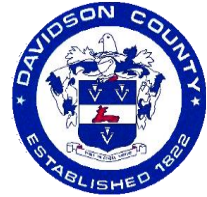


**DAVIDSON COUNTY  
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES**

*Patricia Baker, Director*



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**Davidson County Department of Social Services  
Board Meeting Minutes  
July 27, 2021**

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

**Others Present**

**Mrs. Trish Baker; Ms. Elizabeth Huff; Ms. Katrina McMasters; Mr. Scott Craver;  
Mrs. Susan Bryan; Ms. Elizabeth Huff; Ms. Sheri Woodyard; Mr. Jason Hicks;**

**Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order at 4:02 p.m. by Mrs. Karen Watford. A motion to excuse Mr. Todd Yates was made by Mr. Ed Dawson. The motion was seconded by Ms. Jane Murphy. Mrs. Karen Watford thanked all that were in attendance for their participation in the meeting.

**Vote on 2<sup>nd</sup> Term for Ms. Jane Murphy – DSS Board appointee**

Mrs. Karen Watford nominated Ms. Jane Murphy, Board Appointee, to serve a second three-year term on the DSS Board. The motion was seconded by Mr. Ed Dawson. Ms. Murphy abstained from the vote. The nomination was approved.

**Vote on Chairperson**

Mr. Ed Dawson nominated Mrs. Karen Watford as the Chairperson of the DSS Board for fiscal year 2021-2022. Ms. Jane Murphy seconded the motion. Mrs. Watford abstained from vote. The nomination was approved.

**Review of the Agenda – Additions/Modifications**

Mrs. Karen Watford asked that an item be added as K.6 – CIP Plan.

**Adoption of Agenda**

Ms. Jane Murphy made a motion to adopt the Amended Agenda for the meeting. Mr. Ed Dawson seconded the motion. The Amended Agenda was unanimously approved.

**Adoption of Minutes**

The minutes from the June 22, 2021 meeting were reviewed. Closed Session Minutes for the same date were also reviewed by the Board. Ms. Jane Murphy made a motion to approve the

meeting minutes and the Closed Session 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 thanked staff for providing the information they share in the Management Report as well as the written comments to go with the report.

### **Management Report – Submitted in Writing**

Mrs. Susan Bryan reported that the Salary and Benefits line items are coming in at 99 percent. Special links is at 190 percent; however, it is 100 percent reimbursable. Overall, we are at 87 percent spending and Mrs. Bryan feels very good about that result. The Finance Department has not closed books and probably will not until September or later.

There was discussion about overtime and whether it is mandatory. Ms. Baker shared that we do not say to employees they must work overtime. Workers see the need and choose to work the overtime to get the job done or to help each other. It is normally a team effort when things have to get done.

Ms. Baker shared the Vacancy Report. Ms. Baker shared that we had one new employee who only stayed with us for a week. We have made several offers and are waiting for screening results. We are very close to hiring the Interpreter. Ms. Baker spoke about how hard it is to get applicants that meet the job minimums. Mr. Dawson expressed his concern about the number of vacant CPS positions and that burnout that may occur with the workers who remain to keep all of the work moving. He asked if there is a way to reward the people that are carrying the work loads for the vacant positions. It may be time to go back to high school systems to share where needs are for career paths. Career fairs were discussed. We need to be at the table for job fairs.

Ms. Elizabeth Huff stated that Income Maintenance is holding it together and appear to be doing well. We are still not allowed to make changes on cases due to COVID. The staff is working hard. The application process is now on line for the protection of the worker and the benefit of the people applying. There was discussion regarding the numbers in the statistics and they indicate that staff continue to do well and get the jobs done.

Ms. Katrina McMasters reported that the month was quiet and reports were down. Some workers are carrying double cases due to the vacancies. We are trying to be as positive as we can and keep staff upbeat. We are working to keep morale up. We must look forward to the good things that are to come. Positions are difficult.

Mr. Scott Craver shared that one of the Child Support Agent II positions has been filled. In the Permanency Planning area, the number of children in care remains down. We are moving children into permanence through adoption or reunification. The complexity of issues that the children have create barriers for them and us. We have recently licensed 4 families.

Mr. Craver reported that the Adult Services area remains fairly steady with a slightly higher number of reports and only one ward came into our custody for a total of 83. We have been able to find family to claim their family once they have passed away.

The services staff has someone on call 24/7, including one supervisor. Those duties are rotated.

## **Old Business**

### **LME/MCO Updates**

Transition committee had not begun meeting at this point. The State has awarded a tailored plan for all seven LME/MCO's. We have been in communication with Sandhills Center. Cardinal is still our LME/MCO. WE are waiting to see what happens next. It is thought that someone will be appointed by Cardinal to be a part of the transition committee at the time we are approved for transition.

### **Budget Updates**

The State does not have an approved budget at this time. We are currently using last year's allocation numbers. If the budget does get approved, hopefully it will mean that more children will be added to the Day Care rolls. It does not appear the State will have an approved budget anytime soon.

### **DSS Board Member Training Update**

The Board member training has been rescheduled. The new dates are November 5 and 6 each day, 9:00 am to 12:00 noon each day. We will also get a recorded version.

## **New Business**

### **Record Destruction Request**

There is a request before the Board to purge 288 CPS files, 10 Foster Care files, and 74 APS files. Ms. Jane Murphy made a motion to destroy the records described. Mr. Ed Dawson seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

### **Director Updates**

Our Agency had an employee that had been with the Agency for about 14 years to pass away just recently. She began employment in 2004 in clerical and moved to income maintenance in 2006. Her kind spirit was felt and she was a very big team player. Trish asked that we remember her with a moment of silence. Her passing leaves a huge hole in the DSS family.

There is some legislation, if passed, that could impact DSS greatly. There is a bill that opens some of the records to give access to members of the General Assembly. They would have to make the request for the records through DHHS. We will provide a summary of the bills when they are passed and the information becomes available.

We have several children that who remain in limbo. One child is being transported to Memphis, Tennessee on Thursday; staff is working for one child to go to a placement in Virginia; and one child is in an ED situation and has exceeded 45 days.

### **District 22B Court Collaborative**

Ms. Baker gave kudos to Ms. Sheri Woodyard and the attorney from Davie county for making the District 22B Court Collaborative a total success. All judges, most of Davidson and Davie County parent attorneys, court staff, as well as almost all of the family attorneys were present. This was

a really good meeting and there was a great turnout. This will be a quarterly District Permanency Collaborative. There was very good participation in the meeting, which we hope will carry into the future. These meetings will be held quarterly and hosted on an alternating basis by Davidson and Davie Counties.

### **Court Updates – Sheri Woodyard**

Ms. Woodyard reported that we now have a full bench of judges for hearing Juvenile cases. A rotation has been established to hopefully help with consistency and to help move the permanence for children along more quickly. Judge Terry is working with Ms. Woodyard, Mr. Jason Hicks and the Davie County attorney to get cases scheduled timely and have them heard to help move children closer to permanence.

### **ARPA Funding and Creation of Additional Programs to Support Low Income**

American Rescue Plan Act. The State has received lots of funding to help families in North Carolina. One program that is being considered is the Low-Income Water Assistance Program (LIWAP). This program will look at families that are 130 percent of poverty. This program will work very similar to the Current CIP program. DHHS is trying to get the program up and running by November. The people that are disconnected or close to disconnection will be who this program will help. The target population is for low income. There are several directors on the work group, including Ms. Baker. They will be trying to be sure that the State NC Fast system will accommodate the application process. Our County will gear up and get ready for these new tasks, but the changes are still in the process phase.

Caseloads have increased and there will additional programs and demands being placed on Income Maintenance caseworkers. Some counties are proposing to use the ARPA funds for premium pay for employees. Rowan County presented a plan to give premium bonus to those who worked in the office for at least 154 hours in the period of March 1, 2020 through June 30, 2020. This has been shared with the County Manager's office. Ms. Baker asked that our County do something like this for the employees of the County. She will send the email to the Board.

### **Minnie Dukes**

Ms. Minnie Dukes' open position was a Social Services Commission appointee. That opening has been posted by the Social Services Commission. If the Board knows of someone that might be interested in filling the position on the Board, please let them know to apply or contact Ms. Baker and she will assist.

The mandatory CCPT appointment was mentioned. The next meeting will be at the end of August. There has been no discussion to resume in person meetings. They last year have been by Zoom.

### **CIP Plan**

Ms. Elizabeth presented the Energy Program outreach plan for LIEAP as well as CIP. CIP applicants have to be in a disconnect status and the crisis has to be related to some life-threatening event. This plan is how our Agency will get the word out to potential applicants. A List of Community agencies is used to share information with them. Ms. Debbie Harris does a news release for us for the outreach plan and we share the information with local agencies. This plan does require Board approval and we are asking for that approval today.

Mr. Ed Dawson made a motion to approve the Energy Outreach Plan. Ms. Jane Murphy seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously and Mrs. Watford signed the plan as the DSS Board chairperson.

### **Date of Next Meeting**

The next DSS Board Meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, August 24, 2021 at 4:00 pm at the Governmental Center, fourth floor, Commissioners Meeting Room, Lexington, North Carolina.

There was a motion by Mr. Ed Dawson to go into closed session. The motion was seconded by Ms. Jane Murphy. The motion was approved unanimously. The meeting moved into closed session at 5:00 pm.

### **Closed Session**

Closed session 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. The meeting returned to open session at 5:30 pm.

### **Continued Open Session**

Mr. Ed Dawson made a motion to amend the Agenda again to add item K.7, Review Letter to Mandy Cohen and to revisit Board Member comments. Ms. Jane Murphy seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

Mr. Dawson shared with the Board that he had received several phone calls from employees that Ms. Baker is a very hard worker, but there is great concern due to the number of workers who are leaving the Agency. Mr. Dawson referred those individuals to the Human Resources Department. Another concern is that exit interviews need to be more comprehensive and should be conducted by more than one person.

Ms. Murphy clarified that the DSS Board members' duty involve policies, not taking complaints about individuals or human resources issues.

Information was shared that the social workers help each other out if there is an after-hours issue. Ms. Baker also informed the Board that the two social workers that left want more normal work hours and a better work life balance. Ms. Baker is trying to retain as many employees as possible. Mrs. Eagle is scheduling interviews for candidates and that has expedited the interview process.

### **Adjournment**

Ms. Jane Murphy made a motion to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Mr. Ed Dawson. The motion was unanimously approved and the meeting was adjourned at 5:47 pm.

Minutes submitted by Patricia Baker