

Durham County Board of Social Services

Regular Session Minutes

December 18, 2023

The Durham County Board of Social Services monthly meeting was held on Wednesday, December 18, 2023, via Microsoft Teams.

The following DSS Board members were in attendance: Chair Commissioner Wendy Jacobs, Vice Chair Dr. Monique Holsey-Hyman; Board members: Jacqueline Beatty-Smith, Charles I. Mitchell, and Wendy Sotolongo.

The Durham County Department of Social Services was represented by the following: Director Maggie Cveticanin, and Deputy Director Valery Dambreville

Assistant Directors: Kimberly Lincoln (Interim), Rhonda Stevens, Margaret Faircloth, Jovetta Whitfield, and Cynthia Cason (Interim)

DSS staff attending included Pamela Purifoy, and Montrella Springfield Danielle Briggs, Senior Assistant County Attorney was present.

Chair Commissioner Wendy Jacobs called the December 18 , 2023, regular meeting to order and thanked everyone for working together to have the meeting before the holidays. This will be a brief meeting and the goal is to adjourn by 11:00am.

The public charge was read by Chair Commissioner Wendy Jacobs.

Public Comments

No public comments

Approval of the Agenda

Chair Commissioner Wendy Jacobs asked the board members to review and approve the proposed agenda. Board member Jacqueline Beatty-Smith offered the motion to approve the proposed agenda and Vice Chair Dr. Monique Holsey-Hyman seconded.

The agenda was unanimously approved.

| Board member | Yes | No | Abstained |
|--------------------------------------|------------|-----------|------------------|
| Chair Commissioner Wendy Jacobs | Yes | | |
| Vice Chair Dr. Monique Holsey-Hyman | Yes | | |
| Board member Jacqueline Beatty-Smith | Yes | | |
| Board member Charles I. Mitchell | Yes | | |
| Board member Wendy Sotolongo | Yes | | |

Chair Commissioner Wendy Jacobs welcomed the new board member Wendy Sotolongo to the DSS Board. Chair Commissioner Wendy Jacobs asked Board member Wendy Sotolongo for an introduction followed by the DSS Board.

Board member Wendy Sotolongo expressed it was an honor to be a member of the DSS Board. She graduated from law school and worked in Asheville before returning to Durham in 1990. She worked for the Durham County Attorney's Office and represented Social Services. Great memories of the amazing people that she worked with from 1990 to 1999. She was the Guardian ad Litem, attorney advocate for Durham County for seven years. Also, worked with Adult Protective Services and Guardianship.

The past 16 years worked with Indigent Defense Services helping attorneys represent parents. Board member Sotolongo has a statewide view due to covering the State and other DSS agencies, but have a long standing passion for Durham County.

Chair Commissioner Jacobs conveyed the Board is thrilled to have Board member Wendy Sotolongo's expertise and knowledge.

Vice Chair Dr. Monique Holsey-Hyman welcomed Board member Wendy Sotolongo and will enjoy working with her. Vice Chair Dr. Holsey-Hyman has over 30 years of experience in social work and is a Professor at North Carolina Central University. Also, worked two years as a public servant.

Board member Jacqueline Beatty-Smith welcomed Board member Wendy Sotolongo. Board member Jacqueline Beatty-Smith worked from 1980 to March 2020 serving in various areas of the federal government and moved back to Durham and have been on the Board for almost three years. An Army Veteran and background in human resources management, strategic planning, and various other things.

Board member Charles I. Mitchell welcomed Board member Wendy Sotolongo to the DSS Board. This is his second term on the Board. Board member Mitchell background is in mental health and substance abuse.

DSS Director Maggie Cveticanin gave a brief introduction. She started in April and look forward to working with Board member Wendy Sotolongo.

Deputy Director Valery Dambreville has been at DSS for two months and previously worked in Randolph County.

Interim Assistant Directors Cynthia Cason and Kimberly Lincoln; Assistant Directors Jovetta Whitfield, Rhonda Stevens and Margaret Faircloth welcomed Board member Wendy Sotolongo and gave brief introductions. Deputy Director Catherine Williamson-Hardy is retiring so the leadership will join her for lunch today. Chief Operating Officer_Kelly Inman is off on personal leave. Montrella Springfield welcomed Board member Wendy Sotolongo to the DSS Board.

Danielle Briggs, Senior Assistant County Attorney assigned to Social Services gave a brief introduction.

Pamela Purifoy, Senior Public Information Officer welcomed Board member Sotolongo to the DSS Board.

Chair Commissioner Wendy Jacobs thanked everyone and look forward to an in-person meeting in January.

Chair Report

Chair Commissioner Wendy Jacobs shared the wonderful celebration honoring employees with various milestones with County government. There were new inaugural awards from the county manager. The leadership staff had nominated James Hart, DSS Human Resources Analyst and he received an award for leadership with the job fairs. Chair Commissioner Wendy Jacobs thanked Director Maggie Cveticanin and Interim Assistant Director Cynthia Cason for presenting at the Board of County Commissioners giving an overview about Medicaid Expansion.

Director's Report

Director Maggie Cveticanin gave an update on Northwoods Traverse, the new case management tool starting up in January for Aging and Adult Services and Child and Family Services.

Allied Professional Consulting Services will be working with Child Welfare on best practices beginning in January.

Director Cveticanin highlighted the importance of the work because as of last week, over 39,000 prescriptions have been filled and due to the State of North Carolina expanding Medicaid.

DSS staff are working hard to make sure that applications are processed in a timely manner. I'm giving my hats off to Cynthia Cason and her team. We asked for 35 expanded Medicaid positions, and we have 22 packets in the queue to be processed to get hired.

In January, seven or eight new hires have already started and those are IMC II and posting our supervisor positions.

Rhonda Stevens' team did an amazing job coming in two weeks ago on a Saturday and processed recertifications and made about 100 phone calls to catch up on food and nutrition applications. This was an initiative they decided to dedicate their Saturday to coming in as a team.

Chair Commissioner Wendy Jacobs stated that staff has been showing incredible leadership and innovation. The job fairs were a success. Medicaid expansion started December 1st and between the two job fairs 120 people were interviewed on the spot.

Director Cveticanin mentioned the first one was August and then the second one was October 28th, right after approval, the first one with 120, The second one was 103. Durham was recognized by the State for the job fairs.

Chair Commissioner Wendy Jacobs thanked Assistant Director Rhonda Stevens and staff for their initiative and dedication. Chair Commissioner Jacobs inform board members assistant directors will report at the January.

January 2024 Meeting Agenda

Overall Budget Discussion

Chair Commissioner Wendy Jacobs think the budget would be an important focus because it has to be submitted in February. There was a strategic plan retreat a few weeks ago and learned that similar to mirroring national trends, economic trends, we are seeing a slowing in sales and occupancy tax revenues are three major sources of revenue. The budget staff have already projecting using our base budget moving forward and some of the built in cost are personnel related health care, retirement, increased wages along with some of the areas where we that are priority areas. Funding like Durham public schools and our Durham Pre K program even with just moving those things forward. We're looking already at a budget of revenue shortfall. There are 30 county departments expecting flat funding for the coming fiscal year, which is a big deal. This have not been done this since the pandemic in 2019 where we have had to do flat funding.

Board member Jacqueline Beatty-Smith commented and wished all the fantastic staff to DSS Director Maggie Cveticanin, the assistant directors, and the staff and Montrella Springfield and Danielle Briggs, thank you all so much. Everyone have a very Merry Christmas, happy holidays and all the best in the new year. Director Cveticanin will send an email to staff on behalf of the DSS Board.

Vice Chair Dr. Monique Holsey-Hyman thanked Director Maggie Cveticanin for her leadership and DSS staff for their work. Vice Chair Dr. Holsey-Hyman wished everyone a Healthy and Safe Holiday.

Director Maggie Cveticanin wished everyone a very Happy and Safe Holiday and look forward to working with the DSS Board. The DSS Board has been supportive since relocating to Durham and speaking with directors in other counties Director Cveticanin is fortunate.

Board member Charles I. Mitchell wished everyone Happy Holidays.

Chair Commissioner Wendy Jacobs echoed remarks from the DSS Board. Director Cveticanin has dealt with a lot of challenges, but has guided incredible transformation and results are being seen. There are a lot of initiatives underway under leadership. There is a bright future for DSS and the community. Chair Commissioner Wendy Jacobs mentioned retirement event for Deputy Director Catherine Williamson-Hardy and the presentation of the Order of Long Leaf Pine from Christy Jones attendance from the Governor's Office.

The DSS Board members will drop-off gifts for the family at the agency following the meeting.

Happy Holidays to everyone.

The DSS Board meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Chairperson

Date

Secretary to the Board

Date