

October 27, 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. Latawnya Hall, Adult Services Program Manager; 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.

Public Comment:

None –

Consent Agenda: Heidi Norwick, DSS Board Chair

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

Staff Reports:

Fiscal: Ms. Candice Gobble

The September Revenues are coming in below the target rate. As we continue to monitor revenues, we have met with Fiscal Department – Director Daye and myself to go through each revenue line item (deep dive) to evaluate and maximize funds and as well as look at each revenue line item to coincide with expenditures.

Ms. Gobble gave example of Revenue line item:

323024 FAMILY REUNIFICATION	\$27,233	\$317	1%	\$26,916	99%
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The line item driven by day sheet coding. During last fiscal year, we did not utilize all funds allocated. We contacted the State and now know we can use these funds for Psychiatric Evaluations for Foster Care. We will look to seek reimbursement for the evaluations, which will alleviate the use of Professional Services line. Director Daye added we are carving out meeting times to meet with staff as we try to meet the demands of revenues and expenditures.

We received 25% reimbursement with the old day sheet coding structure, but with the new day sheet coding, we will be able to get 75% reimbursement. Ms. Gobble added the Fiscal staff have

commented they are happy to be included in the conversations and being able to ask why added a new perspective to their duties as fiscal staff.

Ms. Gobble reported the following revenue line items approved as budget amendments at County Commissioners meeting last month:

333120 COVID-19 CARES ACT APS/CPS	\$133,670	\$133,670	100%	\$0	0%
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These funds received to support COVID-19 related expenses for Adult Protective Services/Child Protective Services. The funds expended by December 31, 2020. We have used some of these funds to purchase equipment such as laptops for remote learning for foster children and used to purchase headsets for social workers as they continue to telework. Director Daye added we are having difficult time trying to spend the money due to criteria.

333122 CARES ACT FOSTER CARE STIPENDS	\$37,000	\$12,600	34%	\$24,400	66%
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These funds are for \$100 stipends paid to licensed Foster Care parents or residential providers. The young adults in the LINKS program – 18-21 – were also entitled to receive the monthly stipend. The stipends available for services during the month of April, May and June 2020. The funding increased to include the month of services for July, August and September 2020.

360039 SHIFT NC - ALA YOUTH CONNECTED	\$8,000	\$0	0%	\$8,000	100%
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These funds awarded quarterly from SHIFT NC to link and connect youth & their families to health care services. The project is for three years beginning July 1, 2020 ending June 30, 2023.

The September Expenditures are still trending below the 25% target rate. Our focus is on the salary line for non-permanent salaries due to trending high.

412600 NON-PERMANENT SALARIES	\$151,253	\$52,185	35%	\$99,068	65%
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This line item represents our part-time Energy workers (CIP/LIEAP) programs. The program is different this year due to COVID-19, which resulted in policy changes for the energy programs. Low Income Energy Assistance Program (LIEAP) starts in December and January.

Ms. Gobble announced we received notification this week that Fiscal Compliance Monitoring scheduled for November – we are working diligently to pull each item needed.

Question: Do you typically get request for the Energy programs all year?

Answer: Yes, unfortunately as a requirement of Crisis Intervention Program (CIP) must have a health related or life-threatening emergency for eligibility for crisis funds.

During COVID - applicants can complete a CIP application by mail, email, fax or drop-off at their local DSS. A face-to-face interview is not required at this time. In addition, disconnect notices are not required at this time.

This year our allocation is \$641k and we have already spent about ½ of the allocation.

Question: Do you see higher energy bills due to no money to pay or high due to energy inefficiencies within homes? Do you refer customers to access Duke Energy free assistance with energy efficiency program?

Answer: Currently we are not tracking that information, but we can definitely provide Duke Energy efficiency program as a resource to customers.

Ms. Gobble discussed the following **Expenditure** line items:

Ms. Gobble added Director Daye presented the following budget amendments at County Commissioners meeting on Monday, October 5, 2020 –

449502 COMMUNITY RESPONSE PROGRAM	\$4,033	\$0	0%	\$4,033	100%
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This funding is to coordinate new and existing community family support, educational and health services. Through the CRP program, Social Services staff will work to fill a gap in the continuum of child maltreatment prevention programming by reaching out to families who are reported to Social Services, but whose case was not substantiated for abuse, neglect or dependency.

Fraud: See report –

Unit	September 2020	September 2019	Current YTD	Prior Fiscal Year
Fraud	\$2,225.00	\$21,282.09	\$15,799.39	\$58,498.25

Collections remain suspended through October 2020 due to COVID-19.

Ms. Gobble reported Program Integrity staff continue to telework. As shown on the Fraud Report – there were ten disqualifications from FNS program due to intentional violations. There were over \$30k in claims established during the month of September.

Ms. Gobble reported we discovered a Fraud performance plan – we will begin to meet and discuss and formulate plan. We are hopeful with following the new plan we will have some deliverables for District Attorney’s office and will help with claims as we move forward.

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

Ms. Wellons stated the longer we continue to telework, the severity of cases in children services has increased. The Foster Care program services have increased over the course of two weeks, as well as In-Home services. Please note the statistical report.

Adult and Family Services Program Manager: Ms. Latawnya Hall

Child Support – (Statistical Report Information)

Unit	September 2020	September 2019	Current YTD	Prior Fiscal Year
Child Support	\$883,502.57	\$886,369.40	\$2,973,192.75	\$2,710,021.87

Ms. Hall reported Child Support collections continue to increase - up by 26.95%.

Specific Goal: Child Support—DSS will have 92.88% of paternities established for children born out of wedlock.

Percentage Established	July 2020	August 2020	September 2020
	81.07%	81.71%	82.38%

Ms. Hall reported we are currently not meeting this Performance Management requirement, but we are working diligently. We continue to meet weekly with consultant and State Representative to get on target (10% down).

Ms. Hall reported we continue to meet numbers for Work First – checks continue mailed to recipients, while participation remains low due to COVID-19. All performance management goals for Work First are currently at 100%.

Adult Services –

Ms. Hall reported we continue to see increase in APS reports – we have seen dramatic increase in Outreach services (services that do not meet requirement for APS report – but could utilize resources). The Guardianship cases continue to increase with increase of five guardianship cases in September.

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

Ms. Cole reported the following:

- Assessments continue to increase with school opening – we continue to manage at this time – no caseload over 20 at this point.
- We are receiving reports from multiple resources not just school system.
- Over the last two weeks, we have eight new children in Foster Care. The last two weeks have been very intense and busy.
- We have noticed the increase of meth use in reports.

Ms. Baldwin reported the following:

- The State audits are complete – DSS passed both with no errors found - Adoptions (small sample size) and IV-E (large sample size).
- We used a portion of APS/CPS CARES ACT money for the LINKS program to purchase educational tools for foster children – those items distributed to children (laptops, headphones, printers, and printer ink and laptop bags).
- We have incorporated Zoom for our LINKS program to conduct groups with LINKS children. The meetings were very successful. The LINKS Coordinator worked very hard to coordinate with all LINKS children.
- Performance Management Goal of meeting 95% of all Foster Children will have a contact in their placement each month – we have met the requirement for the July, August and September at 100%.

Board Member Edna Parker gave a “shout out” to LINKS program – such an underserved population 18-21 age group. Great job in helping these children obtain a sense of independence as their transition to adult hood.

Director Daye added the APS/CPS funding guidelines have been relaxed a little at the State level – we continue to struggle to spend the money. We purchased the educational tools for Foster Children but continue to struggle on how we can spend the money. The majority of other Social Services are using the money to provide laptops for staff, but Alamance County we had already outfitted our staff with laptops before COVID.

Director Daye gave a “shout out” to County IT for assisting and helped us outfit our staff with the appropriate equipment to telework. Director Daye added the State is now checking with Counties to see how much money left on the table and may switch money from other Counties to help with those who have depleted funds. The money has end date by December 2020 for allocation. We are currently looking into Food Delivery system for our elderly population and contracted with Sylvan Learning center to provide tutoring for Foster Children in hourly tutoring sessions.

Economic Support: Ms. Jamie Hatfield

Ms. Hatfield reported the following:

- **Public Health Emergency** has been renewed effective October 23, 2020 for 90 days and extends through January 20, 2021. DSS continues to follow the COVID policy as outlined by CDC.
- **Open Enrollment** – Open Enrollment starts November 1, 2020 – December 15, 2020. Last year we received over 600 applications – we expect the amount to increase due to current pandemic.
- **NC FAST Certification** – Alamance Co. DSS went live October 1, 2020 as a pilot for NC FAST Certification. The State has created new policy/certification guidelines for all staff who use NC FAST will be required to pass NC FAST Certification. The timeline for current employees is for 18 months. All new staff certified before any entering completed in NC FAST system.
- **There are two functions:**
 - **Core Function** – any staff who makes changes in NC FAST (Energy, Food & Nutrition Services, etc.) will complete 50-question functionality test (pass/fail with at least 70%). Staff will also participate in web-based training.
 - **Level 1 Programmatic Certification** – any staff who will make eligibility determination for any of the services: Traditional Medicaid, FNS, MAGI, Cash Asset/Work First, Special Assistance, Energy & Child Care. This test is not Pass/Fail. Every staff will build profile and take a test. With this level, supervisors will receive a detailed report of what is current and what is not current.
- By piloting the program, we are able to work out the kinks before it rolls out Statewide. We are currently in the first phase with new staff employed after October 1. All new staff will have 90 days to complete the course certification. We are currently developing training plans – training team has contacted Energy and Child Care services to include in

the training plan. Ms. Hatfield reported we participate in readiness calls with the State twice a week.

Director Daye added as a Pilot County, we get to see how this project will affect our budget – until new staff certified in NC FAST – no day sheets coded which affects our funding.

Family Justice Center – Skye Sullivan

Ms. Sullivan reported the following updates:

- October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month – One in four women will be victims of domestic violence in their lifetime. Across North Carolina, rates of domestic violence are increasing. Neighboring counties are seeing increased in homicide rates for DV victims as high as 250% in the past few months. There has also been an increase in murder/suicides.
- Current GCC Grant closed September 30, 2020. The final reimbursement request will be about \$200k. The FJC awarded a continuation grant for the next two years, which began October 1, 2020.
- In-person service's numbers down compared to last year. We continue to receive more phone calls than walk-ins due to COVID.
- We have seen increase in hotel placements due to Women's Shelter at more than 50% capacity.
- 50B's have remained the same as last year. Call outs for law enforcement are still higher than usual (about 20%).
- The Strategic Planning Committee met to discuss the new MOU with Community Partners – the group is discussing the change of FJC Vision and Mission Statements.
 - **Old Vision:** Through professional collaboration, the Family Justice Center of Alamance County will strive to improve the quality of life by making our community safer, our neighborhoods stronger and our families free of violence.
 - **New Vision:** *The FJC believes in making our community safer and free of violence through promoting healing, hope and justice.*
 - **Old Mission:** The Family Justice Center (FJC) is a public/private partnership of agencies dedicated to ending domestic violence, child abuse, sexual assault, stalking, human trafficking and elder abuse through prevention, education and a coordinated response of comprehensive, client-centered empowerment services organized in a single location.
 - **New Mission:** *The FJC exists to end interpersonal violence through a coordinated response of comprehensive, victim-centered empowerment services organized in a single location.*

Operations – Ms. Candice Gobble, Assistant Director of Operations

Ms. Gobble reported on the following services:

Child Care – Ms. Gobble announced new Emergency School-Age Family Support program – the program is to assist families with childcare while children are engaged in remote learning. The program provides financial assistance for childcare to parents/primary caregivers who have a

school-age child who is attending a licensed childcare facility (childcare center or family childcare home) or a registered community-based organization for remote learning because of the COVID-19 crisis.

Administrative Support/Personnel: Robert Ring

See Statistical Report – as of September 30, 2020

Vacancies	22
New Hires	2
Interagency Transfers	1
Resignations	5

We are holding steady with the 22 vacancies within the last 6 months. We continue to receive applications and interviews are steady. We have made some job offers. Within this 22, 11 of those are frozen positions due to budget restrictions.

Energy Programs: Candice Gobble

Ms. Gobble reported on the upcoming Low Income Energy Assistance (LIEAP) Program – NC received an additional \$25 million Low Income Home Energy Assistance funding as result of CARES ACT. A portion of these funds used for LIEAP to issue 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 target population evaluated are the same as always:

- Households with persons aged 60 or order
- Households with disabled individuals receiving DAAS services and
- Currently receiving FNS and
- Received LIEAP during the 2019-2020 LIEAP season

This automatic payment will help continue social distancing efforts and eliminate face-to-face contact for the more at-risk population.

Households not included in the target population will be able to apply following regular LIEAP application policy.

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

IT Report: Mr. Jason Cole

Mr. Cole reported the following:

- IT Unit has been very busy cleaning up desktops – we are currently working with County IT to redistribute
- We received 27 new laptops this week and will roll those out to staff as deemed appropriate

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

Director Daye reported she has spoken with County Manager and he has informed that if revenues continue to exceed budgeted amounts – DSS positions on hold may be available in January to post and hire. Director Daye added she would advocate and include in DSS plan for the Top Three High Turnover positions to look at raising salaries for the following positions, as well as for current staff for retention. The positions are as follows:

1. IMC II
2. SW III
3. SW I/A&T

Director Daye added she is working on salary plan to have available to present at upcoming Commissioner's Meeting in December or January. Director Daye will provide more information regarding plan.

Director Daye announced Union County and Cabarrus County are meeting and discussing with County Commissioners in their counties to dissolve away from Cardinal Innovations and find another LME. Director Daye reported she will discuss with County Manager and will have more information at upcoming meeting.

Question: Have you received any money for the proposed Community Block Grant funds presented at last month's board meeting for Energy assistance?

No – we have not received any money from the Block Grant.

New Business:

None

Announcements:

None

Adjournment -

The next board meeting is 12:00 noon **Tuesday, November 24, 2020** via Zoom.

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted:

Carmen L. Morrow

Date approved: _____