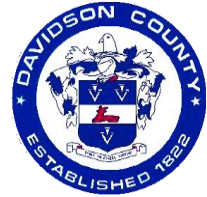


**DAVIDSON COUNTY
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES**

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**Davidson County Department of Social Services
Board Meeting Minutes
February 23, 2021**

Board Members Present via Video Conference and in Person

**Mrs. Karen Watford; Mr. Todd Yates; Mrs. Minnie Dukes;
Ms. Jane Murphy; Mr. Ed Dawson**

Others Present and via Video Conference

**Ms. Trish Baker; Mrs. Susan Bryan; Ms. Elizabeth Huff; Ms. Katrina McMasters
Mr. Scott Craver; Ms. Sheri Woodyard; Mrs. Lexa Eagle; Mr. Tony Dill;
Mr. Casey Smith; Mr. Trey Suttan; Ms. Nicole Six**

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 3:32 p.m. by Mrs. Karen Watford. A copy of the current Board members and their contact information has been provided in the packet of information sent to the Board.

Review of the Agenda – Additions/Modifications

Mr. Trey Suttan's presentation will be moved up when he arrives and allowed to move to I.1. and the DSS FY 21-22 Budget Review will be moved to I.2.

Adoption of Agenda

Ms. Jane Murphy made a motion to adopt the amended Agenda for the meeting. Mr. Todd Yates seconded the motion. The amended Agenda was unanimously approved.

Adoption of Minutes

Mrs. Minnie Dukes requested that the minutes for January 26, 2021 be amended to add that she volunteered to be a member of the CCPT team if Mr. Ed Dawson could not serve as the DSS representative and the Health Department representative. Mr. Ed Dawson made a motion to approve the regular session minutes, with the changes. Mrs. Minnie Dukes seconded the motion. The minutes were unanimously approved.

Public Comments

There was no public comment.

Board Member Comments

There were no Board comments.

Management Reports

Mrs. Susan Bryan has no written report provided due to the 2021-2022 budget being presented this month

There was discussion about how Child Day Care availability is determined. The spending and the reasons for having a waiting list were provided to the Board. Because Day Care is not an entitlement program, there is a cap on the funding and that is what drives the waiting list and is not considered a denied service. We work closely with Smart Start, with referrals going to them for children 0 to 5 years old. Child Welfare children have priority and are being served, but all others are placed on the waiting list until funding levels out and they can be served. Ms. Elizabeth Huff explained the procedure of reallocation of funds from counties that do not spend their allocation. Underspent funds were used this year to help parents with their parent fees and to help pay the extra costs related to children remote learning in the day care centers.

The remainder of the Management Reports were provided in written form. No further questions were asked.

Old Business

The Community Child Protection Team appointment was discussed and Mrs. Minnie Dukes again volunteered to fill this position on the committee. Mr. Ed Dawson made a motion to appoint Mrs. Minnie Dukes as the CCPT representative from DSS. Ms. Jane Murphy seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

New Business

Presentation – Cardinal Innovations Healthcare – Trey Suttan, CEO

Mrs. Trish Baker introduced Mr. Trey Suttan and Ms. Nicole Six from Cardinal Innovations. Mr. Suttan started the presentation with the changes for Cardinal Innovations that have occurred in the last 5 to 10 years. Statewide, we are seeing a strong movement toward integrated care. Transformation will be rolling out statewide. Cardinal is doing this as well. Quality of outcomes is being looked at and not quantity. Cardinal is bringing a commitment to the mission. Cardinal wants a personal connection with the people they serve. There was no transparency before 2017, now that has become one of the missions. They have updated their governance model. In terms of reinvestment into the work place and community, Cardinal has contributed approximately \$50 million toward COVID reimbursement for the provider network. They have also invested an additional \$10 million in community reinvestments, centered around food instability, job training, transportation and housing. Cardinal leads in the State in assistance for housing. Their recent Plan of Action has been posted on their website. The Foster Care population is of utmost importance to him. There is a new push in how Cardinal works with their providers to help children in foster care. They have created a child welfare model around this concept and Ms. Nicole Six has been chosen to head this new division within Cardinal. The goal is to speed up authorization turnarounds, expand their network for level 2, level 3 and PRTF. Only four providers are licensed in Davidson County and Cardinal is contracted with them. Cardinal is committed and making changes. The issues that Cardinal is dealing with are being dealt with by the State as well. The system of care for foster children has long been broken. A new Statewide foster care plan will be implemented in 2022. Mr. Suttan shared information from two different sources

addressing the brokenness of the mental health system. In 2013 foster care came under the umbrella of Cardinal. Foster care is “new” to Cardinal in how they deal with the needs of the child.

Ms. Nicole Six shared that the way they are looking at it now, is quite new and they are considering foster children and their families as a priority. LME/MCO Medicaid is one of the highest users of services. Cardinal will look at the population differently, working to get children’s needs met. Cardinal is working on a co-location model, with one of their staff members being assigned to our DSS virtually. The role of the liaison may change and look different as this is so new. Cardinal has a 24/7 crisis line and DSS can call that line as needed after hours and on weekends. In the spring Cardinal will have a dedicated line for the foster care population. They are trying to close the loop in all areas to serve the foster care population and welcome feedback if there are issues that need to be addressed. The question was asked about availability of staff from Cardinal to assist in placement of a child with mental health needs. Ms. Six stated that it would depend on specific need of the child and that some children are being placed in transitional therapy. Ms. Six feels that Davidson county kids are being served well by this therapy. Their team is working creatively to work around blown placements and emergency services. Cardinal has been working through and will keep working through all problems that may arise. An explanation was provided regarding how the children are being served. Crisis management will be one of the duties of the liaison. There was discussion about transitional therapy homes. Numerous questions were asked and examples were given and answered. The last year of financials have shown that there has been an increase in care for individuals. The Child Welfare model created by Cardinal is constantly changing and involve real time situations that may change the model as they go.

There is a long history of provider accountability statewide. The new arrangements are increasing rates and incentives, but they must also include no eject and no reject rules in the contracts. The 24/7 Access Line is answered live by a licensed clinician in North Carolina. Questions were asked about an after-hours person to serve our County. The system now being implemented by Cardinal will hopefully provide continuity for staff there so that they will have access to specific information if calls are received. Cardinal is working toward that goal and aiming for the person you reach to have the same information, no matter who you reach. Mr. Yates expressed his desire to see a specially tailored line. Assessing the child is imperative as well as the level of care of care needed. Cardinal feels they have a shared responsibility with DSS for placement and handling of a child’s needs. A child may be placed in transitional care rather than the needed level of care. Cardinal also advocates with area hospitals to help determine appropriate placement. Behavioral health care needs deserve a high level of attention in our hospitals as well, even in the pandemic. Cardinal wants a soft landing for the kids involved with them. If a child is in in-patient care in the hospital, the children are getting treatment. If they are being kept in an ED bed, they are not getting any kind of treatment. The Board requested data about how many kids are placed by Cardinal per day. They also want to know the level of care of placement. The Board also wanted to know if provider capacity over their coverage area is being tracked. It is not, however Cardinal is working to make it more accessible rather than calling each one when looking for placement for a child. Cardinal would like to have Cardinal beds with providers just for Cardinal participants. Cardinal realizes each situation and each child’s needs are different. The DSS staff would appreciate having 24/7 support from Cardinal. DSS staff end up spending hours and hours calling for placement. The increased dialog between DSS and Cardinal has been a good thing. Cardinal will continue to work with DSS. There are fluctuating needs for DSS and for each individual child. Cardinal/Benchmark partnership with Partnering for Excellence was discussed. Upstream is the key and getting the right people involved at the right time and early are very important. Whole person care for the kids is very important.

Mr. Scott Craver made a comment about his appreciation for Mr. Suttin's and Ms. Six's commitment to getting care for the children we serve. He also stated that Mobile Crisis appears to be a good resource for our Agency.

Ms. Katrina McMasters expressed her appreciation for the willingness of the liaison to participate in a very lengthy meeting regarding some of the most extreme cases our Agency is involved with.

Mr. Suttin thanked Ms. Baker and Mr. Casey Smith for their continuing commitment and communication.

DSS Fiscal Year 2021-2022 Budget Review

Ms. Baker shared with the Board that we are asking for a little over \$2 million dollars more this year than last year. \$1.6 million of this is for standard operating for the Agency. Sheets for the budget were shared with the Board. We are asking for three new positions and three reclassifications. We are also asking for one new car and will be purchasing two new cars from this year's budget. The positions being requested are one new social work supervisor to supervise Quality Assurance/On Call staff, and/or to get the staffing ratios down. We are also asking for Social Worker III for the licensing and placement area. We have a need for foster parents who will take teens. Recruiting foster parents is a very important piece for the children in our care who do not require specialized treatment. The third position is a Social Worker III Quality Assurance person to be a part of the QA team. This person would do training, reviewing records, etc. The upgrades that we are looking at have been discussed with Piedmont Triad Regional Council of Governments. PTCRG is supportive of the upgrades. COVID has hit us very hard this year. The State has suspended collection of NCHC and no fraud repayment is being enforced. Some are paying voluntarily. Our Agency has lost revenue this past year due to COVID. Our expenditures are listed on the first page. The revenues are on the second sheet. Revenues are lower, based on state estimates. Nothing is the same due to COVID. Predictions were based on pre-pandemic numbers. The training/travel budget has been left at the old amounts rather than what we have used this year.

The request for additional positions sheet was shared as well as the proposal for upgrade sheet.

We have tried to be as careful as we can. The role of DSS Board is to review and convey the DSS budget, if they support the recommendations and budget as presented and it will then go on to the county manager and finally to the BOCC. There will be numerous meetings and potential cuts to this budget. Several questions were asked and answered. There are lots of things to be considered. Salary funds were explained by Mr. Casey Smith.

COVID needs for PPE were purchased by the COVID funds provided to the County. If this money is not available, our supply line item could be outrageous. There were questions about the PBB balance for our Department.

Mrs. Minnie Dukes made a motion to convey the DSS budget as presented to the DSS Board. Mr. Todd Yates seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

Court Updates – Sheri Woodyard

Ms. Sheri Woodyard had no urgent updates to give.

Mrs. Minnie Dukes made a motion to move the meeting into closed session. The motion was seconded by Mr. Todd Yates. The motion was unanimously approved. The meeting moved into closed session at 5:15 pm.

Closed Session

No Action was taken during Closed Session. The meeting returned to open session at 5:45 pm.

Date of Next Meeting

The next DSS Board Meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, March 23, 2021 at 4:00 pm at the Governmental Center, fourth floor, Commissioners Meeting Room, Lexington, North Carolina.

Adjournment

Mr. Todd Yates 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 5:45 pm.

Minutes submitted by Patricia Baker