

March 24, 2020

The Alamance County Social Services Board met for its regular monthly meeting on this date. Those in attendance were: Commissioner Amy Galey, DSS Board Member; Heidi Norwick, Chair DSS Board Member (via phone); Dr. Ernest Eason, DSS Board Member; Reverend Ron Shive, DSS Board Vice-Chair; Edna Parker, DSS Board Member; Ms. Adrian Daye, Director; and Ms. Kelly Inman, Assistant Director of Operations were present.

Ms. Heidi Norwick, DSS Board Chair opened the meeting.

**Public Comment:**

None

**Consent Agenda: Heidi Norwick, DSS Board Chair**

January/February items on the consent agenda were approved. Commissioner Amy Galey made motion to approve and seconded by Dr. Ernest Eason.

**Staff Reports:** *Due to COVID-19 and social distancing guidelines all staff reports were distributed via handout.*

**Fiscal: Ms. Sherry Cooper**

The target rate for revenues is 58% for February. Revenues are \$212,961.00 less than last year. Revenues are 2% more than target rate. The target rate for expenditures is 67%. Expenditures are \$18,066.00 more than last year. Expenditures are 6% less than target rate.

**Fraud: See report -**

Unit	February 2020	February 2019	Current YTD	Prior Fiscal Year
Fraud	\$16,359.03	\$14,495.32	\$134,935.43	\$101,793.92

The Fraud Unit conducted five administrative disqualification hearings – all customers were found guilty of an intentional program violation. The unit conducted one state disqualification hearing and the county decision was affirmed.

**Services – Ms. Adrian Daye, Director -**

**Adult and Family Services Program Manager: Ms. Latawnya Hall**

**Child Support –**

Unit	February 2020	February 2019	Current YTD	Prior Fiscal Year
Child Support	\$812,461.38	\$839,663.42	\$7,028,558.81	\$7,051,545.62

### **Children Services Program Manager: Ms. Lynette Wellons/Angela Cole**

The following report submitted via handout:

- MAPP Classes are temporarily postponed due to COVID-19. There are 30 potential candidates who are enrolled with MAPP – great attendance.
- LINKS events and groups are temporarily on hold. Shout out to Heidi Norwick, United Way Director and DSS Board Chair who presented at the last LINKS group!! It was a hit!
- Actively working on performance management adoption (baseline) goal – However, it is likely we will not meet the 27 adoptions by the end of this Fiscal Year.
- There are no vacancies for Child Welfare ongoing services. (WOO HOO!)
- We had a foster care case pulled for a federal IV-E funding audit. Since there are no on site reviews right now, case information has been scanned and provided the file to the state to do their look through prior to the official audit. By all accounts on the internal review, this was a non-error case.
- Ms. Cole reported “Ring Out” event scheduled for Thursday, April 2<sup>nd</sup> @ 12:30 may will be presented in a virtual presentation to the community on Zoom or Facebook Live. The planning is still underway and could change based on new COVID-19 community restrictions.

### **Economic Support: Ms. Candice Gobble**

The following report submitted via handout:

- As you know the county made the decision to reduce the amount of staff in all county buildings. Additional measures have been taken to protect our customers as well as our staff members. Customers coming into the agency are “triaged” at the resource center and ground floor reception. Supervisors and Program Managers are working windows with the help of front reception staff to see all customers coming into the agency for Economic Services.
- Applications continue to be taken; however applicants are completing paper applications and turning those back in to those at the windows. There is limited foot traffic to the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor which lessens the contact with our case workers. One exception is Work First and Special Assistance which are required to complete face-to-face interviews. This has not be waived at this time.

- Due to COVID-19, we are seeing an increase in applications (mostly FNS) and reported changes due to reduced hours or loss of employment. We are working to share information with the community, which promotes applications and changes to be completed online. A new feature that was recently implemented was the ability for customers to complete a change form on our website.
- The state will be extending March FNS recertification's on March 21<sup>st</sup> and April FNS recertification's on March 28<sup>th</sup>. There are also additional waivers that have been submitted to the USDA; however have not yet been approved. We hope to see the same extensions in Medicaid along with some changes to the verification process however this is not known to be a definite at this time.

**Family Justice Center – Kelly Inman -**

No report.

**Operations – Ms. Kelly Inman, Assistant Director of Operations –**

**Budget Report – 2021 DSS Budget Overview –**

**OPERATIONAL TRENDS**

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- Workers Comp Increase (5K increase)
- Budgeting \$25K for Cameras at HSC for major hallways and elevators
- Decrease Northwoods Contract by \$25K – *contract is up for negotiations in May – we will remove the I-pad functionality due to all of Social Workers now have laptops*
- Vendor increases within Contracted Services – 3% Janitorial, 2% increase for Day Sheets and Reception Software, 20% increase in 211 usage and contract, but overall Contracted Services down by \$22K as a result of Northwoods decrease.
- Director needs access to 10% of current trend for lapsed salaries in order to quickly address staffing shortages (overtime, contract) as well as support from Board and County Budget to address heavy turnover due to Market Salary discrepancies and internal compression. -
- Ongoing need for 2 cars in the fleet to be updated. (\$44K)

**PASS THROUGH FUND TRENDS**

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- Medicaid Transportation – paid out of NCTRACKS except for small amount each year (\$10K a year, but this should decrease with Medicaid Transformation if it comes back online)
- Child Care and Smart Start paid out of NCFAS – Will budget for \$15K contingency –  
*Question: When will do you cut? We are projecting for next year due to NC FAST does not allow for functionality.*
- CIP and LIEAP will each gain \$4K of funding next year, but administration money (remains the same)

Question: Do you think where we sit today with COVID-19 that it's reasonable more money will be allocated to counties?

According to Conference Call held with DHHS on Monday night– there could be potential increases to counties – no approval as of yet.

- Foster Care could be paid through NCFAST (if P4 planning is reinstated by state) during 20-21. There would still be a need for contingency monies to pay foster parents as a temporary backup NCFAST fails.)

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## CHILD WELFARE

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- Volumes maintaining somewhat constant in Foster Care. (86 in Jan. 2019 compared to 81 in Jan. 2020) - The number changes daily – we recently just added 13 additional children (one sibling group of 7 children)
- Kinship placements are all county dollars, but are overall cost-effective, if they are the right case decision for the child.
- IV-E qualifying children are reimbursed at a higher rate (84%), but comprise less and less of foster care cases (65% in 2018 to 60% in 2019 to <40% currently) Foster Care is trending to increase by \$129K from \$654K to \$783K.
- LINKS funding down (\$3K) as 18-21 population in care maintains at 11.
- NC FAST on hold.

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## ADULT SERVICES

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- Guardianship Cases remain steady. (125 in January 2020 compared to 129 in January 2019)
- APS funds increased by \$7K.
- Adult Day Care and Adult Home Specialist allocation stayed the same – these are contracts such as Friendship Center

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## FACILITY NEEDS

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- Public and Staff Bathroom Upgrades – we know the plan is to stay in this building – we will meet with County Maintenance and some upgrades will be placed in their budget as well for HSC upgrades.
- Parking and increased parking signage at HSC – With the addition of the Petree Building, we know this will cause some parking issues for HSC for both services (DSS and Health Department)
- At capacity on office space (will need space for potential Medicaid Expansion) and no space for trauma informed initiatives around staff wellness.
- Replace broken and damaged lobby furniture as needed – We are now going into the 6<sup>th</sup> year of new furniture purchased for trauma focused for staff offices, as well as lobby furniture.

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## STATE REQUIREMENTS/ CHANGING POLICY AND LEGISLATION

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- NCFAST Certification required (August 2020) for all workers working in NCFAST. No reimbursement for first month for new hires in Energy and Economic Services until certification exam is passed. The requirement for existing staff is 18 months.

Question: Why is there only a month for new hires? What type of training will be provided for new hires?

Director Daye expressed Alamance was not selected to be a pilot site, but requested to be a part of the pilot to be on the front end of this project. We were approved to do so and Candice and Jamie are working

with the team to develop criteria. There is a potential that without reimbursement this could become a budget issue. Director Daye expressed she has been informed the test is a basic test – we will most likely alter training for new staff to this new requirement. Due to COVID-19, the pilot counties are now on hold – the project was to start April. Alamance go live date was scheduled for August – it may be pushed back due to April start date on halt currently.

- Family First Prevention Act (Oct. 2021) puts focus on prevention services and only pays for facility placement for 14 days (Foster Care) – Director Daye added this could potentially impact County funds.
- Child Support training to improve/meet MOU performance – We are looking to hire experienced child support staff who can help staff improve performance.
- Impact of Medicaid Transformation (TBD) on Staff Training needs, foot traffic in the agency, time spent per client.
- Impact of Modified Policy/NCFAS implementation/clerical needs on child welfare. (TBD)
- Timing of P12 for NCFAS (document management and federation of our existing document management system) - not all services use NC FAST and documents & information needed for all services. We use a document management system – COMPASS.

House Bill 630 and Regionalization Plan – Director Daye added the State has plans to move to Regional Offices. They are trying to figure out staffing patterns. The State may decide we need 10 more staff in Child Welfare to handle caseloads, etc.

**Question: How will you handle if you need additional staff?**

Fortunately the last time we had money in the budget to handle the mandated staffing requirement. This may not happen in future budgets. We would have to propose and get the Boards approval to request funding from County Commissioners.

## KEEPING OUR CUSTOMER CENTERED FOCUS

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- Increases in leadership and staff training opportunities (\$15K)
- Continue to allow for gradual upgrade of aging technology (20 scanners to be replaced for \$17K yearly)
- Maintaining Trauma Informed Agency focus



Ms. Inman discussed DSS Salary Drilldown with Board Members. Ms. Inman will provide numbers to DSS Chair for letter of support from DSS Board regarding budget.

**Administrative Support/Personnel: No report –**

See Statistical Report – as of February 29, 2020

<b>Vacancies</b>	28
<b>New Hires</b>	6
<b>Interagency Transfer</b>	2
<b>Resignations</b>	6

As of March 23, 2020 - There are 23 current vacancies within Social Services.

- Administration (1)
- FJC – (2)
- Economic Services – (12)
- Reception – (1)
- Child Support – (2)
- Child Welfare – (2)
- Adult Services– (2)
- Child Care Unit – (1)

**IT Report: Mr. Jason Cole**

No report.

**Director’s Report – Ms. Adrian Daye, Director –**

**COVID-19** – Director Daye expressed to Board Members we are working to navigate through COVID-19. As public servants we continue to serve those who rely on us for critical access to programs and benefits. NC Department of Health & Human Services (DHHS) has submitted guidelines for all Departments of Social Services to operate through this crisis. We have attempted to decrease foot traffic for face to face interactions – we encourage potential customers to utilize online and telephone methods for applications, questions and service provision where allowed.

The following programs are mandated services that must continue:

- ✓ Medicaid applications & determinations
- ✓ Food & Nutrition services applications & determinations
- ✓ WF applications and recertification’s
- ✓ Adult Services including Special Assistance, APS, Guardianship
- ✓ Child Support
- ✓ Energy Programs
- ✓ Non-Emergency Medicaid Transportation
- ✓ Child Welfare including CPS, Foster Care, In-Home, Adoptions
- ✓ Subsidized Child Care
- ✓ Refugee Assistance

**Telework** – We have assigned staff who can telework on rotating schedules for A/B days as much as possible. Currently we do not operate a call center for questions – we are currently looking at our Child Care Unit to help with phone calls, questions, etc. due to they are trained in NCFASST.

**State of NC Executive Order No. 120** – Director Daye reported to board members she emailed all DSS staff Governor Cooper’s Executive Order 120 that highlights the following:

**Section 2. Mandatory Local Government Operations:**

Consistent with the authority under N.C. Gen. Stat. §§ 166A-19.30 (c)(1) and (c)(2), and to the extent that local government functions are required under stand and federal law, I hereby direct the appropriate local government agencies and officials to continue to exercise their responsibilities, including but not limited to local county Department of Social Services, Health Department, Registers of Deeds, and other local government functions that are required to protect lives and property.

**Question: Do you have a Kiosk with computers for customers to use to submit online applications?**

*Answer: No – But staff are able to take applications at windows to obtain signatures and acquire as much information as possible while continue to practice social distancing.*

**New Business:**

See Budget Presentation in Fiscal section – Kelly Inman.

**Announcements:**

None

**Adjournment -**

The next board meeting is 12:00 noon **Tuesday, April 28, 2020** in the Boardroom located on the first floor at the Human Services Building.

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted:  
*Carmen L. Morrow*

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Date approved: \_\_\_\_\_