

February 22, 2022

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, Chair, DSS Board Chair; Dr. Ernest Eason, DSS Board Member; Ms. Edna Parker, Vice-Chair, DSS Board Member; Ms. Maria Hernandez, DSS Board Member; Ms. Lynette Wellons, Assistant Director of Services; Ms. Angela Cole, Child Welfare Program Manager; Ms. Candice Gobble, Assistant Director of Operations; Ms. Jamie Hatfield, Economic Services Program Manager; Ms. Wendy Roberts, Economic Services Program Manager; Ms. LaPorscha McCullough, Adult Services Program Manager; Ms. Danae Pickard, Economic Services Program Manager; Ms. Jamie Hamlett, DSS Attorney; Ms. Skye Sullivan, FJC Director; Mr. Jason Cole, IT Director; Ms. Rebecca Lambert, Child Welfare Program Manager and Ms. Selina Campbell, County Finance Office were present.

Heidi Norwick, DSS Chair opened the meeting.

Public Comment:

None –

Consent Agenda: Heidi Norwick, DSS Board Chair

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

Staff Reports:

Fiscal: Ms. Candice Gobble

| | JANUARY 2022 | % OF BUDGET | PRIOR YTD | % OF BUDGET |
|--------------|---------------------|--------------------|------------------|--------------------|
| REVENUES | \$7,840,380.00 | 55% | \$6,249,570.00 | 54% |
| EXPENDITURES | \$10,278,010.00 | 44% | \$10,765,982.00 | 55% |

Assistant Director Gobble reported January 2022 Revenues are trending above rate. Expenditures are trending below. We continue to monitor salary line for lapse salary with the pay raise.

Assistant Director Gobble reported Director Daye received approval for overtime pay in some service areas – Economic Services. Director Daye also received approval to pay out comp time for social workers – the amount is capped for the fiscal year.

Question: Comp-time payments – are you paying them out at one time?

The payments are made monthly. The comp time amount is paid the month after worked and the amount is capped and has to be paid out of this fiscal year.

Assistant Director Gobble reported on the following budget amendments approved by County Commissioners:

1. **Low Income Household Water Assistance Program (LIHWAP)** – Alamance Co. DSS received allotment of \$286,479.00 to assist low-income households with water and wastewater bills. We also received \$52,114.00 in administration funds to support the delivery of the program for the citizens of Alamance County. The following revenue lines were established:
 - a. 333132 – LIHWAP Program
 - b. 333133 – LIHWAP Program Administration

2. **Pandemic Low-Income Energy Assistance Program (LIEAP)** – Alamance Co. DSS received allotment of \$1,112,382.00 to provide one-time vendor payment to help eligible households pay their heating bills. This funding was used for a pandemic automated authorized payment for household with children age 0-10 that are receiving Food & Nutrition Services and received LIEAP last fiscal year. The following revenue lines were established:
 - a. 323069 – LIEAP – ARPA Program – Revenue
 - b. 497262 – LIEAP – ARPA Program – Expenditures

3. **Pandemic Low-Income Energy Assistance Program (LIEAP) Administrative Funds** – Alamance Co. DSS received an additional allocation of \$138,441.00 to provide one-time vendor payment to help eligible households pay heating costs. These administrative funds are used to assist in program delivery. The following budget lines were established:
 - a. 323070 – LIEAP – Revenue
 - b. 412600 – LIEAP - Expenditures

4. **Piedmont Natural Gas Share the Warmth** – The Share the Warmth program is a supplemental energy program where funds can be used to assist with eligible household’s energy cost regardless of the energy source. These funds are donations through customer payments and allocated accordingly to counties. An estimated allocation for Alamance County was budgeted, submitted and approved at the beginning of FY 21-22. The allocation that was released in December 2021 was higher than original budgeted amount. The allocation for Alamance County was \$15,694.23.

Assistant Director Gobble reported we will have more budget amendments in March regarding Crisis Intervention Program (CIP) and additional funds for Adult Protective Services.

Assistant Director Gobble announced we have hired internal staff for Business Officer – Ms. Virginia Hunker. The position will not be a part of Management Team, but will become a member of Leadership Team and will supervise all Fiscal staff.

Assistant Director Gobble reported we have good news to share with County Management and County Commissioners regarding recent hires at Social Services. We hired 16 new staff since July 1st and all staff are still with DSS. Since the increase effective January 1, 2022 – we have 3 re-hires so far.

Assistant Director Gobble announced budget preparations are occurring and will be reported at the March meeting.

Fraud: See report –

| Unit | January 2022 | January 2021 | Current YTD | Prior Fiscal Year |
|-------|--------------|--------------|-------------|-------------------|
| Fraud | \$6,082.32 | \$5,862.00 | \$53,973.58 | \$38,471.00 |

Ms. Pickard reported we have one vacant position – we have made offer and we have a former Alamance staff returning due to pay increase. The staff person is leaving Orange Co. to return to Alamance.

Performance Management -

Specific Goal: Economic Services—DSS will process 85% of SAA within 45 days of receipt. (Baseline)

| | JULY 2021 | AUGUST 2021 | SEPTEMBER 2021 | OCTOBER 2021 | NOVEMBER 2021 | DECEMBER 2021 | JANUARY 2022 |
|--------------------|-----------|-------------|----------------|--------------|---------------|---------------|--------------|
| # APPLICATIONS | 9 | 8 | 6 | 5 | 7 | 0 | 4 |
| # PROCESSED TIMELY | 9 | 8 | 6 | 3 | 7 | NA | 3 |
| % PROCESSED | 100% | 100% | 100% | 60% | 100% | NA | 75% |

Goal Not Met: 75% out of 85% - There was an interface issue with DHSR/NC FAST – Facility license was not active in NC FAST. Unable to authorize application by deadline.

Specific Goal: Economic Services—DSS will process 85% of SAD applications within 60 days of receipt. (Baseline)

| | JULY 2021 | AUGUST 2021 | SEPTEMBER 2021 | OCTOBER 2021 | NOVEMBER 2021 | DECEMBER 2021 | JANUARY 2022 |
|--------------------|-----------|-------------|----------------|--------------|---------------|---------------|--------------|
| # APPLICATIONS | 7 | 3 | 10 | 12 | 4 | 3 | 4 |
| # PROCESSED TIMELY | 5 | 3 | 10 | 11 | 4 | 1 | 3 |
| % PROCESSED | 71% | 100% | 100% | 92% | 100% | 67% | 75% |

Goal Not Met: 75% out of 85% - There was an interface issue with DHSR/NC FAST – Facility license was not active in NC FAST. Unable to authorize application by deadline.

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

Assistant Director Wellons introduced Rebecca Lambert who is the new Child Welfare Program Manager replacing Ayoka Baldwin.

Adult and Family Services Program Manager: LaPorscha McCullough

Child Support – (Statistical Report Information) – see report.

| Unit | January 2022 | January 2021 | Current YTD | Prior Fiscal Year |
|---------------|--------------|--------------|----------------|-------------------|
| Child Support | \$790,234.12 | \$757,896.76 | \$5,991,020.31 | \$6,288,707.96 |

Ms. McCullough reported Child Support Enforcement Unit is fully staffed – we have one vacant position in the Child Support Establishment Unit.

Adult Services -

Ms. McCullough reported the following:

- We are seeking new supervisor for Adult Protective Services Unit
- We were recently notified by NC Division of Health & Human Services (NC DHHS) of specific funding for Adult Services – These funds will allow Adult Protective Services essential services funds to provide essential services for adults for whom the need for protective services has been substantiated. These funds will assist adults to age in place, eliminating unnecessary institutionalization and promoting opportunities to return to a community-based setting, when possible. Alamance County DSS will receive \$78,895.00.

Children Services Program Manager: Ms. Angela Cole/Ms. Rebecca Lambert

Ms. Angela Cole reported Child Welfare continues to interview for vacant positions. We have hit a couple of road blocks with potential hires – some have backed out to go to other positions. We currently have three new staff who started last month who are going through Pre-Service training. Supervisors continue to work cases and caseloads continue to rise.

Ms. Cole reported we are gearing up for Social Work Appreciation Month in March.

Assistant Director Wellons reported the visitation space at the Petree Building is almost complete – we are waiting on furniture delivery. We have been approached by non-profit Home Suite Hope – who would like to donate “room make-overs” for all of the visitation rooms at the new building. We are hopeful the work will start by April 1, 2022.

Assistant Director Wellons announced we have filled two Child Welfare Supervisor positions internally, which creates open positions to fill for line staff. Both staffs will continue to function in both roles until line staff positions are filled.

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

Ms. Hatfield announced we have finally filled Adult Medicaid Supervisor position that has been vacant for a year. The position was filled internally, Lori Gay, who was an Adult Medicaid Trainer. The trainer position is now vacant and has been posted.

Ms. Hatfield reported Economic Services continue to interview for vacant positions. overtime has been approved for Economic Services to manage case loads and Special Assistance Monitoring will begin in March.

Ms. Pickard reported some of the Food & Nutrition Services waivers have expired. The approval of overtime will keep timeliness goals met. Ms. Pickard reported we have filled some of the vacant positions in the FNS unit.

Ms. Pickard reported we are currently running three Energy Programs. We continue to receive funding monthly. The Energy Unit is struggling with vacancies as well with part-time staff.

Ms. Roberts reported we have seen an increase in applications since the pay increase. We conducted several interviews last week and made two offers from those interviews. We are currently developing a new Training Plan when waivers expire to re-train staff.

Family Justice Center – Skye Sullivan

Ms. Sullivan reported the following:

- Comprehensive Needs Assessment completed for FJC – Strangulation will be part of the report.
- Completed annual check-in with Community Partners – budget and funding – Governors Crime Commission grant is very competitive. The funds have dropped from \$150m to \$34m. We are competing with one our community partners for the same funding. We are having discussions with community partners if we lose funding. We are hopeful that Family Justice Center will become a County Department for sustainability.
- Community Partners within FJC are experiencing turnover, as well as all departments. The \$5k increase has helped – pay is very important. We are not able to compete with Guilford County due to pay is \$24hr.

Operations – Ms. Candice Gobble, Assistant Director of Operations

Administrative Support/Personnel: Robert Ring

See Statistical Report – as of January 31, 2022

| | |
|------------------------------|----|
| Vacancies | 51 |
| New Hires | 7 |
| Interagency Transfers | 0 |
| Resignations | 5 |

Mr. Ring reported as of today we currently have 46 vacancies. We have 10 applicants the following process:

- 3 – reference check process
- 5 – accepted offer and in the drug screening process
- 2 – hiring process – waiting for final approval

Mr. Ring reported we are making great progress. The quality of applicants is better than before due to pay increase. We have hired 16 new staff since July 1, 2022 – they are as follows:

- 4 – Child Welfare
- 6 – Economic Services
- 5 – Child Support

- 1 – Reception

Mr. Ring reported we will have more data in May/June.

Energy Programs: Danae Pickard

See Economic Services Report

Child Care: Candice Gobble

Assistant Director Gobble reported the Child Care Co-Efficient is up – we are plateaued at 93%. In the middle of December, we pulled all children from the wait list. We currently do not have a wait list. We will continue to monitor child care spending – we always want to show we can spend the allocation.

IT Report: Mr. Jason Cole

We continue to prepare staff to work from home. We are currently working on the Petree project with security cameras and door access.

Director's Report – Heidi Norwick, Board Chair –

Board Chair Norwick reported the Director's position has been posted twice. The current applicants have gone to OSHR to be qualified. Once qualified – the interview process will begin.

Board Chair Norwick announced Sharon S. Scott will start Tuesday, March 1, 2022 as Interim Director. We are currently waiting on contract from County Attorney – once received we will forward to Ms. Scott for signature.

Question: How do we respond to staff request regarding Adrian's last day? Who will sign documents?
Board Chair Norwick will send out official notice once the contract is signed from Ms. Sharon S. Scott.

New Business: DSS Connecting Links (All Staff)

Assistant Director Gobble gave a recap of the Connecting LINKS presentation carried over from January.

Presentation followed the Family of John:

- John – 32, male, single; lives with elderly mother & 2 children
- Jack – 10, male, 5th grade student, lives with dad, grandmother, and sister Jill.
- Berniece – 82, widower
- Jill – 6, female, 1st grade student

Subsidized Child Care –

Child care assistance will be needed for the placement of the children to be successful. Foster Care SW and Child Care Unit are involved in the process and vouchers can be issued.

Child Support –

Ms. McCullough presented the Child Support portion – John’s children were placed into Foster Care which triggered the referral to Child Support. The court hearing has been conducted to establish a support amount. (This is not only for John, but Child Support Unit will attempt to locate the mother as well to establish support). Enforcement follows the order and establishes support amount until the children are adopted, return home or emancipated.

Adult Protective Services (APS) –

Ms. McCullough presented the case for Adult Protective Services on the report for John’s mother – Berniece. The reported alleged that Berniece, 82, who is bed bound and needs assistance with bathing, transferring, cooking, cleaning, medication management and assistance with her finances. Bernice has been left home alone to supervise the two grandchildren – Jack and Jill.

APS report screened by two APS Social Workers - report fell into category of 24 hr. timeframe due to caretaker neglect. APS notifies law enforcement and District Attorney and Social Worker initiates the evaluation.

Question: Once you got the report – do you go out immediately? What’s the timeframes? Is the order to contact law enforcement for every report?

There are timeframes that have to be met for different reports, 24hr./48hr./72hrs. depending on the situation. But, anytime we suspect exploitation, abuse and/or neglect, the timeframe is 24 hrs. and we notify Law Enforcement and District Attorney’s office. Burlington PD has request we contact them for every report for the elderly population.

Ms. McCullough presents what SW found as she evaluated Berniece. Berniece scores extremely low on the cognition exam and was unable to answer emergency questions. SW determined Berniece was suffering from severe bed sores and required immediate medical attention. SW contacts EMS and transported to local hospital. After medical attention was given to Bernice, hospital assessed the Berniece suffered from UTI which created the issues with the cognition exam at the initial evaluation. Once antibiotics were given to Berniece in hospital, she was able to request to go into placement and did not want to go back home with John. Berniece decides she would like to move to local assisted living facility. SW completes Special Assistance Medicaid application and begins to search for placement and a representative payee is assigned to Berniece to assist her with her finances.

Question: What’s the role of the representative payee?

A representative payee, or substitute payee, accepts disability or social security payments for someone who is not capable of managing their own benefits. They make sure basic needs are covered for the person.

Behind the Scenes –

- Intake staff process the APS report
- Compass – Document Management System is regularly maintained, backed up and updated by IT staff
- An application is submitted to SA (Special Assistance) Medicaid

- The placement Social Worker obtains required documents needed for placement and begins searching for placement options
- The Representative Payee Social Worker begins completing the required Social Security documentation
- The Adult Protective Services SW is in continuous communication with the hospital SW to determine next steps for Berniece

Question: What would happen if the amount established in Child Support the father/mother could not afford?

Child Support staff uses worksheets to determine and calculate support amounts. There are many factors used and considered when determining amounts. The family size, income, and other factors are considered. The minimum amount set is \$50.00.

If child support payments are received for children in Foster Care – the money follows the children for Room & Board. For children who are placed in Foster Care, we agree to provide \$200 to Foster Family for clothing needs, etc., which is funded from County dollars. There are some children who have trust accounts and we can also pull from those funds to help take care of the child.

Question: What would happen if Berniece decided she wanted to go back home with John?

Berniece was assessed to have capacity and could make her own decisions once medical attention was given. The APS unit would help the family put wrap around services in place such as: In-Home Aides, Meals on Wheels, Incontinent Supplies, but the children would have to be removed from her care.

Special Assistance -

Assistant Director Gobble presented Special Assistance which provides a cash supplement to eligible individuals to help pay for room and board in a residential facility.

These facilities include:

- Adult Care Homes
- Family Care Homes
- Group Homes

We have an Economic Services Specialized team to assist with the application process for the following:

- Special Assistance
- CAP (Client Assistance Program) - program designed to assist individuals with disabilities in understanding and using rehabilitation services
- Long Term Care

The Economic Services staff work with the Social Worker to gather the necessary documents and verifications to determine eligibility

All Departments within DSS Working Together Supports Our Community –

- Reception
- Child Welfare
- Adult Services
- Legal

- Economic Services
- Fiscal
- Word Processing
- IT

Announcements:

None

Adjournment -

The next board meeting is 12:00 noon **Tuesday, March 22, 2022** via zoom.

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted:

Carmen L. Morrow

Date approved: _____