

Durham County Board of Social Services

Regular Session Minutes

November 15, 2023

The Durham County Board of Social Services monthly meeting was held on Wednesday, November 15, 2023, in the DSS Board Room with a virtual option via Microsoft Teams.

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

Vice Chair Dr. Monique Holsey-Hyman received excused absence.

The Durham County Department of Social Services was represented by the following: Director Maggie Cveticanin, Deputy Director Catherine Williamson-Hardy, and Chief Operations Officer Kelly Inman

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

DSS staff attending included: Candice Leathers, Latoya Chambers, Meghan Russ, Nancy Santos, Kalindra Ellerbe, Quannah Jackson-Brown, Shontelle Smith, LaVelle Chesney, Susan Lee, Pamela Purifoy, Tonia Gay, Emma Perry, and Montrella Springfield

Danielle Briggs, Senior Assistant County Attorney was present.

James Hart, DSS Human Resources Analyst attended the meeting.

Chair Commissioner Wendy Jacobs called the November 15, 2023, regular meeting to order. 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 Board member Charles I. Mitchell seconded.

The agenda was unanimously approved.

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

Chair Commissioner Wendy Jacobs asked the board members to approve an excused absence for Vice Chair Dr. Monique Holsey-Hyman for the November 15, 2023, regular meeting. Board member Jacqueline Beatty-Smith offered a motion to excuse the absence of Vice Chair Dr. Monique Holsey-Hyman and Board member Charles I. Mitchell seconded.

The excused absence was unanimously approved.

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

Approval of Minutes

Chair Commissioner Wendy Jacobs asked the board members to approve the changes to the minutes from the October 18, 2023, regular meeting.

Board member Jacqueline Beatty-Smith offered a motion to approve the minutes and Board member Charles I. Mitchell seconded.

The minutes were unanimously approved with the changes.

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

Chair Report

Chair Commissioner Wendy Jacobs acknowledged Staff responsible for planning the adoption gala. The event competed with multiple activities in the community. Chair Commissioner Wendy Jacobs attended and recognized the leadership from staff. Families and children were present enjoying the event.

Chair Commissioner Jacobs shared on the consent agenda of the BOCC Monday night meeting, Allies for Outcomes was approved. This has not been done before, bringing in outside professional development to assist staff in child welfare. Very innovated and best practice investing in staff leadership and training.

Chair Commissioner Jacobs mentioned the partnership with Housing for New Hope and Child Welfare.

Assistant Director Jovetta Whitfield will provide additional information.

Director's Report

Director Maggie Cveticanin submitted a written report.

Director Maggie Cveticanin introduced Valery Dambreville, the new Deputy Director of Social Services that will be over Aging and Adult Services and Child and Family Services.

Valery Dambreville gave a brief introduction and emphasized his excitement to be at Durham County Social Services.

Director Maggie Cveticanin and Interim Director Cynthia Cason presented a PowerPoint on Medicaid Expansion to Duke and Latin-19. Director Cveticanin shared the PowerPoint.

DSS has been celebrating cultures within the various units with potlucks, decorations, and amazing cooks. Customer Accountability theme was passport and stamps were given out during the walkthrough. Assistant Director Rhonda Stevens' division theme was a cookbook and staff shared their favorite recipes. They had a QR Code if you didn't want paper. Staff shared their cultures and where they were from.

The winner will be announced Monday.

Director Maggie Cveticanin moved forward with the Medicaid Expansion presentation. Medicaid Expansion was signed into law on March 27, 2023, and will start December 1, 2023. Rod Jenkins, Public Health Director was in Atlanta speaking about the ten year process for North Carolina approving Medicaid Expansion. Eligible adults ages 19 through 64 with incomes up to 138% Federal Poverty Level will be eligible. Medicaid health insurance covers regular preventive care, treatment for chronic health conditions, and maternal care. It also includes physician and hospital services, prescription drugs, behavioral health, and more. The impact for Durham County of new Medicaid enrollees is expected to be 21,622 new enrollees added to the existing 74,233 beneficiaries in Durham County. There will be challenges to the implementation of Medicaid Expansion. Another thing the state is considering NC as a determination state for the federal facilitated marketplace beginning in January. Interim Assistant Director Cynthia Cason explained there will be some automatically

determinations when someone apply. They won't necessarily have to be determined eligibility by person.

Chair Commissioner Wendy Jacobs asked if people may apply through the state or locally. In a situation where there is already information about them in the system would there be a flag about their eligibility? Interim Assistant Director Cason answered no, there may be individuals that never applied once the information is provided and already in the system they will be automatically determined eligible.

Director Cveticanin stressed that all the information has not been provided by the State.

Board member Charles I. Mitchell inquired about some targeted outreach in the community regarding Medicaid Expansion.

Director Maggie Cveticanin indicated some outreach already at the state level, but DSS have done advertisements through Spanish speaking radio as well as faith based organizations, Duke University, and other places. Looking at sending information to churches and providing information to the Spanish speaking community.

Chair Commissioner Wendy Jacobs asked about a one pager that can be distributed at the libraries, Lincoln, and other partners to give out to people in the community. Deputy Director Catherine Williamson-Hardy affirmed the State toolkit is being utilized and the State has been contacted about a paper flyer because when staff went out in the community people want something to hold on to. When the flyer is received, they can be reproduced internally. They have created a new flyer for December and Pamela Purifoy is working with the State PR. Pamela Purifoy contacted the State and the contractor had not printed the material; they were relying on digital. They promised to send out the materials shortly after the conversation this morning. Director Cveticanin vowed local outreach in the community and want people to know they can come the DSS. Director Cveticanin and Interim Director Cason spoke with Duke, Latin-19, the African American COVID-19 Task Force and there were Medical Providers present as well to let them the impact and informed them about the trainings provided by the State. Clients have started receiving calls, letters

and texts from the State, unfortunate, fraudulent letters have gone out. DSS Call Center staff have been prepared to answer questions. Director Cveticanin underlined the commitment to excellence, respect, professionalism, compassion, and communication.

Interim Assistant Director Cason reiterated the information from the Director regarding excellent customer service, timely processing, and determination of eligibility, which is a 45 day process, however, with the increase on applications could take longer.

Board member Jacqueline Beatty-Smith asked with all the new applications, do you anticipate a need for working overtime for processing applications? Yes, a stipend program was created a few months ago which helped with overtime. Additional funding is in place for overtime anticipated with Medicaid Expansion.

Nancy Santos and Jackie Proctor were recognized for assisting with the Job Fair. One hundred and one people were interviewed in five hours and twenty packets have been processed. Interim Assistant Director Cynthia Cason asked two supervisors to work two days after the job fair to contact references.

Durham DSS was recognized by the State for the Job Fair. Durham is leading the State and thanks to James Hart for pulling it all together. Thanks to Candice Leathers and team for working hard on the training module and how to onboard staff. Program Manager Candice Leathers talked about acclimating the new process. Director Maggie Cveticanin publicly acknowledged the tremendous work that the majority of staff are doing daily to make sure people have food on the table and insurance.

Board member Jacqueline Beatty-Smith thanked staff for all their great and hard work and was disappointed because she was not able to attend the last job fair.

Board member Charles I. Mitchell attended the November Job Fair emphasized it was awesome and acknowledged James Hart for a wonderful job under the leadership of Deputy Director Catherine Williamson-Hardy. Board member Mitchell expressed gratitude to the entire team.

Chair Commissioner Wendy Jacobs stopped by the job fair and was impressed with the professionalism and team effort. Chair Commissioner Jacobs also thanked James Hart. There were people from different departments assisting at the Job Fair.

Director Cveticanin conveyed staff from Fiscal, AAS, CATD and the environment was great and important.

Chair Commissioner Wendy Jacobs requested the Medicaid Expansion PowerPoint presented to the Board of County Commissioners in December.

Family Economic Independence (FEI) - Rhonda Stevens, Assistant Director

Assistant Director Rhonda Stevens submitted a written report.

Assistant Director Rhonda Stevens spotlighted an individual that was able to get a job earning \$77,000.00 a year. Kina McKinney and her team had eight individuals go to work and five earning more than \$15.00 per hour. Assistant Director Stevens acknowledged Kina McKinney and Tonia Gay for a job well done.

Food and Nutrition Services applications are picking up and with Medicaid Expansion staff are working to process as many as possible before the holidays.

Interim Assistant Director Cynthia Cason highlighted open enrollment started November 1, 2023. Staff was recognized for their preparation and attended a State Planning Seminar at Mount Vernon Church. The seminar included discussions around a Long Term Care Medicaid Program and Medicaid Expansion.

Also, the Job Fair was held on October 28, 2023, 101 applicants attended and were interviewed on-site. Nancy Santos and staff were recognized for checking references and twenty hiring packets have been completed for submission to Human Resources.

Chair Commissioner Wendy Jacobs thanked staff for the great job with the Job Fair and media coverage that provided the information to the community. Chair Commissioner Jacobs conveyed thanks for the individuals receiving employment through DSS assistance. Durham County's minimum wage is over \$19.00 per hour.

Customer Accountability and Talent Development (CATD) – Kimberly Lincoln, Interim Assistant Director

Program Manager Lynn Thomas submitted a written report.

Interim Assistant Director Kimberly Lincoln spoke about the blended learning module which started on October 16, 2023. The first group completed and the second group will begin. Face-to-Face training for programs will start again based on feedback from new hires and supervisors. Also, working to fill positions and adding refresher training. It has been a difficult month for the Call Center being short staffed, but maintaining a 98% rate of answering phone calls and routing to program areas. A Shout-out was given to the Call Center Staff and other staff who assisted with the calls. A new staff member started which is Bilingual which is a great addition to the Call Center.

Chair Commissioner Wendy Jacobs mentioned besides English, and Spanish, Swahili is the third most spoken language.

Child and Family Services (CFS) – Jovetta Whitfield, Assistant Director

Assistant Director Jovetta Whitfield submitted a written report.

Assistant Director Jovetta Whitfield informed the DSS Board, the Board of County Commissioners approved for Child and Family Services and Aging and Adult Services. Housing for New Hope received funds which will give priority to families who are involved with Child Welfare for housing. A formal protocol needs to be worked out. A process for making referrals to Aging and Adult Services for Coordinated Entry. Once this is completed, funds will be available as a priority, but it does not mean they are guaranteed. At the initial meeting, ten families were referred to Coordinated Entry. There continues to be challenges with ages 18-21.

The Adoption Gala was held on November 4, 2023, the first time since pandemic there has been a celebration for adoption awareness. Chair Commissioner Wendy Jacobs attended the event. Staff from the Adoption and Licensing Units were acknowledged for planning the celebration and Susan Lee for the centerpieces. The children enjoyed themselves and hopefully will expand next year. Assistant Director Whitfield highlighted the vacancy rate in Child and Family Services is low. Unfortunately, two candidates were lost, but thanks to the managers and supervisors for moving hiring packets. Retention is a focus, and we continue to bridge gaps which was mentioned in the report. Continuing to work on communication impacting retention among supervisors and workers.

Director Maggie Cveticanin spoke about the challenges in Child and Family Services. Director Cveticanin expressed gratitude to staff for putting their personal life issues on hold to be in the office to help find secure placement for children.

Assistant Director Jovetta Whitfield reminded the DSS Board about Share Your Holiday and to contact her if they are interested in participating. Shontelle Smith will provide a family for the DSS Board to sponsor this year.

Assistant Director Whitfield mentioned names might pop up and reports with the Child Welfare Transformation due to the State moving into the concept of regionalization. There will be four regional consultants which will meet with staff and CPS and In- Home will have a pharmacy planning regional specialist that will meet with foster care, adoptions, and others. A CQI regional specialist, who hasn't been identified yet and a Family's First regional specialist, who has been identified. Staff will be working with four different specialists who will help make sure we are implementing best practice standards as well as transformation There will be a lot of meetings for management.

Board member Jacqueline Beatty-Smith inquired about are these independent consultants or is this a consulting firm? The regional specialists are state employees from DHHS Division of Social Services.

Aging and Adult Services (AAS) - Lee Little, Interim Assistant Director

Interim Assistant Director Lee Little submitted a written report.

Interim Assistant Director Lee Little stated Housing for New Hope is going to be great for the adult and children population when they come through coordinated intake or coordinated entry and looking for housing. It is very limited options for those families and children to find shelter. I think that's going to be tremendous in terms of funding and a quick shelter for that age group.

LEIAP will kick off December 1, 2023, for seniors 60 and over. The LIHR program is going well, there has been an issue with tax bills going out on time which includes the LIHR flyer. Applications are coming in for assistance. The Meals on Wheels Waiting List is almost as large as the number of people getting served, which is 124.

Chair Commissioner Wendy Jacobs asked if people are receiving food from other resources, going to the Senior Center, or food pantry.

When someone calls for Meals on Wheels they are added to the wait list and speak with a social worker for other resources. Staff try to purge the list monthly for accuracy. Emergency Meals on Wheels are given out at times.

Chair Commissioner Jacobs asked about funding. The funding comes through the State and ARPA dollars, and SSBG fund are used to compensate. One challenge with the program is they are supportive services for adults and elderly which is missing out of funding for In-Home and Meals on Wheels. It is not enough to cover supportive services. Rising cost of living, care and the system of living is cheaper for them to try to stay in our home, versus going into assisted living facilities. A lot of people are private pay, and that's what the facilities want to take private pay instead of Medicaid things.

Chair Commissioner Wendy Jacobs touched on the County doing an RFP for home repairs and rehabilitation which will be focused on seniors.

Chair Commissioner Jacobs asked about collaborative partnerships in the community. Monthly and quarterly meetings are held with different support services.

Board member Jacqueline Beatty-Smith commented about a couple opportunities to volunteer with a group of NCCU Eagles for Community project at Housing for New Hope and was glad that the monies have been funded for that nonprofit organization to continue their work. The executive director and the families they worked with were excellent. Thank you all for that work.

Chair Commissioner Wendy Jacobs was involved in helping to lead the effort with housing for New Hope for the seeing the county to create the first ever campus for permanent supportive Housing Department Creek campus. Chair Commissioner Jacobs is involved with something called familiar faces. The Durham familiar faces initiative is focusing on our most vulnerable residents, people who have severe mental illness and often have co-occurring substance use disorder.

Chair Commissioner Jacobs mentioned the City and County collaboration relating to the Harbor Creek Apartments Project. Chair Commissioner Wendy Jacobs working on it with the Justice Services Department and got money into the county budget 225,000 for data analysis and the data platform because familiar faces, based on using data to identify who are the familiar faces.

Business Operations (BO) – Kelly Inman, Chief Operations Officer

Assistant Director Faircloth on vacation. Chief Operations Officer Kelly Inman submitted a written report.

COO Inman informed the board DSS is on track with the fiscal report and this past month ERAP reached \$339,000. We were averaging \$180,000.

Kickoff phases for the Northwoods Project, starting internally. Adult Services November 15, 2023, and Child Welfare November 16, 2023.

Budget 2025 is coming soon, and staff will be sharing in a few months.

Child Support Service collaboration with the Sheriff's Office, they are meeting with the Warrants Unit and Clerk of Court discussing the processes to better serve the public.

Kay Adams, Intergovernmental Initiating Agent in Child Support had two lump sum payments that should be reflected in the Shout Out List next month. Anything in excess of \$7,000.00 or \$8,000.00 makes the list. The payments were for \$14,301.31 and \$8,825.00.

Chair Commissioner Wendy Jacobs acknowledged the amazing work staff are doing at DSS. Chair Commissioner Jacobs asked about plans to discuss ERAP with City and County Staff.

A meeting was held with Director Maggie Cveticanin and the County Manager to discuss maybe bringing in a housing expert. The CEO for Housing for New Hope was contacted, and meeting will be scheduled to discuss the collaboration.

Vacancy Report

HR Analyst James Hart submitted a written report.

HR Analyst James Hart highlighted work that was done beforehand to make sure that not only the day of experience was excellent, but the post experience. The supervisors have been dedicated to doing references so that process went smoothly. Highlighted some of the changes made from our first job fair in the way that captured the interview questions. We made a completely electronic process as well as the reference information. Shared a folder with every applicant with their reference information as well as the authorization forms to assist with them being able to move packets. A shout out was given to Teffoney James for assisting with the folders and providing information to the hiring managers. A shout out to the Job Fair Committee and administrative staff. Currently the new positions approved are about 40% of our vacancies. We look forward to having as many of these specifically the income maintenance positions filled by December the 11th and we have all the positions posted that will support.

Chair Commissioner Wendy Jacobs thanked James Hart for the new innovative processes. Board member Jacqueline Beatty-Smith congratulated everyone for their hard work.

James Hart conveyed the Job Fairs were submitted for the county Team Excellence Award and will be awarded in December at DCo honors.

The DSS Board wished everyone a wonderful holiday.

Chair Commissioner Wendy Jacobs adjourned meeting..

Respectfully submitted,

Chairperson

Date

Secretary to the Board

Date