

Durham County Board of Social Services

Regular Monthly Meeting

April 19, 2023

The Durham County Board of Social Services monthly meeting was held on Wednesday, April 19, 2023. The DSS Board meeting was a hybrid, on-site meeting in conference room 2421/22.

The following DSS Board members were in attendance: Chair Commissioner Wendy Jacobs. Board members: Janice P. Paul, Jacqueline Beatty-Smith, and Charles I. Mitchell.

Vice Chair Dr. Monique Holsey-Hyman requested an excused absence.

The Durham County Department of Social Services was represented by the following: Director Maggie Cveticanin, Sarah Bradshaw, and Chief Operations Officer Kelly Inman; Assistant Directors: Rhonda Stevens, Jovetta Whitfield, Janeen Gordon, and Margaret Faircloth.

DSS staff attending included: Candice Leathers, Latoya Chambers, Meghan Russ, Nancy Santos, Kalindra Ellerbe, Lee Little, Quannah Jackson-Brown, Shontelle Smith, LaVelle Chesney, Susan Lee, Jennifer Moon, Lynn Thomas, Christie McMillan, Pamela Purifoy, Emma Perry, Tonia Gay, and Montrella R. Springfield.

DSS Human Resources Analyst James Hart attended the meeting.

Senior Assistant County Attorney Danielle Briggs was present.

Public participation: Lorissa Seibel attended the meeting.

Chair Commissioner Wendy Jacobs called the April 19, 2023, Durham County DSS Board meeting to order at 2:02pm. The DSS Board had the first hybrid, and in-person meeting in three years. Director Maggie Cveticanin attended first DSS Board Meeting. Chair Commissioner Wendy Jacobs acknowledged Interim Director Sarah Bradshaw and thanked her for assisting Director Cveticanin during the transition.

Chair Commissioner Wendy Jacobs welcomed everyone to the meeting and read the Public Charge.

The Board of the Durham County Department of Social Services asks its members and citizens to conduct themselves in a respectful, courteous manner, both with the Board and fellow citizens. At any time, should any member of the Board or any citizen fail to observe this public charge, the Chairman will ask the offending person to leave the meeting until that individual regains personal control. Should decorum fail to be restored, the Chairman will recess the meeting until such time that a genuine commitment to the public charge is observed.

Chair Commissioner Wendy Jacobs asked everyone to state their name and address before speaking.

Chair Commissioner Wendy Jacobs requested a motion to approve Vice Chair Dr. Monique Holsey-Hyman's excused absence. Board member Charles I. Mitchell moved for the Board to excuse the absence of Vice Chair Dr. Monique Holsey-Hyman from the April 19, 2023, DSS Board Meeting. Board member Jacqueline Beatty-Smith seconded the motion. The excused absence received unanimous approval.

Public Comments

None

Approval of the Agenda

Chair Commissioner Wendy Jacobs moved forward with the review and approval of the proposed agenda.

Board member Janice P. Paul moved the approval of the amended proposed agenda. Approval of Minutes was added to the Proposed Agenda. Board member Jacqueline Beatty-Smith seconded.

The amended proposed agenda was unanimously approved.

Board member	Yes	No	Abstained
Chair Commissioner Wendy Jacobs	Yes		
Board member Janice P. Paul	Yes		
Board member Jacqueline Beatty-Smith	Yes		
Board member Charles I. Mitchell	Yes		

Approval of Minutes

Chair Commissioner Wendy Jacobs requested approval of the March 15, 2023, minutes.

Board member Janice P. Paul offered a motion to approve the minutes and Board member Jacqueline Beatty-Smith seconded.

The voice vote was unanimous by the DSS Board.

Board member	Yes	No	Abstained
Chair Commissioner Wendy Jacobs	Yes		
Board member Janice P. Paul	Yes		
Board member Jacqueline Beatty-Smith	Yes		
Board member Charles I. Mitchell	Yes		

Chair Commissioner Wendy Jacobs welcomed Director Maggie Cveticanin to Durham County Department of Social Services. Interim Director Sarah Bradshaw was recognized for leadership the past six months.

Director Maggie Cveticanin gave a brief introduction and thanked Mrs. Bradshaw for staying until the end of the month. Director Cveticanin conveyed gratefulness for the opportunity to move to Durham and work at DSS. The main goal is making sure staff have the tools and support to work with the community and provide services needed to the most vulnerable population. Staff have been friendly, gracious, and welcoming. Director Cveticanin thanked the DSS Board. The DSS Board recognized James Hart for his support during the recruitment of the DSS Director.

DSS Board Report

Chair Commissioner Wendy Jacobs inquired about any changes due to the ending of the public health emergency related to food and nutrition.

Commissioner Wendy Jacobs reminded attendees about the Dementia Community Event. The event will be Saturday, April 29, 2023, at the Health and Human Services Building. The event is scheduled from 10 AM-2 PM, there is no cost and lunch will be served. Jay Reinstein is the keynote speaker. Durham County DSS is one of the sponsors. Assistant Director Janeen Gordon is on the board. There is approximately 6000 people in the Durham community with Dementia. There is a profound effect on families caring for parents and others diagnosed with dementia.

The event will create advocacy, education and support around the issue. People are isolated and dealing with dementia, but there is help. One possible precursor for dementia is having hearing loss, doctors recommend utilizing hearing aids.

The Durham Crisis Response Center supports victims of domestic and sexual violence is reopening after renovation and a new director is in place.

The Family Justice Center in downtown Durham at the old convention center is a joint project of the City and County. The County donated the building and the City is paying for the renovations. The Family Justice Center is similar to the model in Greensboro. The model is setup as a one stop shop for victims of domestic, family, and sexual violence. People can request restraining orders; help with housing; and other services. The model has shown a reduction of fatalities and trauma incidents. Approximately 60% of children have been exposed to family trauma and violence. This is a trauma informed approach focusing on a multi-generational issue which is critical to treat children.

Chair Commissioner Wendy Jacobs mentioned the Holistic Empathetic Assistance Response Team program operated by the Durham Community Safety Department (DCSD) which is one of the five pilots at the City. A non-law enforcement approach to family crisis. A documentary will be presented at the Carolina Theatre, April 19, 2023, at 7:00 PM and everyone is encouraged to attend if possible.

Chair Commissioner Jacobs mentioned participating in a national initiative which focuses on vulnerable residents and visited two different county programs in Kansas. Johnston County has My Resource Connect a system that shares information internally for people to have contacts in public health, DSS, EMS, Veterans Affairs, and law enforcement. They are tracking and conducting case management internally. Chair Commissioner Wendy Jacobs suggested doing the same in Durham. Chair Commissioner Jacobs visited a program in Douglas County, they have a 24-Hour Crisis Response Center including a walk-in urgent care and a transitional/supportive housing campus in one place.

Board member Janice P. Paul inquired about the DCRC and the new director. The new director is Damien Talley. Board member Paul asked about the new director for the Family Justice Center. Jeff Whiston is the new director.

DSS Director's Report – Interim Director Sarah Bradshaw

Interim Director Sarah Bradshaw provided information from a recent NCACDSS Meeting and Newsletter. One highlight received from the American Academy of Pediatrics included a one-year review on state progress on congregate care under Family First Prevention Act. The State reduced the use of congregate care and increased the use of kinship placements in foster care. Qualified Residential Treatment Program (QRTP) is now a primary component of congregate care placements. The critical barriers include workforce and staff, therapeutic foster care models, funding and foster families. Child welfare needs confirm that QRTPs are accountable and appropriate for children with special needs.

Recommendations for improvements comprise of additional federal and state resources, specialized QRTP staff, regulated standards, identified performance measures, better oversight, and integration within child welfare services.

There is a bill currently in the legislature which might pass focusing on accountability for providers and facilities to place children in appropriate settings with significant issues. Alliance is in the top six providers. Durham is in a good area relating to Alliance to help with the crisis issues. The State shared a Medicaid data dashboard tracking all placements, issues, percentages and outcomes compared to all providers and Alliance was one of the top three.

The USDA study of SNAP E&T intended to identify practices and lessons learned to support states as they work to prove case management needed for participants and program priorities.

There are issues across the board and will be discussed at the Annual Director's Meeting. Director Maggie Cveticanin plans to attend the meeting.

Interim Director Bradshaw report included items enforced as of April 1, 2023. If DSS agencies are not in compliance, they must provide a county specific plan/corrective action to the State for approval. Medicaid beneficiaries should be able to communicate with DSS by telephone during recertification process. DSS is required to monitor phone calls placed on hold and limit calls placed on hold to a minimal time. Beneficiaries have to be able to leave detailed messages while remaining on hold. Detail instructions have to be provided on voicemail. Durham DSS has seen a reduction in dropped calls.

Assistant Director Rhonda Stevens shared a script will be added to the voicemail after-hours and during the day and tested by April 21, 2023, since the deadline is May 1, 2023.

Chair Commissioner Wendy Jacobs questioned if this is achievable with staffing issues? Will there be a dedicated person to follow-up on the messages and will temporary staff be added. Assistant Director Rhonda Stevens conveyed staff in the Call Center will handle calls and messages during the day. Temporary staff will retrieve message the next morning and distribute appropriately and timely. An email was created and available on the DSS website. Emails are being received with questions not only regarding Medicaid but other programs. The email in place is part of the lawsuit.

Chair Commissioner Jacobs asked if the County Manager was aware of the impact? The BOCC approved new technology that could possibly be used to assist. Chair Commissioner Jacobs suggested connecting with County IT to see if the new technology is beneficial to DSS.

Chief Operations Officer Kelly Inman will report on the budget presentation with the County Manager. Interim Director Bradshaw emphasized the impact of families and DSS with the public health emergency ending, and Medicaid expansion. Leadership have been discussing gradually bring staff back, space is being assessed, parking is in place, but we are still in need of hybrid work.

Management had first in-person meeting that targeted three topics which included performance appraisals, grievance policy, and appeals. Alanna Jones presented on personal management tips which will benefit new managers. DSS is working with County HR for a formal training relating to SAP process and ensuring orientation especially for new supervisors.

Interim Director Bradshaw shared HR may be overseeing the hiring processes for all temporary employees in all departments. The County is looking to centralize the process and departments have to supply information about the current contracts. The main reason for the change is for HR awareness of people in the buildings.

James Hart, HR Analyst corresponded the County is looking to centralize the process and departments have to supply information about the current contracts. The process has not been finalized. Human Resources will be aware of temporary staff working in the different departments.

Board member Janice P. Paul inquired in reference to DSS continuing their relationship with current temporary agencies. DSS will continue to use Vanguard and Express, different departments may use other vendors. HR will work based on information collected to create the best process. The process will be feasible for liability, knowing who is in the building, their function and what temporary agency they are associated with during their tenure. The email mentioned by Interim Director Bradshaw included our main concerns would be ensuring that DSS services are known and relationships with companies not being interrupted. More information will be available at the next board meeting.

Interim Director Bradshaw will work with Director Cveticanin to complete the timelines for the program changes requested by the DSS Board. Board member Janice P. Paul asked if Sharnese Ransom is currently working for NCACDSS. Interim Director Bradshaw suggested contacting NCACDSS to schedule an introduction for Director Maggie Cveticanin and retrieve information relating to trainings at the State level. Sharnese Ransom is a good resource due to her knowledge of legislative, State and the association.

Chair Commissioner Wendy Jacobs moved forward with the vacancy report and reports from the Assistant Directors.

Vacancy Report – James Hart

James Hart, HR Analyst, highlighted the vacancy rate is at 15%. This is considered a very low vacancy rate. New hires are scheduled to begin May 1, 2023. Critical supervisor positions are being filled with many being promotions within the agency. Evaluating reclassifications and looking at some reorganization has assisted with reduction of burnout and retention. Staff retirement is occurring across the agency with long term employees retiring in AAS and CATD. To address staff vacancies, DSS participated in the career fair at the Durham convention center on March 31, 2023. The first hour was dedicated to veterans and it was a great opportunity to meet perspective candidates.

DSS is partnering with Human Resources for the manager's matrix program, a seven-day process where new supervisors, managers go through different areas that includes performance evaluations, recruitment, and benefits.

The classification and compensation study were completed, and the proposed changes will affect social services staff. Primarily, there will be changes to pay ranges to meet current market salaries. In addition, pay incentives are being addressed for hard to fill positions. DSS had to provide information to contrast

relationships between different pay ranges throughout the agency and how they affect one another.

This information was presented to the consultant and the final proposal will go to the BOCC. County Manager Dr. Sowell allowed reclassification of positions and they have been submitted.

Chair Commissioner Wendy Jacobs asked about the internship launched for the summer and whether DSS is a part. Positions are targeting high school, and college students in Durham County. Our current internship program has been joined with the cities program for the sake of efficacy and effectiveness. Chair Commissioner Jacobs will forward information to DSS.

Family Economic Independence (FEI) – Rhonda Stevens

Assistant Director Rhonda Stevens conveyed that a total of ten hiring packets have been submitted.

Chair Commissioner Jacobs questioned the numbers in Work First program and the childcare issue. Assistant Director Rhonda Stevens said that up until recently they always meet program requirements, and that improvements in the program increased the number of applications. Flyers have been created and distributed, also, a meeting was held about child care. Notices will be sent to providers to be posted so parents will be aware of the childcare subsidy and pass on the information to others eligible program participants. Staff will be attending a community event on April 25, 2023, and will be going to schools to provide information relating to child care and other DSS programs.

Assistant Director Margaret Faircloth stated that quarterly meetings will start back with Child Care and mentioned other counties discussing having someone from childcare attending job fairs.

Assistant Director Rhonda Stevens spoke with James Hart about sharing child care information with new hires at Durham County.

Director Maggie Cveticanin suggested outreach at the Family Justice Center and Crisis Center to determine if it will be helpful to have DSS FEI staff onsite at the new center.

Chair Commissioner Wendy Jacobs welcomed Lorissa Seibel to the DSS Board meeting.

Customer Accountability and Talent Development (CATD) – Lynn Thomas, Program Manager

Program manager Lynn Thomas expressed gratitude for Interim Assistant Director Cynthia Cason's leadership. The DSS Board did not have any questions for Program manager Lynn Thomas.

Chair Commissioner Jacobs thanked Lynn Thomas and CATD staff.

Child and Family Services – Jovetta Whitfield

Assistant Director Jovetta Whitfield announced April is National Child Abuse Prevention Month. Assistant Director Whitfield mentioned the contract with SpeakWrite which will allow staff to work directly on their smartphones. Since staff are hybrid, it will give them the opportunity to complete documentation in a timely manner. It will be available 24 hours toll free and available via smartphone or laptop. The plan is to launch May 1, 2023, and staff are excited because they can complete their documentation by dictation.

Program Manager LaVelle Chesney shared activities for Child Abuse Prevention Month that included National Digital Advocacy Day. Individuals can partner with Prevent Child Abuse America to contact members of Congress to advocate for increase investment for grants and additional funding. A Child Welfare Lunch and Learn scheduled for April 25, 2023, from 11:30 AM to 1:30 PM via Microsoft Teams. They will discuss such things as mandated reporting and CPS intake investigation and assessment in home prevention and recruitment. Child Abuse Prevention Month will focus on Safe Sleep and educating our clients and members of the Community regarding defense and appropriate sleep arrangements. Also, April 24th through April 28th is designated as the Five Days of Action and there will be a tree ribbon tying event at 11:00 AM on Thursday, April the 27th, concluding our activities for Child Abuse Prevention Month.

Assistant Director Jovetta Whitfield talked about activities in May for Foster Care Month which include the large event at the Durham Bulls Ballpark, May 17, 2023, at 6:00pm. Resource providers and youth are looking forward to the first live event since the start of the pandemic. Chair Commissioner Jacobs inquired about the number of people attending. Invites are still going out therefore there is not a final count of participants at this time.

Board member Janice P. Paul asked about group activities around the building related to offsite groups. Staff continue to work effectively regardless to their presence.

Chair Commissioner Wendy Jacobs posed a question relating to an RFP for Rapid Response/Emergency Beds and not receiving a response. An RFP was put out a few years ago and received no responses. DSS currently has a contract with a private provider for rapid response.

Board member Janice P. Paul inquired about the AND Program Judge replacement. Assistant Director Whitfield met with the Guardian Ad-Litem Administrator and a name must be submitted to the Governor for approval. Judge Gordon is the visiting judge at this time.

Chair Commissioner Wendy Jacobs queried about the housing vouchers for foster youth aging out. Chair Commissioner Jacobs was contacted by a foster parent concerning the housing vouchers. This is an important resource for foster youth. Assistant Director Whitfield will look into the housing vouchers, but they are not under Social Services.

Aging and Adult Services – Janeen Gordon

Assistant Director Janeen Gordon highlighted the Dementia Awareness Day. Staff have received training on SpeakWrite and are utilizing automated ways to complete documentation. Program managers Lee Little and Meghan Russ attended the National American Society on Aging Conference. Lee Little, shared information about aging in place and healthcare workers. Retaining staff in critical areas for vulnerable adults is essential due to retirements and career change. Discussion was held around increasing budget for adult protective services and guardianship that is awaiting administrative approval. Issues relating to food insecurities across the country and soliciting ideas for helping the community were also discussed at this conference. This will help adults transitioning into retirement and over age 60. Meghan Russ added the discussion on the Six Pillars of Brain Health facilitated by Sanjay Gupta.

Assistant Director Janeen Gordon announced two positions have been filled in SAN Home that were reclassified. The State has distributed policy regarding case management and staff continue to work on the wait list as the numbers continue to increase.

Board member Jacqueline Beatty-Smith asked about the impact on seniors when their benefits decreased to approximately \$20.00. Assistant Director Gordon replied they have worked on several committees to come up with solutions to address the issue. One suggestion is to work with the food banks and Durham Center for Senior Life. There also needs to be discussions with

the County to see how we can support the programs in place with additional resources or funding.

Chair Commissioner Wendy Jacobs stated the BOCC approved over \$400,000.00 in food assistance until the end of June. Chair Commissioner Jacobs conveyed the wait list for home delivered meals is increasing, the same issue exist with housing and the financial resources are not available. The other question centered around the recommendation for low-income homeowner relief program. There has not been a follow-up meeting. Chair Commissioner Jacobs suggested bringing this item back to the next meeting and thanked Aging and Adult Services for the report and work they continue to provide to Durham citizens.

Business Operations – Margaret Faircloth and Kelly Inman

Chief Operations Officer Kelly Inman and Assistant Director Margaret Faircloth reported on the meeting with the County Manager Dr. Kimberly Sowell about budget requests. Items brought to her attention included reclassification of positions and special assistance positions. DSS leadership looked within FEI to find positions asked for in the budget for IT Tech and an HR Analyst. Fifteen positions have been requested in the budget and two were reclassified. Aging and Adult Services was a focus and a manager compliance officer.

Another request included buying Traverse, a case management/document management tool. DSS internal systems are outdated, and new software will provide productivity and efficiency. This can be paid with ARPA funds. ARPA funds can be used for In-Home Aide Services/Meals on Wheels. There is discussion at the county level about centralizing the vehicle fleet. DSS gets reimbursement on cars purchased and only DSS staff can operate.

Leadership took the opportunity to talk through some non-mandated services, Tax Program, HOPWA, Opening Doors, Eviction Diversion, Coordinated Entry, and ERAP. The overhead reimbursed decreased due to the cost allocation process. The public health emergency ended and due to Medicaid expansion there will be an influx and County Manager Dr. Sowell understands the concern and will help at that time.

County Manager Dr. Kimberly Sowell is very supportive. DSS Leadership emphasized letting the BOCC know about reimbursements and that changes have to be in the budget at the beginning.

Chair Commissioner Wendy Jacobs thanked everyone for the detailed report and showed interest about implementing virtual appointments. Virtual

appointments are something being looked at with scheduling software. Currently, there are 120 spots available until January 2024. County IT is assisting with the scheduling platform and integrating with Teams. They have a dedicated analyst at the county working on this project.

Chair Commissioner Jacobs mentioned operating more in-person now that parking is available. The re-opening group is evaluating expanding in-person operations. DSS never closed, and leadership is making sure space is available for staff. DSS leadership is reviewing the strategic plan to meet upcoming reversion back to face-to-face requirements.

Chair Commissioner Jacobs asked if there was any more business requiring the DSS Board attention and thanked everyone for attending the meeting. Chair Commissioner Jacobs and reminded DSS Board members to reapply if their terms are expiring.

The meeting was adjourned by a majority vote.

Respectfully submitted

_____	_____
Chairperson	Date
_____	_____
Secretary to the Board	Date