

May 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, Chair DSS Board Member; 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, Child Welfare Program Manager; Ms. Candice Gobble, Economic Services Program Manager; Ms. Jamie Hatfield, Economic Services Program Manager; Ms. Jamie Hamlett, Attorney; Ms. Sherry Cooper, Business Officer; Mr. Robert Ring, HR Director; and Mr. Jason Cole, IT Director were present.

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

Public Comment:

None –

Consent Agenda: Heidi Norwick, DSS Board Chair

April items on the consent agenda were approved. Ms. Edna Parker made motion to approve and seconded by Dr. Ernest Eason.

Staff Reports:

Fiscal: Ms. Sherry Cooper

The target rate for revenues is 75% for April. Revenues are 1% less than last year even with the circumstances with COVID-19. Revenues are \$463,576.00 less than last year. The target rate for expenditures is 83%. Expenditures are \$3,965.00 more than last year. Expenditures are trending 8% lower than the target rate. We are coming in at least 75% significantly lower due to COVID-19.

Ms. Cooper discussed the following:

ACCOUNT DESCRIPTION	Budget	Expenditures	Spending %	Balance	% Left
419000 PROFESSIONAL SERVICES	\$59,631	\$29,424	49%	\$30,207	51%

Last year we were at 44% and jumped to 55% in May of last year. All are related to COVID-19.

ACCOUNT DESCRIPTION	Budget	Expenditures	Spending %	Balance	% Left
431100 CONF/SCH/SEM/TRAINING	\$51,367	\$31,996	62%	\$19,371	38%

Last year we were at 68% and jumped to 92% in May. Due to COVID-19, we are not traveling & able to attend any trainings.

ACCOUNT DESCRIPTION	Budget	Expenditures	Spending %	Balance	% Left
497410 GENERAL RELIEF & HOSPIT	\$30,000	\$6,531	22%	\$23,469	78%

Last year we were at 43% - The amount of overages is due to COVID-19.

Question: Are there any opportunities where you are able to move funds around?

Ms. Cooper responded that we are looking into some options of moving funds around of these line items where possible.

Director Daye added she is working with Ms. Cooper on revenues as well to see where we can increase day sheet coding to draw down as much funds as possible before the fiscal year ends June 30, 2020.

Fraud: See report -

Unit	April 2020	April 2019	Current YTD	Prior Fiscal Year
Fraud	\$81,181.83	\$147,112.72	\$229,246.01	\$269,681.43

Due to COVID-19, collections have been put on hold. There were no FNS recoupments completed for the month of April. For all federal tax offsets collected after April 7, 2020 will be returned to clients. For April and May, there are no direct payments required.

Director Daye reported we are working on new Performance Management goals for the agency. We are trying to figure out which goals will be used in conjunction with the current DHHS MOU. The new DHHS MOU will not be effective until January 2021 – June 2022. Once we have developed new goals for the upcoming year, we will present to DSS Board.

Services – Ms. Adrian Daye, Director -

Adult and Family Services Program Manager: Ms. Latawnya Hall

Child Support –

Unit	April 2020	April 2019	Current YTD	Prior Fiscal Year
Child Support	\$884,812.07	\$962,129.21	\$9,026,856.17	\$11,031,533.19

Ms. Hall reported Child Support court will start June 5th with a large docket. We have met with legal team and came up with a plan on how court will be held with social distancing guidelines, etc. Jamie Hamlett, DSS Attorney has secured additional spaces to allow for social distancing. Ms. Hall reported Child Support staff will wear PPE in court. We are also look at staggering times for court to adhere to guidelines. Ms. Hall reported once we complete court on June 5th, we will come back together to meet and adjust as needed.

Ms. Hall reported Adult Services unit continue to work within mandated guidelines to provide services. We have created a log form that we are using and completing for each visit made to facility. We are using the proper protocol of PPE while making visits as well as contacting C-Com for any facilities that may have been flagged due to COVID.

With our payee cases, we anticipated some issues due to stimulus checks received by customers who receive SSI. We contacted the State and received some guidance and we were told we are not responsible for stimulus payments. Ms. Hall reported there are no issues so far. We are encouraging the customer to use the money wisely. There is only one case we anticipate some small issues but so far so good.

Guardianship – The unit continues to flowing as normal. We will begin virtual court soon. We have scheduled future cases for July in WebEx. We continue to make contact calls and continue to use collaterals.

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

Ms. Cole reported we continue to experience some challenges with school not in session and not having that extra support with school social workers and other school partners. Ms. Cole discussed the following report:

The reports have been reduced due to school not in session.

M E A S U R E	APRIL 2020	APRIL 2019	CURRENT YTD	PRIOR FY
CHILD WELFARE				
# OF CHILD PROTECTIVE SERVICES REPORTS	140	244	2,032	1,730
# OF CPS CASES INVESTIGATED	18	13	145	123

Ms. Cole reported the numbers reported for CPS Cases investigated is incorrect. She will need to check data further. There is a decrease in cases over the past year. Ms. Cole also reported we have seen a rise in cases where they have been more egregious. For the month of May, we have taken 9 children into custody – one sibling group of 5. The cases have been from mental health, substance abuse, strangulation, domestic violence, and car accidents.

Action: Ms. Cole will look at CPS Cases data and will send updated report when completed.

Ms. Wellons reported the following:

- We have been given approval for Deciding Together: A **Training Program to Prepare Families for Fostering and Adoption Deciding Together** which is a series of guides that will help families decide if they want to become a foster or adoptive parents. We have started this platform virtual about two weeks ago. We can only host group families of three – we are conducting two groups – so far the group is going well.
- MAPP Classes continue to be postponed due to COVID-19. We continue to reach out to potential candidates to keep families engaged. We are hopeful that we will be able to incorporate these families into Deciding Together.
- We continue to license foster care placements – we continue to follow the guidelines per DHHS that were established due to COVID.
- We hosted a virtual recruitment event for potential foster care families.

- We have increased parent and child visitations – we are conducting visits face-to-face.
- We will close out Shift NC Grant this year. We have been instructed to spend down funds to support and sustain the grant moving forward. We will continue to provide education to young adults and provide guidance under SHIFT NC curriculum through virtual platform in the June or July with small groups.

Economic Support: Ms. Candice Gobble/Ms. Jamie Hatfield

Ms. Hatfield reported the following:

- Paper application stations continue to be placed in the front lobby for Food & Nutrition Services (FNS) benefits and Medicaid applications. For the month of April, we received 1,300 applications. For May, we have seen the numbers decrease about ½ of 1,300. Economic Services staff continue to focus on processing applications and timelines standards.
- Customers continue to have access to apply for benefits via epass.com and via phone for economic services.
- Changes continue to be submitted via the new online change portal.
- Documentation continues to be submitted via the online documentation portal
- We continue to receive information and questions via ASKDSS email system
- We hosted a virtual spirit week for Economic Services to boost morale – the event went well.
- We continue to have a lot of vacancies – we are conducting phone interviews this week
- With so many policy changes with COVID-19 – we will start refresher trainings on FNS and Medicaid policies for staff to follow normal policy guidelines and not COVID.

Ms. Gobble reported we receive updates from the Division daily regarding Economic Services which has been challenging.

The following updates were reported:

- The DSS website has been updated to include all COVID-19 criteria changes as it impacts all economic services benefits. The State has extended Food and Nutrition cases due for re-determination during the months of March, April, May, and June have or will be extended. Cases will be extended for 6 to 12 months depending on your current certification period. Medicaid cases due for redetermination during the months of March, April and May have or will be extended. Case will be extended for 6 to 12 months.
- We are not sure what types of resources will be needed to handle the influx of recertification's due to extensions as we move forward.
- P-EBT notices have been mailed out to families from the State. There were letters who were mailed incorrectly to emergency contacts instead of parents. The State has rectified the situation and new notices have been mailed. The P-EBT cards will begin to mail out on May 21st. We have encountered a total of 310 notices that were returned due to incorrect mailing address – 235 have been contacted and we have about 75 pending.

Question: What is P-EBT?

P-EBT is Pandemic Food & Nutrition Benefits – waiver approved by USDA to provide pandemic FNS benefits to households with school aged children who would be eligible for free and reduced lunch if schools were open.

Families will not need to apply for the P-EBT program. Eligible families already receiving Food Stamp benefits will receive an additional benefit on their existing EBT card. For families not already enrolled in Food Stamps, a new EBT card will be mailed to residence listed at school. This service was completed at the state level; these benefits will not be issued by your local DSS.

Director Daye added Alamance-Burlington School system has several Title I schools in the school district. This means all the families will receive P-EBT benefits for their children who attend the Title I schools. We have received a magnitude of phone calls inquiring why they are receiving the notices due to not applying for the benefit.

Family Justice Center – Director Daye-

Director Daye reported after 11 months searching for FJC Director, we have finally hired Skye Sullivan who comes to us from Family Abuse Services. She will begin effective June 1st.

Director Daye reported Family Abuse Services will end telework next week and will return to the office. With staff returning to FJC, we will host a training with the partners of FJC and DSS staff on new protocols in the building as it relates to COVID-19. All staff at FJC will wear PPE when walking hallways, etc. and we will have PPE on hand for visitors who access FJC, inventory permits. We have a scheduled Zoom call next week to discuss protocols.

Director Daye reported we have secured extra space within FJC to allow for social distancing- this move will include moving of computers with IT staff, carpet cleaning, etc. to prepare areas.

Question: Chairman Norwick inquired about the # of clients served at FJC – Is that accurate?

M E A S U R E	APRIL 2020	APRIL 2019	CURRENT YTD	PRIOR FY
FAMILY JUSTICE CENTER				
# OF FAMILY JUSTICE CENTER CLIENTS SERVED	41	106	348	1,346

**The number of clients listed above is the number of unduplicated clients that were seen at the FJC, not counting how many times each client visited. The number of visits demonstrates the number of instances when a client came in. Clients often visit the Family Justice Center multiple times over varying periods of time. Many clients return for additional assistance following their initial intake, including legal services, economic services, and other supportive services. Every time a client comes to the FJC they are greeted warmly by FJC staff. FJC staff then directs the client to the person or organization they are there to see.*

***Please note that we saw a substantial decrease of in-person clients this past month. We attribute this decrease to the COVID-19 crisis and the resulting Stay at Home Order. We have continued to reach out to clients via phone. We have used social media to let the community know that we are still seeing clients.*

Operations –

Administrative Support/Personnel: Robert Ring

See Statistical Report – as of April 30, 2020

Vacancies	19
New Hires	5
Interagency Transfer	0
Resignations	1

As of May 26, 2020 - There are 23 current vacancies within Social Services.

- Economic Services (18) of the current vacancies. Supervisors are conducting phone interviews. We have not conducted any face-to-face interviews due to COVID. All job offers have been conducted via phone as well. We have the first face-to-face meeting on the 1st day of employment.

CHILD DAY CARE				
# OF CHILDREN ON DAY CARE WAITING LIST	21	1,087	--	--

Question: Why is the number so low on the child care waiting list?

Director Daye expressed prior to COVID- we had removed a substantial amount of children from the wait list in February when the State permitted counties with spending coefficients to start serving children who were wait listed. The 21 children that are listed now are eligible for child care, but parents are not currently working or out of work due to COVID-19.

IT Report: Mr. Jason Cole

Mr. Cole reported we have noticed a decrease in calls for teleworking staff. We are in the process of looking for ways we can assist Energy Staff with the upcoming energy season to practice the CDC guidelines. Director Daye added we are challenged with figuring out ways we can run the Energy program during this season – the offices are small. We are trying to come up with innovative ways.

Mr. Cole reported we are in the process of replacing 35 PC’s and laptops for DSS staff.

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

COVID-19 – Director Daye expressed to Board Members we continue to work to navigate services through COVID-19. All of DSS Leadership Team are working on site since May, 18, 2020. We have several staff who have been quarantined and monitored due to exposure. We continue to provide PPE and cloth face coverings for staff. Face coverings are not required for all staff to wear in building, it is left up to staff preference. We continue to work with supervisors who have staff who work in large team rooms – staggered schedules are encouraged. All meetings, staffing’s, conference are conducted via zoom if social distancing is not an option.

Director Daye reported she is currently working with County HR on Hazard Pay for DSS staff – the criteria allows for Adult Protective Services (APS) and Child Protective Services (CPS) staff who are listed in the CARES Act. All information has been submitted to County HR.

Question: Are there other employees who will receive hazard pay?

Unfortunately the criteria does not call for all employees – only those who are at high risk of exposure which are APS and CPS who are providing the face-to-face services.

Telework – We have assigned staff who continue to telework.

Petree Building – The ground breaking has been announced for June 2020. Director Daye will work with County Maintenance regarding how it would affect parking at HSC.

Question: Any word on the budget yet?

No word on the budget yet.

New Business:

None

Announcements:

None

Adjournment -

The next board meeting is 12:00 noon **Tuesday, June 23, 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

Date approved: _____