarding the requirement for stores to provide information to our Agency when an investigation is being conducted. She hopes to be able to share some information in the coming months.

Ms. Trish Baker shared the vacancy report. We now have 21 vacancies. The 2 office support positions are frozen. Several of our vacancies are due to employees who have been promoted or moved to other positions. We are working on getting a contract with Vanguard before the Commissioners for approval so that some much-needed assistance for the Child Welfare area can begin for the remainder of the fiscal year.

Mr. Scott Craver reported that in the Child Support area continues to do very well. We are a quarter of the way through the year and are at 27% of collections. The total number of cases are

down. We now have two establishment staff and hopefully they will start to get new cases established.

Ms. Katrina McMasters reported that they are doing ok, although the number of workers is down and the number of cases is up. The number of children we are working with is down. CPS is now down 7 workers, which they are trying to fill. The total number of cases continues to go up. The type of cases coming in is very hard on workers and this causes burn out and ultimately loss of personnel. The number of children coming into care in the month of October is higher than the number in the past three months. There was discussion about how to get and keep good applicants. One of the things that has not helped is that they have not been able to attend community fairs for newly graduated students. COVID may also be a determining factor. Workers are experiencing higher caseloads and this is troublesome as well. One case is one family, regardless of the numbers of children in the home. There was also discussion about how to show appreciation for staff.

Mrs. Susan Craig reported that in the Permanency Planning area, 20 children found permanence. The children still in care have significant needs. COVID is still very much an issue with the children, parents, staff, etc. MAPP training started on Saturday and is being held at Medical Ministries in their lobby. This provides us with lots of space to social distance and still have the training.

Mrs. Craig reported that in the Adult Services area, two wards were transferred to family and two were transferred to the Hope for the Future contract. The situations are different for serving adults than children. Most visits are being conducted virtually when possible due to wards being in facilities. There was also discussion about Hope for the Future.

Old Business

COVID-19 Emergency Assistance Program - Update

As of now, we have spent \$46,500.00. We have approved 93 applications. 358 applications have been taken. We thought we were going to spend more, so this funding will be reduced to \$100,000.00.

PBB Projects Update – Davidson House and Playground

The approval of the proposed playground is being sought from Board of County Commissioners tonight. A description of the playground was shared. This will be used by foster children, their parents and possibly DSS staff for lunch. 811 Utilities have been contacted and the utilities have been marked. The Davidson House project was approved by the BOCC in a previous meeting and is moving along. There will be a lot of shelving for storage of files. This space will more easily accessible than where the records are currently stored.

New Business

Record Destruction

The request to dispose of identified files as provided in the Board Packet was presented for approval. There were also some additional records from Income Maintenance that were identified for destruction. Ms. Jane Murphy made a motion to approve the destruction of the records that have been identified. Mrs. Minnie Dukes seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

Court Updates – Sheri Woodyard

Ms. Sheri Woodyard shared that the legal team is now caught up on cases that had to be delayed due to COVID. They have returned to regular court days - returned to Wednesday and TPR cases on two Thursdays of each month. There will be no court on November 11, 2020. Tomorrow will be a very big day due to the number of petitions filed recently.

Director Updates

Ms. Baker shared the Legislative Report regarding child welfare reform and HB 630. This MOU and action were delayed due to COVID. Data measurements for Child Welfare Performance were shared from the packet, as well as Energy Programs and Work First Family Assistance. These program data elements are to be measured and are standards that we will have to meet. The first year this was done, numerous counties refused to sign the MOU. Some of the requirements are very hard to meet. The MOU has been revisited and revised due to that refusal and it is better, but not perfect. The sharing of this MOU is for informational purposes and is an 18-month agreement. There was discussion about the MOU. The MOU has to be signed by the end of December, 2020. Our current PBB goals are set around some of these numbers. If measures are not met, the State could ultimately step in and take over the area not meeting the MOU, but we are doing a tremendous amount of good work.

The DSS Board meeting schedule for next year was shared with the Board. We do have time to modify the dates if they are not agreeable. We are currently working on a holiday luncheon for staff and our December meeting will be held before that luncheon.

Cardinal concerns are at the top of the list due to problems that we are having with them not providing good service. There are a lot of counties considering a request to pull away from them. We just want what is best for our children.

Hazard pay has been a discussion for staff compensation due to COVID. Ms. Baker has spoken with the county and assistant county managers about the possibility of using the CARES money to reward staff or give hazard pay. Ms. Baker has been exploring what other counties are doing to determine if this could be done. She will share any information she gets with the assistant county manager.

On Friday, we are doing a Halloween event. Other events have also been discussed. Before COVID, DSS had a very active employee appreciation program. Now it is very hard to work these events out due to COVID. The Board was invited to Friday's event.

There was discussion about having someone that staff can talk to about the hard things that workers are experiencing. Dragonfly House has offered to help with staff concerns due to fatalities. Sharing details with supervisors sometimes helps staff to cope and move forward. Fatalities effect all staff in some way.

Mrs. Minnie Dukes made a motion to move the meeting into closed session at 5:13 pm. The motion was seconded by Ms. Jane Murphy. The motion was unanimously approved.

Closed Session

No Action was taken during Closed Session. The meeting returned to Open Session.

Date of Next Meeting

The next DSS Board Meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, November 24, 2020 at 4:00 pm at the Governmental Center, fourth floor, Commissioners Meeting Room, Lexington, North Carolina.

Adjournment

Ms. Jane Murphy made a motion to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Minnie Dukes. The motion was unanimously approved and the meeting was adjourned at 5:35 pm.

Minutes submitted by Patricia Baker