

**DAVIDSON COUNTY
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES**

Patricia Baker, Director



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**Davidson County Department of Social Services
Board Meeting Minutes
January 26, 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;
Mr. Scott Craver; Ms. Sheri Woodyard; Mrs. Lexa Eagle**

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 4:03 p.m. by Mrs. Karen Watford.

Welcome and Swearing in of New Board Member – Mr. Ed Dawson

Mrs. Karen Watford welcomed Mr. Ed Dawson as our newest DSS Board member.

Oath of Office

Mrs. Debbie Harris administered the Oath of Office for the DSS Board to Mr. Ed Dawson. He has met all members of the Board that are present. Mr. Dawson welcomed the opportunity to be involved with the Department of Social Services.

Review of the Agenda – Additions/Modifications

Ms. Trish Baker asked to have the agenda amended to add I.2.CCPT Appointment.

Adoption of Agenda

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

Adoption of Minutes

Mrs. Minnie Dukes made a motion to approve the regular session minutes of the December 11, 2020 meeting. Mr. Todd Yates seconded the motion. The minutes were unanimously approved.

Public Comments

There was no public comment.

Board Member Comments

Mrs. Karen Watford thanked Mrs. Debbie Harris and Mr. Joel Hartley for their help in preparing for our meetings. Mrs. Watford also offered her condolences to Ms. Baker upon the loss of her father.

Management Reports

Mrs. Susan Bryan shared that the expenditure reports shared are for December and January. Finance has still not closed out the books. Mrs. Bryan pointed out the overages and welcomed questions. There were questions about the CIP allocation and how that is being spent.

Ms. Trish Baker shared information regarding the vacancy report. It has been very hard to fill social work positions. Other vacancies were discussed. We are evaluating structure and evaluating functions of some of these vacant positions. The Social Work and IMC positions will always be posted. Both Adult Services supervisors have left the agency. Vacancies are high but not as bad as they could be considering the environment. Questions were asked and answered regarding interviewing. Vanguard Staffing use was approved last month, which has allowed us to get some temporary help. Ms. Baker shared that two of the Vanguard staff are on board and we will try to get a third; however, Vanguard is stretched to the maximum helping other Departments of Social Services as well. Vanguard is the only company in North Carolina that specializes in DSS Social Work positions.

Ms. Elizabeth Huff shared that applications for Medicaid have increased. In January, they appear to be leveling off. Ms. Huff gave a shout out to staff, doing a tremendous job getting applications approved. In Food and Nutrition Services, October and November had high numbers of applications and December started to decrease. The average processing time for these applications is approximately 10 days. 749 FNS applications were disposed of. Work First is holding its own. No significant changes in the numbers of applications coming in or the number of active cases. It is business as usual with Work First. In the Child Care area, we still on a waiting list, as of the end of October. The spending coefficient is good and we will continue on a waiting list until the coefficient drops to 97 percent. We are still serving child welfare and foster care parents. In the Emergency Assistance area, we are staying about the same. The CIP allocation was discussed. This program is in NC Fast and cannot be overspent, because once the fund is exhausted, the system will not allow us to approve any more applications for assistance. There will probably be a reallocation with some of the CIP money. The eligibility criteria for CIP was explained. LIEAP spending in December was for 60 and over or receiving services through DAAS. The other populations will be served beginning January 1, 2021. All other emergency assistance spending remains stable.

In the Child Support area, the report was submitted in writing and opened for discussion.

In the CPS area, the report was also submitted in writing. Mrs. Karen Watford touched on the highlights, discussing the number of reports received, the number of children coming into care and the overall stress in December 2020.

In the Permanency Planning area, Mrs. Watford reviewed the written report and touched on the highlights.

In the Adult Services area, the written report was reviewed. Ms. Baker shared there was an increase in APS reports and we lost 2 supervisors as well. Adult Services is doing a great job. The social workers are making sure that our wards have the COVID vaccine, if they are medically cleared and want it.

Old Business

Cardinal Innovations Update

The issues with Cardinal continue. We have had meetings with Cardinal last month. DSS wrote a letter in response to Cardinal's action plan and this was shared with the Board last month. Mr. Casey Smith, County Manager, sent the letter on the behalf of DSS. A group of social workers assisted with the crafting of the response presented to Cardinal. Mr. Smith and Mr. Jason Martin, Assistant County Manager, have been so very supportive of DSS. They have been on calls this month concerning some of our children. The Social Workers are spending lots of time with children because Cardinal does not have beds available or cannot locate beds willing to take our children. NCACDSS has sent letters out regarding behavioral health issues with providers. Several examples were provided to the Board about how social workers are having to take care of situations with our children due to Cardinal's inability to respond to the needs for children with severe behavioral and emotional issues. Mr. Smith's push is helping get some cases to the forefront. We are getting better responses, but it is still not meeting our needs. There has been some discussion regarding possibly housing a person from Cardinal in our building. Mr. Smith has included Trish in the County Managers' meetings when there is discussion about our LME/MCO. He has continued to work very hard on this. Several counties in North Carolina have resolved to step away from Cardinal and others are considering some action. The behavioral health system in North Carolina is not ideal. Our LME/MCOs were discussed. Some counties using Partners are experiencing some of the same problems as Davidson County. Our Licensing and Placement teams are working overtime to achieve placement for children. Mr. Yates asked if facilities are at capacity? Ms. Baker shared that some are, but Cardinal does not contract with some providers and there are still providers who tell us they refuse to work with Cardinal. They will take our children but would require we pay for the children, which would come out of county funds. The DSS letter was written because their action plan was not sufficient to meet the needs of this county. It is hard to get movement from Cardinal. Mr. Ed Dawson shared that there have been issues with Cardinal for a long time and he has experienced things as a provider. Mr. Dawson states that DSS should not be the clinical home for the child and Cardinal should step up to be the clinical home for the child. If someone from Cardinal had to sit with the children who need placement, they would find placement quickly. There was more discussion about the action plan and how it has not been really addressed. There has been no revision to the action plan. The Sub-Capitation Payment Agreement is still in a holding pattern. Ms. Baker got involved with the issues with Cardinal because staff were getting frustrated. We were not doing a very good job of making our needs known to Cardinal. Now that is happening, with the help of Mr. Smith. Mr. Yates asked why we cannot use multiple MCO's. The General Assembly does make the decision about what LME/MCO each county could use. The NC County Commission Association was a part of the decision process to split the State up with different LME's. Legislation does determine who we have to work with. The county can request to pull out from their LME/MCO, but the State has to approve it. We need to try to address this problem in any way that we can. Being able to choose our providers appears to be a great idea and we may want to get Rep. Larry Potts to present the idea and use our County as a possible pilot for this type program.

CCPT Appointment Discussion

The DSS Board is required to have a representative on the CCPT/CFPT teams. The person is appointed by the DSS Board. Ms. Baker will send the information to anyone who might be

interested in being appointed. The next CCPT/CFPT meeting is set for Thursday, January 28, 2021, 8:00 am. Ms. Baker will ask at the next CCPT/CFPT meeting as to whether Mr. Dawson can serve a dual role, as he is already a member of the team, appointed by the Davidson County Health Department. Mrs. Minnie Dukes volunteered to fill this spot on the CCPT/CFPT group.

New Business

Record Destruction

The Services Clerical Staff have identified 131 CPS and 132 Foster Care records that meet the criteria for record destruction. We would like to get approval to destroy the aforementioned records. Ms. Jane Murphy made a motion to destroy 131 CPS records and 132 Foster Care records as requested. Mr. Ed Dawson seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

Court Updates – Sheri Woodyard

Ms. Sheri Woodyard shared that Court is back up and running as before, prior to December. They are doing more hearings via Webex. This is the only format that has been approved by the State in regards to confidentiality. There are some changes at the court hour because we will have two new judges for our court system. Judge Wood is now a justice on the Court of Appeals and Judge Michael is retiring eff February 1, 2021. There are substitute judges coming in, but we have not had any in our Court hearings. There will also be a new Chief District Court Judge.

Director Updates

Ms. Baker shared that budget kickoff has started. The first submission is due to Mr. Casey Smith, County Manager on February 26, 2021. We are on a very tight timeline this year. We will do our very best to have the budget to be presented to the DSS Board at our February meeting, prior to submission to Mr. Smith. The State budget estimates will not be available until the middle of February, which adds to the stress. The Fiscal unit will be working diligently to get this budget completed. This will be another fiscally conservative year and we will be very aware of the impact our budget has on the entire County. Ms. Baker is concerned about the supplies budget and being able to find the supplies needed for COVID. We will do all we can to maintain a good budget and still provide the needs of the citizens of our County.

Delegation of Authority Request to State OSHR

We learned sometime last year that we were not certified to hire the people. North Carolina Office of Human Resources gives the authority to a county once the person or persons involved are trained. No Delegation of Authority has been assigned to Davidson County since at least 2007. Mrs. Lexa Eagle has been completing the tasks involved after receiving training from within DSS, but has not had proper authority to determine qualified candidates. Since learning about this, the applications for potential employees have been forwarded to OSHR for them to determine if the individuals are qualified. This training was completed by Ms. Baker and Mrs. Eagle in January. This Delegation of Authority would enable us to have the authority to hire, based on qualifications of individuals, without approval through OSHR and would possibly help speed up the process. Mr. Ed Dawson made a motion to approve signing of the Delegation of Authority. The motion was seconded by Ms. Jane Murphy. The motion was approved unanimously.

Mrs. Minnie Dukes made a motion to move the meeting into closed session at pm. The motion was seconded by Ms. Jane Murphy. The motion was unanimously approved. The meeting moved into closed session at 5:10 pm.

Closed Session

No Action was taken during Closed Session. The meeting returned to open session at 5:35 pm.

Date of Next Meeting

The next DSS Board Meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, February 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 Ms. Jane Murphy. The motion was unanimously approved and the meeting was adjourned at 5:35 pm.

Minutes submitted by Patricia Baker