

May 24, 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: Ms. Heidi Norwick, Chair, DSS Board Chair (Zoom); Ms. Maria Hernandez, DSS Board Member; Dr. Ernest Eason, DSS Board Member; Ms. Edna Parker, Vice-Chair (Zoom); Commissioner Pamela T. Thompson, 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; Ms. Jamie Hamlett, Attorney and Ms. Sharon S. Scott, Interim DSS Director were present.

Heidi Norwick, DSS Chair opened the meeting.

Public Comment:

None

Consent Agenda: Heidi Norwick, DSS Board Chair

April items on the consent agenda approved. Dr. Ernest Eason made motion to approve and seconded by Maria Hernandez, Board Member.

Staff Reports:

Fiscal: Ms. Candice Gobble

	APRIL 2022	% OF BUDGET	PRIOR YTD	% OF BUDGET
REVENUES	\$12,042,627.00	84%	\$9,844,062.00	85%
EXPENDITURES	\$16,088,013.00	69%	\$15,234,179.00	77%

Assistant Director Gobble reported the County Managers’ recommended budget presented at County Commissioner’s Meeting on May 16, 2022. We received the following information from Sherry Hook, Interim County Manager.

DSS Requested Budget FY 2022 – 2023:

- Maintain the \$5k increase that DSS staff receiving in January 2022
- Adjustment to Non-Permanent Salary lines to meet the trend of this staffing area
- (2) IMC II FT positions for Energy

- SW III position for Guardianship
- Vehicles for Fleet Update
- Increase to our agency supply line, automotive supplies (gas & vehicle repair) and utilities due to rising costs
- Continued building improvement monies

Total: \$21,729,280.00

County Manager's Recommended Budget:

- \$5k increase will continue to be maintained in the DSS Salary Line, however, the total salary figure will be reduced by \$300,000. The assurance was provided that if all positions hired in the upcoming fiscal year, the county would provide the funding needed.
- Adjustment to Non-permanent salary line (\$83k)
- One SWIII position for Adult Services Guardianship
- Two vehicles for fleet updates (\$50k)
- Increase to agency supply line, automotive supply line (gas & vehicle repair) and utilities due to rising costs
- Continued building improvement monies
- No changes to any other budgeted expenditure lines

There were two items that were not included in the recommended budget that we requested initially. They are as follows:

- (2) IMC II positions requested for Energy
- DSS **will not** be included in the upcoming \$5k increase provided to all County employees due to DSS received the \$5k increase in January. There are two other departments that will not be included for \$5k – they are Sheriff's Department and EMS because they received increase in January 2022. The County will bring both those departments up to \$5k increase due to departments did not receive the full raise.

Assistant Director Gobble reported we should see some savings in salary line when FJC becomes its own County Department. With the \$5k increase in January, we have been able to hire staff. But, staff continue to leave DSS especially in our Child Protective Services unit.

Assistant Director Gobble reported please keep in mind this is the “recommended budget”. The ultimate approval lies with the County Commissioners. The public hearing is set for June 6, 2022 meeting.

April Revenues:

Assistant Director Gobble reported we are currently at the end of State Fiscal year. We are trying to pull down all revenues possible to close out the fiscal year. The fiscal unit continues to monitor all line items. We have exhausted most funding sources. We would like to see \$0 at the end of this month.

April Expenditures:

Assistant Director Gobble reported we continue to monitor all expenditures. We recently purchased two vehicles to update fleet: Ford Fusion and Dodge Caravan. We have received quotes for the building upgrades for kitchenette areas which includes cabinetry and appliances. We will encumber for the new fiscal year, but will pay out of this year’s budget.

Assistant Director Gobble reported we will present the following budget amendments at the upcoming Commissioners’ Meeting scheduled for June 6, 2022. They are as follows:

- **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. The funds are donations through customer payments and allocated accordingly to counties. The additional allocation totals = \$2,887.07.
- **Low-Income Energy Assistance Program** – The LIEAP program provides a one-time vendor payment to help eligible households pay their heating costs. This adjustment to the previous allocation total will support the issuance of a one-time LIEAP supplemental payment to those households who received LIEAP payment during the 21-22’ FY. The additional allocation received totals = \$228,936.60.

Fraud: See report –

Unit	April 2022	April 2021	Current YTD	Prior Fiscal Year
Fraud	\$1,318.00	\$4,790.00	\$64,923.66	\$59,985.81

The Fraud Unit continues to maintain 100% timeliness and manage workflow. There were two Administrative Hearings held – all clients found guilty of committing an intention program violation. Collections remain suspended.

Agency Error Explanations for April 2022:

8 State Agency Errors:

- All due to duplicate supplements being issued to recipients.

2 County Agency Errors:

- Keying error by Orange County worker, but case was transferred to Alamance County who the became the county of issuance
- System issue with NCFASST

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	MARCH 2022	APRIL 2022
# REPORTS COMPLETED	70	69	110	90	100	63	28	111	128	88
# INITIATED WITHIN TIME FRAMES	64	66	100	75	91	60	27	104	120	81
# REPORTS INITIATED TIMELY	91.4%	95.7%	91%	83.33%	91%	95.2%	96.4%	93.7%	93.75%	92.05%

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 April, 7 reports were not initiated timely. For those 7 reports, the assessor made an appropriate number of attempts via a variety of methods to initiate the specified timeframe. For 1 report, the family was out of state during the time of required initiation.

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

Assistant Director Wellons gave the following updates:

- DSS is partnering with Alamance County Health Department for an onsite Job Fair. The event is planned for July date. Once the planning is complete, we will send out flyer.
- DSS is partnering with Alamance County Health Department to host Juneteenth Event scheduled for Friday, June 7, 2022 at the HSC Building. We will forward invitation to Board Members once the event has been finalized.
- Ann Petree Ribbon Cutting ceremony is scheduled for May 31, 2022 at 1:30pm at the Petree Building. Invitations have been forwarded.

Adult and Family Services Program Manager: LaPorscha McCullough

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

Unit	April 2022	April 2021	Current YTD	Prior Fiscal Year
Child Support	\$6,356,478.00	\$1,076,476.47	\$13,925,808.35	\$9,213,392.68

Ms. McCullough reported Child Support Unit completed IRS Audit – 100% approval and no findings.

Ms. McCullough reported Child Support “Amnesty Day” for non-custodial parents is scheduled for June 1, 2022. This event is a day to resolve active orders for arrest and resources to help non-custodial parents move in the right direction.

Adult Services -

Ms. McCullough reported the following:

- We continue the search for new supervisor for Adult Protective Services Unit

- We currently have two vacancies
- Elder Abuse Awareness Event is scheduled for June 16, 2022 at the Burlington Sock Puppets baseball game. The Sock Puppets have agreed to let two of our Persons Under Guardianship (P.U.G) throw the first pitch at the beginning of the game. Game Time: 7:00pm.

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

Ms. Angela Cole reported Alamance County DSS will not continue with Community Response Grant for upcoming fiscal year.

Ms. Cole reported assessments and intakes have increased. Our screening numbers are coming in at a higher rate between 63% - 68% - we typically screen at 55%. We continue to monitor reports. We continue to have staff resign.

Ms. Rebecca Lambert reported 18-21 LINKS Program funds are now available. We received an additional \$100k for Transitional Housing.

Ms. Lambert reported VAYA continues to meet at DSS twice a week - Assistant Director Wellons discussed challenging case as regards to clinical assessment and placement.

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

Ms. Hatfield reported the following:

REDA Audit

Office of Compliance and Program Integrity has started Round 2 of the REDA Audit (Recipient Eligibility Determination Audit) for all 100 counties. Round 1 took place prior in February 2019, and because of the pandemic to the pandemic, there was a delay.

Each month 20 cases will be reviewed (10 active and 10 negative) to determine that our county meets the state's accuracy standards. The accuracy standard for eligibility is 96.8% (meaning that only eligible applicants are approved or recertified for Medicaid benefits 96.8% of the time and Eligible applicants are not denied or terminated 96.8% of the time). In addition, the eligibility process must be free of any technical errors that do not change the outcome of the eligibility determination 90% of the time.

- Our accuracy rate for Active cases in February and March was 100%
- Our accuracy rate for Negative cases in February was 80% and 100% in March.
- And our Internal Control rate, for both Active and Negative cases, in February was 95% and 100% in March.

Ms. Hatfield reported we are actively working on methods once the PHE ends. We have started to see traffic increase for Economic Services. We have a “roll out” plan to open 2nd floor lobby for face-to-face with customers on June 1st. We will provide update at next meeting.

Ms. Pickard reported FNS CAPERS audit has ended. We were removed from all corrective actions and plans.

Ms. Pickard reported recipients aged 60 or older and disabled who received LIEAP automatic payment during the month of December 2021 – will receive an additional one-time LIEAP payment due to underpayment issue. These households will receive the difference between what they already received. The payment will be made directly to heating provider. Energy and Fiscal staff are working diligently to get payments to vendors – we are hopeful to have all payments completed by the end of May. This will affect 3,000 households and totals \$1million.

Ms. Pickard reported we have exhausted all Energy funds with the exception of LIHWAP which is the water program.

Ms. Wendy Roberts reported we continue to interview for IMC positions. We have a total of 19 vacancies. We recently conducted hiring blitz and we continue to train all new staff. We continue to work on training programs to occur once the PHE ends.

Family Justice Center – Skye Sullivan

Ms. Sullivan reported the following:

- FJC is down four positions - (1) maternity leave and (2) surgeries and (1) vacancy – critical position. We continue to use Interns from Elon University to assist when needed.
- We will be sending 10 staff and community partners to San Diego, California for 2022 Annual Family Justice Center Conference. There are trainings on Strangulations, etc., that are key to the services we provide at FJC.
- DV Fatality Review Team is scheduled on June 2 and June 3rd. This will be the first meeting - Ms. Sullivan reported she is currently working with the DA’s office to identify the first care for review.
- FJC will partner with the Court System with the program “Caitlyn’s Courage”. This a domestic violence GPS monitoring program that aims to reduce the interaction between domestic violence victims and the accused. This program utilizes GPS technology to ensure that potentially harmful or deadly interactions do not occur.

Operations – Ms. Candice Gobble, Assistant Director of Operations

Administrative Support/Personnel: Robert Ring

See Statistical Report – as of April 30, 2022

Vacancies	34
New Hires	3
Interagency Transfers	2
Resignations	6

Mr. Ring reported as of today we currently have 39 vacancies. We have 19 vacancies in Economic Services and 14 in Child Welfare. We hired 6 new staff on May 1st and we have 4 new staff slated to start on May 31st. We are hopeful to get the 2% COLA and maybe this will keep Alamance Co. DSS competitive.

Action: Heidi Norwick, DSS Board Chair will work with Candice Gobble to formulate a letter to send to Alamance County Commissioners on behalf of DSS Board regarding competitive salary.

Energy Programs: Danae Pickard

- See Economic Services Report

Child Care: Candice Gobble

- No report.

IT Report: Mr. Jason Cole

- No report.

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

Ms. Sharon Scott reported she continues to be impressed with staff here at Alamance County Social Services. The staff here are very knowledgeable in their work.

New Business: Ethics Presentation –

Jamie Hamlett, DSS Attorney presented Confidentiality, Ethics and Conflicts of Interest presentation -

The following was presented:

Confidentiality – Why is this Important? –

We respect our clients and want them to feel their private/personal information is protected. Almost all information held by Alamance County DSS is protected and/or confidential. The NC Administrative Code says that employees can be disciplined for wrongful release of information. The wrongful release of information could result in a law suit.

General Rule –

North Carolina's public records law provides a broad right of access to records of public agencies. The main statutes that define the scope of the law are contained in Chapter 132 of the North Carolina General Statutes. Many exceptions that deal with public records can be found in other statutes and administrative codes.

The following General Statutes were presented:

- **NCGS.108A-80** – It shall be unlawful for any person to obtain, disclose or use or to authorize permit or acquiesce in the use of any list of names or other information concerning persons applying for or receiving public assistance or social services
- **10A.NCAC.21A** – client records are confidential

Board Access to Records –

N.C.G.S 108A-11 – Every member of the county board of social services may inspect and examine any record on file in the office of the director relating in any manner to applications for and provision of public assistance and social services authorized by this chapter. ***No member shall disclose or make public any information which he/she may acquire by examining such records.***

§ 14-234.1. – Misuse of Confidential Information –

It is unlawful for any officer or employee of the State or any officer or any employee of any of its political subdivisions, in contemplation of official action by himself or by a governmental unit with which he is associated, or in reliance on information which was made known to him in his official capacity and which has not been made public, to commit any of the following acts:

1. Acquire a pecuniary interest in any property, transaction, or enterprise or gain any pecuniary benefit which may be affected by such information or official action; or
2. Intentionally aid another to do any of the above acts.
 - a. Violation of this section is a Class 1 Misdemeanor

Ethics – (*John Saxon, Handbook for County Social Services Board 2009, UNC School of Government, The University of NC – Chapel Hill, 2009*)

Ethics refers broadly to the standard of moral behavior that the public generally expects from persons who hold public office... And to the legal requirements and prohibitions that regulate the conduct and behavior of social services board members and local government officials.

rooms, Staci Stepp for putting heart and soul into designing the rooms.

Ethical Expectations of Public Officials –

- Discharge responsibility faithfully, diligently and competently;
- Comply with applicable laws;
- Act in the public interest and for the public good and not use their offices for private benefit;
- Provide responsible and effective public leadership;
- Act honestly, courteously and fairly when discharging their public responsibilities; and

- Maintain high standard of morality and integrity in their personal affairs.

NCACBSS – North Carolina Association of County Boards of Social Services

The mission of NCACBSS is to inform, educate and empower Board Members to become more aware of their duties and responsibilities.

NCACBSS has adopted a model code of ethics to encourage its members to act in an ethical manner. <http://www.ncacbss.org/Index.html>

§ 14-230. Willfully failing to Discharge Duties –

- (a) If any clerk of any court of record, sheriff, magistrate, school board member, county commissioner, county surveyor, coroner, treasurer, or official of any the State institutions, or of any county, city or town, shall willfully omit, neglect or refuse to discharge any of the duties of his office, for default whereof if it not elsewhere provided that he shall be indicted, he shall be guilty of a Class 1 Misdemeanor. If it shall be proved that such officer, after his qualification, willfully and corruptly omitted, neglected or refused to discharge any of the duties of his office, or willfully and corruptly violated his oath of office according to true intent and meaning thereof, such officer shall be guilty of misbehavior in office, and shall be punished by removal therefrom under the sentence of the court as a part of the punishment for the offense.

Prohibition from Benefitting from Public Contracts –

§ 14-234. Public officers or employees benefiting from public contracts; exceptions.

- (a) (1) No public officer or employee who is involved in making or administering a contract on behalf of a public agency may derive a direct benefit from the contract except as provided in this section, or as otherwise allowed by law.
- (2) A public officer or employee who will derive a direct benefit from a contract with the public agency he or she serves, but who is not involved in making or administering the contract, shall not attempt to influence any other person who is involved in making or administering the contract.
- (3) No public officer or employee may solicit or receive any gift, favor, reward, service, or promise of reward, including a promise of future employment, in exchange for recommending, influencing, or attempting to influence the award of a contract by the public agency he or she serves.

Conflict of Interest –

- A conflict of interest is a transaction or arrangement that benefits an officer, board member, or employee on a personal level. People other than board members may also present a conflict of interest, including board members who are related to employees, immediate relatives of board members, and dual-capacity individuals (a person who is an employee that also serves on the board.)

<https://www.boardeffect.com/blog/avoiding-conflicts-of-interest-on-a-board-of-directors/>

- It is important to consider if, as a board member, you have any outside commitments, personal or otherwise, that would divert you from your duty as a board member.
- Conflicts can be real, potential or perceived.
- Try to avoid all forms of conflict.
- Make disclosures.
- If a conflict is real and significant, it may be cause to ask for resignation or removal.

Chair Heidi Norwick asked the board to move into closed session –§ NCGS 143-318.11(a)(6) -To consider the qualifications, competence, performance, character, fitness, conditions of appointment, or conditions of initial employment of an individual public officer or employee or prospective public officer or employee; or to hear or investigate a complaint, charge, or grievance by or against an individual public officer or employee.

Vice-Chair Edna Parker made motion, seconded by Dr. Ernest Eason to go into closed session. The motion passed unanimously and the board went into closed session at 1:15pm.

Vice-Chair Edna Parker made motion to return to open session, seconded by Dr. Ernest Eason. The motion passed unanimously and board return to open session at 1:45pm.

Announcements:

None.

Adjournment -

The next board meeting is 12:00 noon **Tuesday, June 28, 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: _____