

March 22, 2022

The Alamance County Social Services Board met for its regular monthly meeting on this date. The meeting was held at Family Justice Center, 1950 Martin Street, Burlington NC with the following in attendance were: Commissioner Pamela T. Thompson, DSS Board Member; Ms. Heidi Norwick, Chair, DSS Board Chair; 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; Mr. Robert Ring, HR Director; Ms. Danae Pickard, Economic Services Program Manager; Ms. Skye Sullivan, FJC Director; Mr. Jason Cole, IT Director; Ms. Rebecca Lambert, Child Welfare Program Manager and Ms. Sharon S. Scott, Interim DSS Director were present.

Heidi Norwick, DSS Chair opened the meeting.

Chair Heidi Norwick welcomed Sharon Scott, Interim DSS Director to Board. Introductions were made of DSS Board members.

Chair Heidi Norwick wished Lynette Wellons and Jamie Hamlett – Happy Birthday!

Public Comment:

None

Consent Agenda: Heidi Norwick, DSS Board Chair

February items on the consent agenda approved. Vice-Chair Edna Parker made motion to approve and seconded by Commissioner Pamela Thompson, Board Member.

Staff Reports:

Fiscal: Ms. Candice Gobble

	FEBRUARY 2022	% OF BUDGET	PRIOR YTD	% OF BUDGET
REVENUES	\$9,132,821.00	64%	\$7,534,854.00	65%
EXPENDITURES	\$12,700,111.00	52%	\$12,333,485.00	63%

Fraud: See report –

Unit	February 2022	February 2021	Current YTD	Prior Fiscal Year
Fraud	\$3,995.85	\$5,862.00	\$57,969.43	\$43,829.81

We hired new fraud investigator, Katie White – who is former employee of Alamance County. She returned to us from Orange County.

Collections remain suspended.

Performance Management -

Specific Goal: Child Welfare—DSS will initiate 95% of all screened-in reports within assigned time frames.

	JULY 2021	AUGUST 2021	SEPTEMBER 2021	OCTOBER 2021	NOVEMBER 2021	DECEMBER 2021	JANUARY 2022	FEBRUARY 2022
# REPORTS COMPLETED	70	69	110	90	100	63	28	111
# INITIATED WITHIN TIME FRAMES	64	66	100	75	91	60	27	104
# REPORTS INITIATED TIMELY	91.4%	95.7%	91%	83.33%	91%	95.2%	96.4%	93.7%

Goal Not Met: Assessors are mandated to initiate CPS reports within the timeframe specified or diligent efforts to initiate must continue until the initiation has been completed. For the month of February, seven reports were not initiated timely. Five of those seven reports, the assessor made an appropriate number of attempts via a variety of methods to initiate within the specified timeframe.

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	FEBRUARY 2022
# APPLICATIONS	9	8	6	5	7	0	4	4
# PROCESSED TIMELY	9	8	6	3	7	NA	3	3
% PROCESSED	100%	100%	100%	60%	100%	NA	75%	75%

Goal Not Met: *Keyed in error – Admin denied past due date.*

Specific Goal: Energy—DSS will process 95% of Crisis Intervention Program (CIP) applications within one business day for applicants with no heat or cooling source.

	JULY 2021	AUGUST 2021	SEPTEMBER 2021	OCTOBER 2021	NOVEMBER 2021	DECEMBER 2021	JANUARY 2022	FEBRUARY 2022
# APPLICATIONS	5	2	7	6	20	25	19	10
# COMPLETED WITHIN TIME FRAME	5	2	6	6	19	24	19	7
PERCENTAGE	100%	100%	85.71%	100%	95%	96%	100%	70%

Goal Not Met: These applications were Dual applications, because of this, the programs had different due dates and we were unable to change the application date on the CIP application, causing it to show overdue.

Specific Goal: Energy—DSS will process 95% of Crisis Intervention Program (CIP) applications within two business days for applicants who have a heat or cooling source.

	JULY 2021	AUGUST 2021	SEPTEMBER 2021	OCTOBER 2021	NOVEMBER 2021	DECEMBER 2021	JANUARY 2022	FEBRUARY 2022
# APPLICATIONS	251	282	345	169	254	357	374	320
# COMPLETED WITHIN TIME FRAME	249	281	341	169	249	353	360	282
PERCENTAGE	99.20%	99.65%	98.84%	100%	98.03%	98.88%	96.26%	88.13%

Goal Not Met: These applications were Dual applications, because of this, the programs had different due dates and we were unable to change the application date on the CIP application, causing it to show overdue.

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

Assistant Director Wellons gave the following updates:

- **The Ann Petree Building** - The building is located in parking lot of the Human Services Center has finally opened. The furniture has finally arrived for the family visitation rooms, etc. Home Sweet Hope, non-profit organization based in Mebane, NC contacted us to do “room make overs” are complete. The roll out date of the final product will be scheduled for April 1 – April 2, 2022. The County will host “ribbon cutting” ceremony soon for the building that also houses Open Door Clinic and Friendship Center.
- **Return to Work Plan** – We have finalized a return to work plan for all DSS staff. We worked with Health Director, Tony Lo Giudice with regards to COVID numbers, etc. All DSS staff will return to work the week of April 4, 2022.
- **Intensive Fatality Review** – Fatality Team Review is comprised of members from various Community Agencies – Team recently reviewed the fatality of death of child by fire arm here in Alamance County. NC Child Fatality Task Force will launch Fire Arm Initiative – we will partner up to provide training to our local fatality team.
- **VAYA** – We have met with VAYA several times – very different experience than Cardinal Innovations. The meetings have gone well – very transparent conversations with VAYA.

Adult and Family Services Program Manager: LaPorscha McCullough

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

Unit	February 2022	February 2021	Current YTD	Prior Fiscal Year
Child Support	\$788,655.02	\$804,334.23	\$6,780,675.33	\$7,093,042.19

Ms. McCullough reported Child Support Units are fully staffed. The Child Support Unit completed an audit today with 5 out of 5 cases and no cases were deficient.

Adult Services -

Ms. McCullough reported the following:

- We are seeking new supervisor for Adult Protective Services Unit
- We are working closely with the Group Home Task Force. This group was developed to educate and train locate group homes on the appropriate community partners to contact during crisis situations.

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

Ms. Angela Cole reported Child Welfare continues to interview for vacant positions. We have received 5x more children in Foster Care than last year.

Question: Is this the uptick in foster care cases due to parents being addicted to drugs?

There are different issues why a child would come into foster care – Mental Health issues as well as drug use.

Ms. Cole reported Social Work Appreciation Month is ongoing – we have provided several activities for Social Workers – Spirit Week, Massage, Snacks and BINGO with prizes.

Ms. Rebecca Lambert reported our Foster Home licensing social workers are working hard with recruiting foster parents. In-Home Audit is upcoming and will be conducted with 50% staff.

Ms. Lambert reported Foster Care was one of the units fully staffed in Child Welfare. We recently received two resignations this week.

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

Ms. Hatfield reported Public Health Emergency was scheduled to end April 16, 2022 but has been extended again. Once the PHE ends, we will have an additional 90 days to get programs back up and running pre-COVID. We are actively developing a plan for training.

Ms. Hatfield reported Economic Services continue to interview for vacant positions.

Ms. Pickard reported Food & Nutrition Services waivers have been extended. The numbers are high with cases – the waivers have helped us to get keep applications process steady.

Ms. Pickard reported LIEAP will end March 31st. We have a huge amount of CIP applications that are on hold due to CIP funds have been depleted. We do anticipate receiving additional funds for CIP – once received we will process on-hold applications.

Question: What are the qualifications for Energy applications?

All programs are based on income eligibility.

Question: Do you have folks (staff) who speak Spanish?

Yes – we have two interpreters on staff.

Family Justice Center – Skye Sullivan

Ms. Sullivan gave brief introduction of Family Justice Center – “one-stop” shop for domestic violence, child abuse, sexual assault, stalking, human trafficking and elder abuse through prevention, education and a coordinate response of comprehensive, client-centered empowerment services organized in a single location.

Ms. Sullivan reported the following:

- We have received one resignation – losing staff to District Attorney’s office – which is a critical position. We will soon be down four positions out of six due to (1) maternity leave and (2) surgeries.
- Victim Survey will go out soon to community partners and families. FY 2021’ was busiest year on record.
- We recently conducted annual check-in with community partners within FJC – the number one issue has been turnover rates with all departments including: Burlington Police Department, Family Abuse Services (50% turnover rate), and Crossroads (50% turnover rate). The philosophy of the FJC is to have collaboration.
- Strangulation is the #1 homicide for victims – there have been an increase in EMS calls.
- Completed Site Visit with Governors Crime Commission – no findings.
- Governors Crime Commission grant is very competitive. 90 new applicants have applied for the funding. The funds have dropped from \$150m to \$34m. We are competing with one our community partners for the same funding. We continue to be hopeful that Family Justice Center will become a County Department for sustainability.

Question: Are you feeling good about the conversations with the County regarding FJC becoming a county agency?

The conversations are on-going and we continue to discuss options.

Operations – Ms. Candice Gobble, Assistant Director of Operations

Administrative Support/Personnel: Robert Ring

See Statistical Report – as of February 28, 2022

Vacancies	39
New Hires	12
Interagency Transfers	4
Resignations	3

Mr. Ring reported as of today we currently have 43 vacancies. We are down from the 60 vacancies – which is a huge milestone. We hired 6 new staff in March but received 3 resignations.

Question: What about the DSS Director position?

Chair Norwick reported the posting will close at the end of the month. We did receive 15 applications this go around and all 15 applications will go to OSHR to be qualified before those applicants can be interviewed.

Energy Programs: Danae Pickard

See Economic Services Report

Child Care: Candice Gobble

No report.

IT Report: Mr. Jason Cole

Mr. Cole reported we hired new staff – James Jensen. Mr. Cole reported on how long it takes for new staff to be processed in IT in regards to set up of computer, phone, etc. (5 hours per staff).

Director’s Report – Sharon S. Scott, Interim Director–

Ms. Sharon Scott reported she is impressed with staff here at Alamance County Social Services. The Management Team has been very gracious and helpful.

New Business: 2022 Budget Presentation –

Assistant Director Gobble presented the 2022-23 DSS Budget:

Assistant Director Gobble opened with Lookback to FY 2022 – Alamance Co. DSS focused on the development of quality training in agency departments and furthered efforts to combat critical staffing levels due to increasing turnover.

- Maintained 4% increase for high-turnover positions, increase to non-permanent salaries, and 2 FJC positions moved to DSS budget for sustainability
- Vendor increases, developed plans to update specific areas of HSC – update kitchenettes and purchase 2 vehicles for fleet update
- Trainers established and training plans developed
- Diligent efforts to increase all DSS staff salaries, including hiring salaries by \$5k (effective January 1, 2022. We have seen since November 21 – we see new staff arrivals outweigh the departures. Since January 1, 2022, we hired 25 new staff with 11 departures.

Total: \$373,662.00 = Cut in Salary Line

Budget Impacts for 2023 –

Family First Prevention Services Act – This act was signed into law as part of the Bipartisan Budget Act in 2018. This act reforms the federal child welfare financing streams, Title IV-E and Title IV-B of the Social Security Act, to provide services to families who are at risk of entering the child welfare system. The bill aims to prevent children from entering foster care by allowing federal reimbursement for mental health services, substance use treatment and in-home parenting skill training. It also seeks to improve the well-being of children already in foster by incentivizing states to reduce placement of children in congregate care. We discussed this act last year at budget time.

Budget: \$6m for 2022 and \$23m for 2023

Newly Established Energy Programs – The new Low-Income Household Water Assistance Program (LIHWAP) provides funds to assist low-income households with water and wastewater bills. The Summer Cooling program will run through July 1st – September 30, 2022. We are not sure of the funding at this time.

Enhanced 75/25 Medicaid Administrative Funding – Centers for Medicaid and Medicare Services (CMS) has raised questions in NC about how funds are pulled down regarding the validation of pulling down claims. The State is in the process of developing workgroup to address the claims process.

State Allocation estimates remain unchanged; however, services need increases. There will be increase in expenditures due to larger footprint in the County.

Medicaid Transformation – There are continued delays in the roll of phases. We do know it will impact the County once the roll out occurs.

Staffing Needs –

- Maintain \$5k increase for Full-Time positions (\$1.4m which includes salary, fringe, etc.) – this includes service awards – 2% COLA and cover merit increases between now until the end of year.
- Increase to Non-Permanent Salaries (\$83k) – PT Staff are imperative to the agency – Energy, Contract staff in CPS as well as clerical staff in other areas.
- Two (2) Full Time IMC II Positions – hybrid to assist with both Energy and FNS (\$100k, includes salary and fringe, etc.) – We currently have 14 PT Energy staff – we have 3 different Energy Programs in 2021 and we have been informed that the LIHWAP program will become permanent, not temporary program. The staff were worked at capacity to support the programs. As of July 1, 2021 – 4,799 CIP/LIEAP applications processed.

Question: Are there three different applications for the programs?

Yes – each program has their own application – none are combined.

- SW III position – (\$69k includes salary & fringe benefits, etc.) – This position would be assigned to Guardianship Unit. Due to increase in guardianship cases– 4 out of the 5 SW III positions are at capacity in guardianship.

Operational and Facility Needs –

- Potential separation from Family Justice Center – (-\$315k) – we are not sure what will happen if the GCC funding is not approved for FJC.
- Identified funds for upcoming building projects – (\$66k) – DSS building is not a part of the County’s Capital Projects.
- Increase to Automotive Supplies & Utilities – (\$7k) – rising costs of fuel and 9.3% increase in Duke Energy.
- Increase to Vehicle repair line – (\$7k) – In last years budget we had theft of catalytic converters of three vehicles and offset the rising cost of maintenance for vehicles.
- Purchases 2 new vehicles to update DSS fleet -

FY 2023’ Expenditures –

Staffing - \$16,561.72 (74%)	Services - \$2,925,938 (14%)
Pass Through - \$1,460,626 (7%) – Reimbursed 100% by the State	Operations - \$1,375,882 (5%)

Total Expenditures for 2023 = \$22,324,158.00

FY 2023’ Revenues-

Federal - \$10,374,176.00 – (92%)
State - \$815,480.00 – (7%)
County - \$120,610.00 – (1%)

Total Estimated Revenues = \$11,310,266.00

Services Overview –

- Increase in Medicaid Recipients (+1,494)
- Increase to Food & Nutrition households (+2,386)
- Increase in Guardianship cases (136 – January 2021 to 139 – January 2022) – 27 deaths not shown
- Increase in children in Foster Care (91 – January 2021 to 98 – January 2022)
- Increase in number of petitions filed by DSS (17 – January 2021 – 29 – January 2022)

2023 Budget Timeline –

March 2022	Department meetings held to discuss budget request with County Manager
April 14, 2022	Budget Retreat with County Commissioners
May 2022	Presentation of County Manager’s Recommended Budget

June 2022	Public Hearing on Proposed Budget, Adoption of FY 22-23' Budget Ordinance
July 2022	Adopted budget ordinance finalized, printed and distributed

Question: With the 3 energy programs, do they cover 12 months?

It depends on the program:

- *LIHWAP – no deadline – as long as there is funding – program will run*
- *CIP – the program starts in July – program runs until all funds are exhausted – we requested additional funding*
- *LIEAP – the program starts in December and runs through March 31st*

Announcements:

None

Adjournment -

The next board meeting is 12:00 noon **Tuesday, April 26, 2022** at Family Justice Center, 1950 Martin Street, Burlington NC.

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted:

Carmen L. Morrow

Date approved: _____