

September 28, 2021

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 Pamela T. Thompson, DSS Board Member; Ms. Heidi Norwick, DSS Board Chair; Dr. Ernest Eason, DSS Board Member; Ms. Edna Parker, DSS Board Member; Ms. Lynette Wellons, Assistant Director of Services; Ms. Ayoka Baldwin, Child Welfare Program Manager; Ms. Angela Cole, Child Welfare Program Manager; Ms. Candice Gobble, Assistant Director of Operations; Ms. Jamie Hatfield, Economic Services Program Manager; Ms. LaPorscha McCullough, Adult Services Program Manager; Ms. Danae Pickard, Economic Services Program Manager; Ms. Wendy Roberts, Economic Services Program Manager; Ms. Jamie Hamlett, DSS Attorney; Ms. Skye Sullivan, FJC Director; Ms. Andrea Rollins, County Budget Analyst Director; and Commissioner Bill Lashley, Alamance County Commissioner were present.

Heidi Norwick, DSS Chair opened the meeting.

Public Comment:

None –

Consent Agenda: Heidi Norwick, DSS Board Chair

August items on the consent agenda approved. Edna Parker, Vice-Chair made motion to approve and seconded by Dr. Ernest Eason.

Staff Reports:

Fiscal: Ms. Candice Gobble

Assistant Director Gobble reported on Expenditures – we are currently trending below the proposed target rate due to funds received from Cardinal Innovations. We will reach the proposed expenditures for line item:

435300 MAINT & REPAIR VEHICLE	\$18,000	\$709	4%	\$17,291	96%
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This is due to theft of three 2016 Toyota Prius vandalized and catalytic converters were stolen from each of the vehicles. The cost to repair each of them with anti-theft shield from Toyota is approximately \$3000+. The vehicles are now at Cox Toyota waiting on parts to be repaired.

Assistant Director Gobble reported on Revenues – we are currently at 20% due to reinvestment funds from Cardinal reported last meeting– without the Cardinal money showing we are currently where we should be at 11%. Director Daye added the funding from Cardinal is not revenue that will go into a County fund – this money is specified only for DSS and can only be used for DSS Child Welfare (Foster Care).

	AUGUST 2021	% OF BUDGET	PRIOR YTD	% OF BUDGET
REVENUES	\$2,491,594.00	20%	\$1,201,259.00	11%
EXPENDITURES	\$2,884,836.00	13%	\$2,782,297.00	15%

Fraud: See report –

Unit	August 2021	August 2020	Current YTD	Prior Fiscal Year
Fraud	\$18,147.43	\$3,137.39	\$22,794.43	\$13,574.39

Danae Pickard reported there were five disqualification hearings held – all clients found guilty of intentional program violation. There was also one state qualification hearing held – county decision affirmed. The suspension of collections will impact revenue.

Performance Management -

There was only one goal not met for the month of August:

Specific Goal: DSS will process 95% of the Work First Recertifications no later than the last day of the current recertification period.

	JULY 2021	AUGUST 2021
# RECERTIFICATIONS	6	12
# DOCUMENTED AND COMPLETED	6	11
PERCENTAGE	100%	91.67%

August 2021:

One case was not completed due to caseworker error of starting but not completing the recertification process.

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

Adult and Family Services Program Manager: LaPorscha McCullough

Child Support – (Statistical Report Information)

Unit	August 2021	August 2020	Current YTD	Prior Fiscal Year
Child Support	\$918,446.61	\$1,013,815.81	\$1,788,145.35	\$2,089,690.00

Ms. McCullough reported child support underwent a case audit this month. There were five cases reviewed and all cases received 100%.

Adult Services -

Ms. McCullough reported we recently hired (2) new Social Worker III for Adult Services.

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

Ms. Ayoka Baldwin reported we have been working on ways to give additional support to staff with the vacancies. We hired contract employee (retired DSS employee) to help with assistance with child welfare visitations. The employee will start this week.

Ms. Baldwin reported onsite review conducted for In-Home services. Ms. Baldwin gave kudos to staff – they did an amazing job on the review with vacancies.

Ms. Baldwin discussed the Family First Act which became effective October 1, 2021. The Family First Act Prevention Services Act passed in February 2018 and is now effective. The prevention act impacts federal child welfare financing as it pertains to prevention services and limitations on funding for congregate care. The Act seeks to curtail the use of congregate or group care for children & instead places a new emphasis on family foster homes.

The prevention act will affect youth entering or currently in DSS custody that are in non-Medicaid placements will only be allowed to remain in those placements for 14 days. The children that are currently in non-Medicaid placements will be grandfathered in until placement changes. Once a new placement is completed, DSS will begin tracking the 14 days – we will start looking for new placement at 10 days. This is to ensure IV-E children are not in non-Medicaid covered residential placements no longer that requirement of 14 days. After the 14th day, Alamance County will be responsible for payment.

Question: What was the limitations before the Family First Prevention Act?

There were no limitations.

Assistant Director Wellons reported on the stimulus one-time funding for LINKS children. We have been informed by the State to reach out to LINKS children who are receiving these services to see how many children would be impacted between the ages of 14-18, but less than 27. We have at least 160 children within those age ranges (\$400k). The stimulus amounts that would pay out are as follows:

- (18 – 20 age range) - \$2500
- (21 – 27 age range) - \$5000

We have potentially identified 21 children where \$73k would be allocated. We have requested additional funds to reach 9 other young children. We are working with Fiscal Unit to get all information completed – the plan has to be in place by September 30th. The stimulus money could help the LINKS children with purchasing vehicles for work, help with housing and to work on budgeting for other expenses.

Economic Support: Ms. Jamie Hatfield/Ms. Danae Pickard/Ms. Wendy Roberts

Ms. Jamie Hatfield announced we have finally hired new Economic Services Supervisor for Adult Medicaid. She will start in October. She is knowledgeable for Adult Medicaid. The staff will receive the sign-on bonus and referral will be paid to current staff person who gave the referral.

Ms. Danae Pickard reported we have hired Food & Nutrition Services Supervisor – we are excited to give staff direct support. Ms. Pickard also reported we are currently on the third allocation of CIP (Crisis Intervention Program) funds. We have PT Energy staff on board to complete and process applications.

Ms. Wendy Roberts reported we have filled some vacant positions in August, we will have two staff start in October – which gives us a total of five positions filled in Economic Services. We continue to interview.

Family Justice Center – Skye Sullivan

Ms. Sullivan, FJC Director announced October is Domestic Violence month. There will be a candlelight vigil held that is co-sponsored with Family Abuse Services. We will send out flyer to board members.

Ms. Sullivan also reported on the following Performance Management Goals:

Specific Goal: The Family Justice Center will track the number of victims assessing services in person and will increase victims served by 10% from previous year.

	JULY 2021	AUGUST 2021
# OF VICTIMS (21-22)	158	159
# OF VICTIMS (20-21)	90	101
% OF INCREASE	75%	57%

Ms. Sullivan reported the numbers have escalated since the start of FJC in 2010. FJC has also seen a huge increase since the start of the pandemic.

Specific Goal: The Family Justice Center will track the number of referrals to partners in the Family Justice Center and will increase the number of referrals by 10% from previous year.

	JULY 2021	AUGUST 2021
# OF REFERRALS (21-22)	245	265
# OF REFERRALS (20-21)	93	99
% OF INCREASE	163%	167%

Ms. Sullivan reported the numbers of referrals have increased tremendously. There are 11 partners within the FJC – there may be some cases that could potentially be seen by each partner agency.

Question: Has the shelter been at capacity?

Not sure – Family Abuse Services manages the women’s shelter. We manage cases at FJC differently with victims. We use hotels and other means to shelter victims. Kristie Coffee and LaTawnya Hall work with the Elder Justice Project for victims over 50+.

Director Daye announced there is different leadership at Family Abuse Services. Calvetta Watlington is now the interim director.

Operations – Ms. Candice Gobble, Assistant Director of Operations

Administrative Support/Personnel: Robert Ring

See Statistical Report – as of August 31, 2021

Vacancies	37
New Hires	10
Interagency Transfers	8
Resignations	3

Mr. Ring reported as of today we currently have 44 vacancies.

Energy Programs: Danae Pickard

We are currently accepting applications for the CIP Energy Programs. We are currently in the third round of funds.

Child Care: Candice Gobble

No report.

IT Report: Mr. Jason Cole

The camera project is still progressing – we currently have 34 cameras mounted. We are waiting on County IT to configure servers for the cameras.

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

Compensation Plan #2 –

Commissioner Pamela Thompson introduced Commissioner Bill Lashley to Board Members. Director Daye gave report of New Compensation Plan. The Compensation Plan presented to Commissioners on August 2, 2021 was not a “fix” for Social Services. The initial plan was a “stop gap” to hire and retain staff with bonuses.

Director Daye gave a brief overview of the first plan presented on February 21, 2021 regarding the five high turnover positions with 4% increase for staff in those positions (\$1600 increase). The

August 2, 2021 presented and approved by County Commissioners was not a “fix” but was created as a “stop gap” measure to retain and hire staff.

The plan included the following bonus options:

- **Referral Bonus** - \$500 bonus to staff who referred staff to DSS (the referral bonus open to all Alamance County staff, not just DSS)
- **Retention Bonus** – bonus created on years of service with Alamance County that range from \$1000 - \$2000)
- **Sign-On Bonus** – new staff hired for one of the five high turnover positions would receive \$2k sign-on bonus -the bonus will be paid in two installments - \$1k at the completion of the probationary period and the other \$1k six months after the completion of probation

The five high-turnover positions are as follows:

1. SW I/A&T – (Child Welfare)
2. SW III (Child Welfare & Adult Services only)
3. Income Maintenance Caseworker II (Economic Services/FNS & Medicaid)
4. Income Maintenance Supervisor II (Economic Services)
5. Child Support Agent II (Child Support)

Director Daye reported we are now in October and we currently have 44 vacancies. We have hired 9 (HT positions) which will be eligible for sign-on bonus and September hired 12 (HT positions). But we have received total of 14 resignations/terminations in those high turnover positions since the incentives started.

Director Daye reported staff who recently left reported they are leaving due to salary. For instance, one staff left due to needing more money to take care of parent and another staff person resigned to go another DSS in the same position but will make \$6300 more a year. Director Daye reported Durham Co. are paying IMC III positions \$7500 more to come and do the same work.

Director Daye discussed the “New” Compensation Plan that would give all DSS staff a \$5k raise across the board and raise the starting salaries by \$5k. We have met with Andrea Rollins and Sherry Hook at the County extensively discussing the new plan. The total amount that would cost the County is \$513,685.11. We anticipate to receive \$195k from the State for all Economic Services staff. The reimbursement rate is also changing from 50% to 100% for FNS. Director Daye reminded board members we receive 50% revenues for salaries at DSS from Federal/State which would be approximately \$684,913.00.

Director Daye expressed over the last three years we have \$1million in lap salary due to the many vacant positions. Each compensation plan has been paid with DSS lap salary. Assistant Director Candice Gobble reported in September payroll – we had \$219,973 in lap salary. We anticipate with the \$5000k increase for all staff – traditionally we will continue to have vacancies.

Question: When does your year end?

The Fiscal Year is from July 1 – June 30

Director Daye expressed DSS Budget is very complicated. Director Daye explained the day sheet process of how each service receives reimbursement for services provided. Director Daye also shared DSS is reimbursed for every purchase. The reimbursement comes in the form of one lump sum from the State which is sent to County.

Question: With the FNS change from 50% reimbursement to 100%, is that one-time change?
We have been informed that we will receive through the fiscal year. The State has been granted additional funds and they anticipate for three years.

Question: Will the \$5k increase to salaries make a difference to staff?
Director Daye added the salary increase will keep us competitive with some of the surrounding counties. The increase would bring us to \$1k - \$1600 closer in salaries.

Question: How does it compare to the difference of keeping staff here to be competitive?
We have had staff leave to go to Durham Co. and other surrounding counties and return to Alamance Co. for other reasons. There are vacancies at every DSS across the State. We are the lowest paid county outside of Caswell County.

Director Daye expressed we also will have a continued problem with compression. Andrea Rollins, Budget Analyst for County added when merit increments are added for staff – it does not change the starting salaries.

Commissioner Pam Thompson expressed it's very important to increase all DSS staff, not just the five high turnover positions. One position is not important than the other – every role is critical and important. Director Daye added we are definitely in crisis mode when it comes to Medicaid. Once the recertifications stop rolling over and we have to process, we will not have enough staff to process cases.

Commissioner Bill Lashley suggested 3-Tier system for salary ranges, if possible. The tier system should help with compression. Director Daye responded we would have to check with OSHR who approves all salary ranges for all DSS positions.

Question: How much have you handed in out in bonuses since the incentive program started August 2, 2021?
We budgeted \$15k for referral bonus which we opened to all County Departments, not just DSS. We have not paid out any bonuses as of yet due to staff have not fulfilled the requirements of the bonus. We have 12 new staff who could potentially receive the \$2k sign-on bonus if meet the requirements. Assistant Director Gobble added we spent \$226,200 paid for retention bonus in August.

Question: If the annual cost is \$1.3 million – will DSS receive 50% reimbursement of the \$1.3 million?
Yes – DSS will receive 50% reimbursement for services rendered.

Director Daye expressed we have discussed freezing positions – approximately 11 positions. But when the work force demands changes we may need to discuss those positions. The plan is similar

to what the Sheriff created for his staff that was approved recently. If the compensation plan is approved, we would do away with bonuses with the exception of the referral bonus.

Vice-Chair Edna Parker thanked Commissioner Lashley for attending DSS Board meeting and listening to the proposed DSS Compensation Plan. Chair Heidi Norwick thanked Commissioner Thompson for inviting Commissioner Lashley. Director Daye added she appreciated DSS board members for always listening and being a sounding board for DSS.

New Business: Board Presentation

Director Daye opened the floor for board members to give thoughts/ideas of presentations they would like to hear in Board meeting.

Board Members expressed each meeting they learn about the important work and services that are a part of Social Services. Board Members expressed they would like to see the following:

1. Division of Labor – who does what? What they do?
2. Walk through a client’s perspective – scenario?
3. Legislative Support
4. Success Stories
5. Finance

Director Daye we will take these topics back as a Management Team and work on presentation for future meetings. If you think of any other ideas you would like to see, please contact Director Daye to add to list for future meetings.

Announcements:

None

Adjournment -

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

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted:

Carmen L. Morrow

Date approved: _____