

November 24, 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; Ms. Heidi Norwick, DSS Board Chair; Dr. Ernest Eason, DSS Board Member; Ms. Edna Parker, DSS Board Member; Reverend Ronald Shive, DSS Vice-Chair; Ms. Adrian Daye, Director; Ms. Angela Cole, Child Welfare Program Manager; Ms. Lynette Wellons, Assistant Director of Services; Ms. Ayoka Baldwin, Child Welfare Program Manager; Ms. Candice Gobble, Assistant Director of Operations; Ms. Jamie Hatfield, Economic Services Program Manager; 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. Chair Norwick congratulated Commissioner Amy S. Galey on her Senate win for District 24. We will continue to call on Commissioner Galey as she represents Alamance County.

Commissioner Amy Galey expressed gratitude for serving on the Social Services board. She expressed she learned so much that will help her in her future endeavors. Commissioner Galey expressed thanks to Director Daye for her leadership.

Public Comment:

None –

Consent Agenda: Heidi Norwick, DSS Board Chair

October items on the consent agenda approved. Dr. Ernest Eason made motion to approve and seconded by Dr. Ernest Eason.

Staff Reports:

Fiscal: Ms. Candice Gobble

Ms. Gobble reported we continue to monitor line by line. We will start budget conversations next week with County to plan for next year’s budget. Director Daye shared we are grateful that Andrea Rollins attends our board meetings while we discuss revenues/expenditures to gain knowledge about DSS line items.

	OCTOBER 2020	% OF BUDGET	PRIOR YTD	% OF BUDGET
REVENUES	\$3,272,241.00	29%	\$2,521,065.00	22%
EXPENDITURES	\$5,919,130.00	31%	\$5,474,696.00	28%

Ms. Gobble reported we are still searching for Business Officer – interviews will start next week.

Fraud: See report –

Unit	October 2020	October 2019	Current YTD	Prior Fiscal Year
Fraud	\$8,250.42	\$12,596.71	\$24,049.81	\$71,094.96

Collections remain suspended for all programs due to COVID-19.

Ms. Gobble reported Program Integrity staff completed single county audit – no fraud findings. Completed massive file upload of old fraud cases to NCFAS.

Ms. Gobble reported Program Integrity staff continues to receive fraud referrals – all collections continue suspended until December 2020.

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

Adult and Family Services Program Manager: Ms. Lynette Wellons

Child Support – (Statistical Report Information)

Unit	October 2020	October 2019	Current YTD	Prior Fiscal Year
Child Support	\$846,296.54	\$914,947.79	\$3,819,489.29	\$3,624,969.66

Ms. Wellons reported Child Support staff continue to work diligently in the midst of many vacancies. The caseloads are extremely high – we are trying to filter work and trying to figure the best way to work the cases with ½ staff. Child Support continue to go to court.

Adult Services –

Ms. Wellons reported Adult Services Unit has a vacancy in each unit – we have staff out on medical leave and/or quarantine. We continue to meet priorities and meet the needs of the individuals we serve. We attempted to secure temporary staff with Vanguard services, but no fit that could support the Adult Services unit.

Ms. Wellons reported we were able to utilize Cares Act Funding to secure Walmart gift cards in \$50.00 increments for social workers to use for shopping for the elderly residents to reduce risk.

Children Services Program Manager: Ms. Angela Cole/Ms. Ayoka Baldwin

Ms. Cole reported the following:

- We are at 38% less staff than normal – we have had multiple staff quarantined and on leave – over the last week we had multiple exposures of COVID for one case due to element of teamwork while working a case. We are working on protocols to keep staff safe as we continue to provide care for children
- Reports are picking back up especially for bringing children into care – September (19) in care – we are already at 56 children – Last FY total 59.
- Secured Vanguard contract for temporary social worker to assist with Intake

Ms. Baldwin reported the following:

- November is National Adoption Month - National Adoption Month is about spreading awareness. It is a month to encourage others to learn about adoption, to hold adoption related events, and to acknowledge the people in this country whose lives have been impacted by adoption. The mission of National Adoption Month is to celebrate the families who have grown through adoption, and to recognize the many children who are still waiting for forever families. Alamance Co. DSS has an amazing Adoption Team.
- We are preparing for Christmas for Foster Children – we have been very creative with ways we will celebrate this year. We will host a Christmas Party Drive Thru. We have staff who have volunteered for dress up like elves; we will provide meals for each family as well as gifts for each child.
- We continue to distribute educational tools purchased for foster children with APS/CPS Cares Act Funds –items distributed are (laptops, headphones, printers, and printer ink and laptop bags).
- Tutoring sessions purchased with APS/CPS funds have been very successful. There were 10 children who participated with the six- eight week sessions – parents have expressed the sessions were beneficial.

Economic Support: Ms. Jamie Hatfield

Ms. Hatfield reported the following:

- **Open Enrollment** – Open Enrollment started November 1, 2020 – December 15, 2020. Currently, we received over 509 applications – we expect the amount to increase due to current pandemic.
- **Medicaid Re-Certification** – We are in the process of completing re-certifications for Medicaid (MQBE) cases. All re-certifications (525 cases) are due by the end of December. We started the process in October and are on track to meet December deadline.
- **FNS Benefits Extended** - North Carolina has accepted the option to automatically extend all Food and Nutrition Services (FNS) cases that have a six- month certification period. Automatic extension will alleviate the need for FNS households to leave their homes to mail or deliver their recertification forms or to retrieve required verifications, reducing potential exposure to COVID-19. This automatic extension will apply to all FNS cases with a six-month certification period that ends between November 30, 2020 and June 30, 2021.
- **NC FAST Projects** – We continue working with three NC FAST projects.

Family Justice Center – Skye Sullivan

Ms. Sullivan reported the following updates:

- Current GCC Grant closed September 30, 2020. The final reimbursement request will be about \$199k. The FJC awarded a continuation grant for the next two years, which began October 1, 2020 but on hold currently as all awards on hold with the Federal Government. Awaiting word on possibility of Federal Shutdown on December 11, 2020.
- The Victim Liaison position is working well at the Sheriff's Department – this position has helped bridge cases and very hopeful to launch the new forensic program.

- Hired new Elder Coordinator position – we are working on how to get services out to over 50 age population – any ideas send to Skye. The numbers have plummeted for this population.
- Strategic Planning Committee finalized the draft for the new MOU with Community Partners – the final draft forwarded to Justice Advisory Council (JAC) members.

Question: Are your challenges and issues for customers is a result of COVID? *Currently we have many partners who are not present in the building – Legal Aid partners feel they will put staff at risk due to their position in attending court. Fortunately, we have not endured any COVID positive staff cases – but we have served COVID positive customers.*

Ms. Parker suggested could you advertise/market to public that you are still open and what you are doing to keep staff and customers safe. A public service announcement would be valuable information to public.

Ms. Sullivan asked board members if they would be interested in joining FJC Outreach Committee. Chair Heidi Norwick and Edna Parker, Board Member both agreed to be a part of the committee.

Operations – Ms. Candice Gobble, Assistant Director of Operations

Ms. Gobble reported on the following services:

Administrative Support/Personnel: Robert Ring

See Statistical Report – as of October 31, 2020

Vacancies	32
New Hires	3
Interagency Transfers	1
Resignations	4

We currently have 26 vacancies. We continue to advertise and post jobs. We continue to receive applications and interviews are steady. We have made two job offers this week.

Energy Programs: Candice Gobble

Ms. Gobble reported on the upcoming Low Income Energy Assistance (LIEAP) Program – the program starts December 1, 2020. Due to COVID - funds for LIEAP issued as automatic payments to a target population that received LIEAP payment in 2019-2020. The automatic payment will help continue social distancing efforts and eliminate face-to-face contact for the more at-risk population.

The energy staff has received report for those customers who will receive an automatic payment and will contact via phone to determine if any changes to household. Deadline is December 4, 2020.

The automated LIEAP payments for each household based on heating source type:

- \$300 for Coal or Wood
- \$400 for LP Gas, Natural Gas, Kerosene, Fuel Oil, Energy other
- \$500 for Electric

Ms. Gobble reported Management and Leadership Team hosted Staff Appreciation (Drive Thru Event) on November 12, 2020. Although it was a very rainy day – we did have staff who attended the event. All staff received Biscuitville biscuit, orange juice/apple juice and a treat bag. There was great attendance.

IT Report: Mr. Jason Cole

Mr. Cole reported the following:

- IT Unit prepared for eight new staff to telework including agency cell phone.

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

Director Daye reported Alamance Co. DSS received \$133k for APS/CPS Cares ACT funds. The funds were very restrictive of items purchased. We are reverting \$52k back to State. We purchased everything we could for APS/CPS staff. Director Daye gave “hats off” to Lynette Wellons and Candice Gobble for securing and ordering items needed.

Director Daye reported Cardinal Innovations meetings have been going well. We now have weekly updates with Cardinal Innovations regarding cases and follow up with emails. Director Daye gave shout out to Ayoka Baldwin presenting case to Cardinal regarding one of our difficult cases. Director Daye announced Cardinal Innovations has set aside \$30m dollars for Foster Children – more details to come.

Director Daye thanked Commissioner Amy S. Galey for serving on the DSS Board. Director Daye wished Commissioner Galey luck in her future role in Raleigh.

Commissioner Galey thanked Director Daye and social services staff – Thanks for providing her the knowledge of DSS Core functions as she worked on this board. The people of Alamance County should see the work of social services staff – please share sentiments of Thanks to staff.

New Business:

Director Daye asked DSS Board Members about December Board meeting. In the years past, we typically have not met in December.

Action: Motion made by Reverend Ronald Shive and seconded by Edna Parker to cancel December Board Meeting.

Announcements:

None

Adjournment -

The next board meeting is 12:00 noon **Tuesday, January 26, 2021** via Zoom.

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted:

Carmen L. Morrow

Date approved: _____