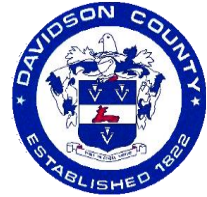


**DAVIDSON COUNTY
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES**

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**Davidson County Department of Social Services
Board Meeting Minutes
June 22, 2021**

Board Members Present via Video Conference and in Person
Mrs. Karen Watford; Ms. Jane Murphy; Mr. Ed Dawson; Mr. Todd Yates

Others Present

**Mrs. Trish Baker; Ms. Elizabeth Huff; Ms. Katrina McMasters; Mr. Scott Craver;
Mrs. Sheri Woodyard; Mr. Jason Hicks; Mr. Casey Smith; Mrs. Debbie Harris; Mrs. Kara Cody;
Miss. Sydnie Beck; Mr. Rhett Melton;**

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 3:03 p.m. by Mrs. Karen Watford.

Review of the Agenda – Additions/Modifications

Mrs. Karen Watford would like to modify the Agenda to include a closed session.

Adoption of Agenda

Mr. Ed Dawson made a motion to adopt the Agenda for the meeting. Mr. Todd Yates seconded the motion. The Agenda was unanimously approved.

Adoption of Minutes

The minutes from June 8, 2021 were reviewed. Ms. Jane Murphy made a motion to approve the meeting minutes. Mr. Ed Dawson seconded the motion. The minutes were unanimously approved.

Public Comments

There was no public comment.

Board Member Comments

Mrs. Karen Watford appreciates the Program Managers who share information each meeting.

Presentation and Discussion – Partners LME/MCO – Rhett Melton

Mrs. Trish Baker introduced Mr. Rhett Melton from Partners to start off the presentation. Mr. Melton stated that when they were forming Partners back in 2012, they wanted their name to reflect their mission. Mr. Melton stated they serve some of the most complex and needy individuals. They believe they need to be partners to the members they serve. They strive to have a partnership with their providers because the more providers they have within their network makes for a higher success. He stated several times that this is not managed care. Mr. Melton said back in May when everyone got together he did not think Partners was in a position to take on two or three additional Counties. After reviewing data, they determined they could do so. He said his staff is focused and eager to provide services for Davidson County. Mr. Melton told everyone they will make mistakes, but they would own up to the problem and fix it. Their model is built on improving lives, strengthening communities, value centered and ethical obligation, not contractual.

Mrs. Watford asked the attendees from Partners to introduce themselves and share their view point from their position.

Ms. Lynn Gray is the Director of Care Management for mental health and substance use. In 2015 they noticed that their communication with DSS and DJJ was not as good as they wanted it to be so they created a position that would embed a liaison at local DSS and DJJ offices. In addition to the liaisons she has a full child team that consists of about 30 staff, three Supervisors and a Manager. The child teams provide care management to high risk children. If there is an emergency after 5:00pm, they are available when needed.

Ms. Allison Gazda is the Senior Director Population Health and has been with Partners since it was formed. She likes to lead and create new program. Ms. Gazda wants to know what is needed and how they make it happen. In Catawba County they are wanting to start up a new program similar to one that is already formed in Georgia. This program is a Peer Respite Program that would be for adults. This Facility would be open 24 hours and helps with crisis management. For adolescents, they have a MORESS (Mobile Outreach Response Engagement and Stabilization Service) Program. Ms. Gazda learned about this program while attending a two-day Peer to Peer discussion in New Jersey about mobile response. This is an 8-week service with a licensed clinician and a bachelor's level qualified professional who can do skill and asset building. This is a family partner who has lived experience raising a child/youth with multiple symptoms. This mobile response program is open 24/7. The caller defines the crisis and the team responds within 45 minutes. This is piloted in Gaston and Burke County. This has been going on for two years and they have seen an impact.

Ms. Beth Lackey is the Provider Network Director. Ms. Lackey is responsible for credentialing providers which means the providers are verified to come into the network to provide trainings, technical support, etc. The process to credential a provider can take about 60 days but they try to get it completed within 20-30 days. They work with the provider along the way to gather the needed information.

Ms. Rachel Porter is the Chief Administrative Officer. Ms. Porter oversees Community Engagement and Member Engagement Departments as well as Marketing, Communications, and Provider Network. She wanted to make sure that we know that Partners was committed to having a presence in the community. They want folks here that can work for us and know us and that are committed.

Several questions were asked including:

Q: What does the liaison do at DSS?

A: The liaison is not a licensed clinician, but they can write treatment plans if they need to. They have to get the comprehensive clinical assessment completed. They know how to navigate the system to get the help the child needs.

Q: Have you been involved with a lot of rapid response; the state rapid response?

A: Partners has been involved with a few; maybe three or four. For the most part they have been able to stay out of it because they communicate and figure out things before it gets to that.

Q: Children in crisis; they are in the emergency room and they need a different level of care, what is your process?

A: Partners has been tracking their kids going into the emergency room; they have found they have the lowest number and shortest length of stay. They have systems in place that the other MCOs are just now getting set up. They get the care coordinator assigned very quickly and get the assessment completed.

Q: If the Board of Commissioners decided to disengage and go with Partners, what kind of seat would Davidson County have at the table; what does Partners' board look like?

A: Partners currently has a 21-member Board. Per their By-Laws, each County has a member on the Board that is appointed by the County Commissioners. Mr. Melton made note that they are currently working on editing their By-Laws to allow more than 21 members so each County can have a seat on the Partners Board.

Q: How many Counties does Partners currently have?

A: There are currently nine Counties with three new Counties starting in September and one anticipated starting in January.

Q: Where is Partners main office located?

A: Gastonia.

Mrs. Karen Watford noted that she liked hearing that Partners is adaptable. Mrs. Watford said Davidson County is looking for stability and having our vulnerable population served and we want to feel like we are just as important as any other County. Mrs. Watford thanked those from Partners for coming and presenting and informed them the Board is nearing their decision and will be in touch.

Old Business

LME/MCO Discussion

Mrs. Karen Watford thought talking about Sandhills would be a good place to start the discussion. Mrs. Watford and Ms. Baker, were among Davidson County participants in a meeting with Sandhills at their office in Greensboro. A group of Sandhills Board members were in attendance to answer questions. Mrs. Watford stated, one board member stated he didn't hear much on the negative side and take that as a compliment and see that things are going well. Another board member said that he recognized, from his previous job, that there were too many broken things in the mental health system. Mrs. Watford said he was a big advocate for getting things established to help with the problems and he was very proud when his county joined Sandhills. Sandhills CEO, Victoria Whitt, spoke in detail on how they do things. One thing that caught Mrs. Watford's attention was when dealing with critical problems, they deal with the problem from the top down, not the bottom up. The CEO is involved regularly in the services they provide. Board members continued to discuss and several members expressed a level of comfort with Sandhills.

Mrs. Baker's recommendation would be to pick either Partners or Sandhills. Mr. Todd Yates made the motion to disengage from Cardinal and partner with Sandhills. There was a second from Mr. Ed Dawson. The motion was unanimously approved. This recommendation will go to the Board of Commissioners.

Closed Session

Closed session for was for Confidential Information (N.C.G.S. §143.318.11 (a)(1) and Personnel (N.C.G.S. §143.318.11 (a)(6)).

No action was taken during closed session.

Date of Next Meeting

The next DSS Board Meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, July 27, 2021 at 4:00 pm at the Governmental Center, fourth floor, Commissioners Meeting Room, Lexington, North Carolina.

Adjournment

Mr. Ed Dawson 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 5:46 pm.

Minutes submitted by Patricia Baker