

July 28, 2020

The Alamance County Social Services Board met for its regular monthly meeting on this date. The meeting was held virtual (zoom) with the following in attendance were: Commissioner Amy Galey, DSS Board Member; Heidi Norwick, DSS Board Chair; Dr. Ernest Eason, DSS Board Member; Reverend Ron Shive, DSS Board Vice-Chair; Edna Parker, DSS Board Member; Ms. Adrian Daye, Director; Ms. Latawnya Hall, Adult Services Program Manager; Ms. Angela Cole, Child Welfare Program Manager; Ms. Lynette Wellons, Assistant Director of Services; Ms. Candice Gobble, Assistant Director of Operations; Ms. Jamie Hatfield, Economic Services Program Manager; Ms. Sherry Cooper, Business Officer; Mr. Robert Ring, HR Director; Ms. Skye Sullivan, FJC Director; Ms. Jamie Hamlett, DSS Attorney; Mr. Jason Cole, IT Director and Andrea Rollins, County Managers Office were present.

Heidi Norwick, DSS Chair opened the meeting.

Public Comment:

None –

Consent Agenda: Heidi Norwick, DSS Board Chair

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

Staff Reports:

Fiscal: Ms. Sherry Cooper

The June Revenue report number reported that was distributed earlier has been updated from \$9,386,158.00 to \$10,191,696.00. The target rate for revenues is 92%. Revenues are trending 1% less than the target rate. The target rate for expenditures is 100%. Expenditures are \$47,383.00 less than previous year. Expenditures are 11% lower than the target rate.

Ms. Cooper reported we are still undergoing audit. Medicaid has participated in the testing with auditors, so far all is going well according to our State representative. The audit will continue until the end of August. The auditors will close out May and June.

Question: Do you think COVID-19 has had an impact on collections of revenue?

Yes, especially with Health Choice payments being waived during the pandemic.

Fraud: See report -

Unit	June 2020	June 2019	Current YTD	Prior Fiscal Year
Fraud	\$23,200.70	\$34,077.77	\$273,078.72	\$349,520.76

Ms. Gobble reported both Program Integrity staff telework and continue to maintain 100% timeliness with no interruption to work flow. USDA has extended suspension of program integrity claims, recoupments and delinquent payment forgiveness until 8/31/2020. The unit is conducting fair hearings via telephone.

Services – Ms. Lynette Wellons/Assistant Director of Services -

Adult and Family Services Program Manager: Ms. Latawnya Hall

Child Support –

Unit	June 2020	June 2019	Current YTD	Prior Fiscal Year
Child Support	\$1,162,363.88	\$886,092.81	\$11,191,782.94	\$11,031,533.46

Ms. Hall reported Child Support court continues to flow smoothly. With the upcoming court date there are approximately 125 on docket. Ms. Hall reported Child Support staff are using different court rooms to practice social distancing and have PPE on hand for customers. Staff continue to contact customers to see if issues with case could be worked out via phone instead of appearing in court. The staff at court have been very helpful including Alamance Co. Sherriff’s Department and our legal staff.

Ms. Hall reported Child Support applicant pool has been approved to help with vacancies. Since the inception of the pool, we have interviewed ten applicants, hired one and selected three to keep in the pool. With the pool we hope this will help to alleviate time span for new hires for Child Support unit. All interviews were conducted via zoom.

Ms. Hall reported we continue to work within mandated guidelines to provide services for Adult Services – please see the following reports:

Month/Reports	Accepted
June – 70 reports	39
May – 53 reports	20

Ms. Hall reported we pulled back-up staff to help with the uptick in reports and made adjustments within the units to help.

Guardianship – The unit continues to flow as normal. Virtual court has started for guardianship proceedings in WebEx. The process is going well, but we have assisted customers and made some accommodations to assist customers with technology, SW going to home to assist or using staff offices to assist.

Ms. Hall reported the Adult Home Specialist have received a lot of facility complaints last month. They will continue to follow protocol and investigate within the mandated timeframes.

Children Services Program Manager: Ms. Angela Cole

Ms. Cole reported Child Welfare staff continue to telework. The assessors' are working very hard to manage caseloads. There are some staff who have more than the max caseload of 10 – but all of them are below 20 cases. The cases continue to be very complex. There has been an increase in reports of 21 and 10 of them were accepted.

Question: Do you attribute the cases to be complex because of COVID?

Yes –COVID has added additional stressors on families –families have experienced job loss and other stressors that would put a strain on any family dynamic.

Ms. Cole reported we continue to build our Child Welfare pool with qualified applicants. We have one more position to fill.

Ms. Lynette Wellons reported the following:

- Great News! Alamance County was selected for Federally Funded Initiative of SHIFT NC called Alamance Youth Connected. This is a 3 year grant and Alamance County was the only county selected in the State to participate. This initiative engages all community levels to embrace a systems thinking approach to lower teen pregnancy, birth and STI rates in Alamance County. The grant will mainly focus on minority populations.
- We have started a creative way of how we recruit potential foster parents – we created a ***“Be the Hope for a Child – Foster to Adopt”*** cloth face covering to use as a marketing tool. All DSS staff as well as foster parents received the mask along with a business card with contact information for those who inquire.
- Retention and Foster Parent Support Groups have started and facilitated by Mary Shaw, Trauma Specialist.
- We continue to secure permanency for children with In-Home Services and Foster Care Adoptions.
- We continue to meet the Foster Care performance baseline measure of 95% of all foster children will have a contact in their placement each month – we have met this baseline goal with 100%, with the exception of one month and that goal was 95%.
- Foster Care federal audit is coming up soon – we have one case selected. We have pulled the case and are prepared. The audit will be conducted virtual.
- **CARES ACT Funding** – Adult Protective Services (APS)/Child Protective Services (CPS) will receive funding from the CARES Act funds. This funding will have specific guidelines on how the funding can be used. Director Daye added Alamance DSS received \$133k from the CARES Act. The challenge is how to meet the specific guidelines that are set up to use this allocation. Director Daye reported counties across the State are having difficulty figuring out how to spend the allocation. The allocation has to be used by December 2020.

Action: Meeting scheduled next week with Supervisors and Program Managers of both departments to brain storm on how to spend.

Economic Support: Ms. Jamie Hatfield

Ms. Hatfield reported the following:

- **FNS (Food and Nutrition Services)** – DHHS requested approval from USDA to extend these waivers until July 31, 2020. If not approved, all the waivers would end June 30, 2020. The State received word the waivers were approved and extended to August 31, 2020. The following were extended:
 - Administrative Disqualification Hearing by Telephone
 - Application and Recertification Interview Waiver
 - FNS Certification Period Extensions for July Recertification’s
- **Medicaid** – due to Federal Requirement, while under a National Emergency, we are required to continue coverage (unless they meet a certain criteria – death, out of state, or request termination). We were informed that the Public Health Emergency has been extended another 90 days – we will continue to work under these flexibilities until late October 2020. (NC Health Choice fees will be extended and not required to continue health coverage, as mentioned in the Revenue report by Sherry Cooper).
- **P-EBT (Pandemic EBT)** – All counties had to work P-EBT issuance reports “Card Status Report Undelivered County” report. Through Phase I and Phase II we had about 195 undelivered cards. As of today, there are 50 remaining – we continue to reach out by phone to verify if the address is correct.
- **COVID Workgroup** – we will meet this week to finalize protocol for Employee Self Screening. Our next task will be Visitor Screening for those with and without an appointment.
- We have filled 7 positions since June. We are trying to figure out how to train new staff with the challenges of CDC guidelines.

Question: How do you conduct training during COVID?

We are conducting some virtual trainings as well as one-on-one trainings and continue to follow CDC guidelines. Our trainers are coming up with creative ways daily.

Family Justice Center – Skye Sullivan

Ms. Sullivan reported the following updates:

- The GCC Grant is caught up – we are in the process of spending down the remaining amount of surplus (total of \$230k) – with some of the following upgrades: furniture upgrades, painting of offices, installing a new Forensic Interview Room with new recording upgrades.
- FJC is actively recruiting for two vacant positions – Victim Liaison and Elder Abuse Coordinator.
- Ms. Sullivan reported we are in the process of conducting Strategic Plan for FJC through JAC (Justice Advisory Committee) on how we will plan for the future.
- Ms. Sullivan reported FJC will host RADAR (In Person Training) – This training will be great to offer to staff and partners. The training for 21 participants will cost \$12k, but will be covered with grant funds.

Operations – Ms. Candice Gobble, Assistant Director of Operations

Ms. Gobble reported on the following services:

Ms. Gobble reported CIP/LIEAP (Crisis Intervention/Low Income Energy Assistance Program) has started. We received the allocation of \$79k at the end of June and begin offering the program on July 7th. As of last Friday, we have received 406 applications. We are slower than normal due to COVID – usually we have long lines of customers waiting, but now customers have the option to complete paper application, phone application or online. Customers who are experiencing a crisis, we have 48 hours to complete application and process. This process has been a huge adjustment for staff, as well as customers. Ms. Gobble reported we received the remaining allocation by July 22nd but will need to manage to get us through the Fall/Winter season.

Energy Programs Outreach Plan – The outreach plan was emailed to Board Members before the meeting. The outreach plan has to be submitted by each county detailing how your community will collaborate with partners and plan how to effectively reach county residents to inform them of the services provided by the energy programs.

In Alamance Co. DSS plan – we will host conference calls as well as Zoom calls with community partners to focus on community outreach. We have a dedicated phone message assigned to assist customers with information related to CIP/LIEAP. We also moved an IMC III position to be a lead worker in the Energy Department to assist new staff with training needs and to assist the Supervisor of the unit.

Action: Reverend Ron Shive made motion to approve community outreach plan. The motion seconded by Edna Parker.

Child Care – Ms. Gobble reported the Child Care unit continues to work diligently with Child Care providers in Alamance County. The Child Care Supervisor participates in several community partner meetings such as Health Department and Alamance Partnership for Children on how to support Child Care facilities. Ms. Gobble reported Child Care unit recently encountered issues with NC FAST as it relates to payment to Child Care providers. The issue has been resolved. Ms. Gobble reported we currently have 25 families on the current wait list.

Administrative Support/Personnel: Robert Ring

See Statistical Report – as of June 30, 2020

Vacancies	25
New Hires	5
Interagency Transfers	3
Resignations	5

As of July 28, 2020 - There are 18 current vacancies within Social Services. We currently have (3) positions on hold due to upcoming budget. Units continue to interview via Zoom and we continue to conduct offers via telephone.

Question: Do you find you have more applicants applying for jobs now due to COVID?

Yes – we are also receiving more qualified applicants due to COVID.

IT Report: Mr. Jason Cole

Mr. Cole reported IT Unit has been working with Greg Slagell, County IT on new client software. Mr. Cole reported we have ordered 20 additional laptops for DSS, as well as requested 30 additional laptops from the County to help with teleworking needs.

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

Director Daye gave a “shout out” to County Manager and County IT for being proactive with requests for additional staff to have the ability to telework. With the pending school year becoming virtual, we will be able to allow more staff to work from home to help ease the stress as children transition for a new school year and be able to provide support as we all try to stay safe with COVID-19.

Director Daye added the additional laptops will be purchased with CARES Act funds. County Manager and County IT are working diligently to price the equipment and secure quotes. Once the quotes have been approved, there are several other steps for approval before CARES Act funds can be used.

Telework – We are looking to send more staff home to telework. We are currently working on a new telework agreement for staff which includes telework etiquette, etc.

Ms. Edna Parker commented and suggested send out a survey to staff – there are some staff who may not have enough bandwidth to work from home and may not have the ability to work from home.

COVID-19 – Director Daye reported we received PPE Push Packs specific to APS/CPS staff to use in the field. We received cases of hand sanitizer, gloves, disposable masks and gowns (these were delivered by mistake but we were able to keep). We provide some gowns to Health Department and will set aside some for Board of Elections. We will also keep in our Shelter supplies as we move through this Hurricane period.

Contracts – Director Daye reported we have been looking at 2020 – 2021 contracts and have helped providers “Think outside the Box” on how to use the funding associated with contract amounts. Director Daye gave examples on how DSS staff helped two providers with how to work with children during COVID and using virtual platforms.

New Business:

None

Announcements:

Ms. Edna Parker announced Lab Corp continues to provide testing for COVID. As of today, one shipment from Fed Ex contained 10K test kits. Ms. Parker reported last week, LabCorp received 180k test kits.

Adjournment -

Dr. Ernest Eason made motion to adjourn meeting. The motion seconded by Edna Parker.

The next board meeting is 12:00 noon **Tuesday, August 25, 2020** via Zoom.

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted:
Carmen L. Morrow

Date approved: _____