

Durham County Board of Social Services

Regular Session Minutes

October 18, 2023

The Durham County Board of Social Services monthly meeting was held on Wednesday, October 18, 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, Vice Chair Dr. Monique Holsey-Hyman; Board members: Jacqueline Beatty-Smith and Charles I. Mitchell

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, Margaret Faircloth, 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 Loretta Roberts

Danielle Briggs, Senior Assistant County Attorney was present.

James Hart, DSS Human Resources Analyst attended the meeting.

Chair Commissioner Wendy Jacobs called the October 18, 2023, regular meeting to order.

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		

Chair Commissioner Wendy Jacobs asked the board members to approve an excused absence for Vice Chair Dr. Monique Holsey-Hyman for the September 20, 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 September 20, 2023, regular meeting. Vice Chair Dr. Monique Holsey-Hyman 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		
Vice Chair Dr. Monique Holsey-Hyman	Yes		
Board member Jacqueline Beatty-Smith	Yes		
Board member Charles I. Mitchell	Yes		

Chair Report

Chair Commissioner Wendy Jacobs commended the staff on all the management systems and the Allied HR program. The BOCC budget will include the following DSS items: (1) The new Northwoods Traverse application using \$500,000 in ARPA funding and (2) The request for new positions to implement Medicaid Expansion. Chair Commissioner Wendy Jacobs addressed that staff have been dealing with numerous challenges. She met the Employee Assistance Program grief counselor at the Durham County Employee Appreciation event last week. She hopes that the grief counseling sessions were helpful, and that staff will utilize this service when needed.

Director's Report

Director Maggie Cveticanin submitted a written report.

Director Maggie Cveticanin informed the board members that on December 1, 2023, Medicaid Expansion will go live. On October 23, 2023,

she will be asking for approval for 36 positions to include Income Maintenance Caseworker II's, program managers, supervisors, and administrative staff. DSS will be hosting a second IMC II Job Fair on August 28, 2023, and HR Analyst James Hart will be leading this effort. Director Maggie Cveticanin will be recording a joint video on October 20, 2023, with Public Health Director Rod Jenkins to highlight Medicaid Expansion and will be promoting applying through the ePass website {<https://epass.nc.gov>}. On November 8, 2023, Director Maggie Cveticanin and Interim Assistant Director Cynthia Cason will be presenting on Medicaid Expansion to Latin-19. The media outreach plan will focus on colleges, senior citizen agencies, Latin communities, and faith-based organizations as well as community events broadcasted on the radio, TV, and social media. Director Maggie Cveticanin will share the information received from the State about Medicaid Expansion with the board members. HR Analyst James Hart will send the IMC II Job Fair flyer to the board members.

Chair Commissioner Wendy Jacobs acknowledged Director Maggie Cveticanin for contracting Allies 4 Outcomes with the main focus of Child and Family Services and CCR Consulting to assess the policies and processes with the FEI and Medicaid divisions.

Vice Chair Dr. Monique Holsey-Hyman inquired about an updated "A Day in the Life of a Social Worker" Child Welfare video. Director Maggie Cveticanin and Deputy Director Catherine Williamson-Hardy attended the Social Services Institute August 2, 2023 – August 4, 2023, and the State is working on a Child Welfare video and will be using Durham County as a guide since it has been so popular. Vice Chair Dr. Monique Holsey-Hyman requested to be notified when the video is completed.

Director Maggie Cveticanin introduced Kimberly Lincoln as the Interim Customer Accountability and Talent Development {CATD} Assistant Director effective October 4, 2023. Chair Commissioner Wendy Jacobs welcomed Interim Assistant Director Kimberly Lincoln and thanked Director Maggie Cveticanin for her report and hard work.

Vacancy Report

HR Analyst James Hart submitted a written report.

HR Analyst James Hart said that the department is in a good place pertaining to vacancies due to the work in all of the divisions since July 2021. The department is working on filling the vacancies utilizing the candidates from the recent Job Fair. A good number of new hires have started. Human Resources is finalizing the start dates, and some applicants are currently in review. The October 28, 2023, Job Fair will be using the applicants for the new positions and including the applicants from the August 5, 2023, Job Fair for any pre-existing vacancies. The department is streamlining the onboarding procedure after the Job Fair to minimize the post-work process. HR Analyst James Hart and Director Maggie Cveticanin attended the Personnel and Professional Development Conference from September 26, 2023 – September 28, 2023, with the North Carolina Association of County Directors of Social Services (NCACDSS). The sessions focused on employee retention. The other counties were amazed to hear that Durham County has a lot of great benefits available (personal leave, six weeks of paid family leave, sign-on bonus program, etc.). A combination of benefits, internal training with QAT, and supervisory work has helped the department with retention. HR Analyst James Hart is optimistic that DSS will be in a better position regarding vacancies moving into the new year.

Chair Commissioner Wendy Jacobs thanked HR Analyst James Hart for his great work. She asked HR Analyst James Hart about the Durham County vacancy rate. HR Analyst James Hart replied that he could not speak on the actual figure but feels Durham County is probably in good shape.

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

Assistant Director Rhonda Stevens submitted a written report.

Assistant Director Rhonda Stevens and Interim Assistant Director Cynthia Cason are presenting a shared report. Assistant Director Rhonda Stevens

stated that the focus this month has been on filling positions. The division has submitted 23 employee selection packets for all of the vacancies on the FEI side, except for one packet that will hopefully be submitted by the end of the day. The applicants from the IMC II Job Fair will be utilized to fill as many positions as possible.

Interim Assistant Director Cynthia Cason stated that she is very excited about Medicaid Expansion. The Medicaid department is in the process of filling positions for new staff to be on board, extremely busy working with current staff, and getting ready for December 1, 2023. Interim Assistant Director Cynthia Cason is very enthusiastic about the idea of 22,000 people being eligible for healthcare.

Deputy Director Catherine Williamson-Hardy emphasized the number of staff that are returning to Durham County DSS and from other counties. This is a direct result of the work that the BOCC has done to be marketable and to have a hybrid environment.

Chair Commissioner Wendy Jacobs expressed her appreciation for Interim Assistant Director Cynthia Cason's positive attitude and complimented Assistant Director Rhonda Stevens for her great work.

Board member Jacqueline Beatty-Smith applauded the department for filling vacancies and is hopeful that the next Job Fair will have more responses. She thanked the department for their hard work.

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

Program Manager Lynn Thomas submitted a written report.

Deputy Director Catherine Williamson-Hardy highlighted that QAT has worked in concert with FEI and Medicaid to produce a blended training module to be effective with the next new hiring group. The division is focusing on retention along with recruitment. The probationary period will be extended to nine months to ensure the new hires transition effectively into their roles. Program Manager Candice Leathers highlighted that the

trainers are excited about the new hires being tooled up and acclimated to the agency during a two-week period. The division will also be providing multiple consecutive trainings. Deputy Director Catherine Williamson-Hardy added that the new hires will be oriented into the Social Services world by sitting with staff who are currently doing the work that they will be doing. A tour of the Human Services building will be conducted. A shadowing period of two weeks will be to assess how the new hires are applying the learning by focusing on the transfer of learning component, applying the policy knowledge, and navigating the computer systems.

Program Manager Candice Leathers stated that she is also excited about the 60-day period of continued collaboration after the new hires have been released to the floor to their supervisors. The QAT trainers will contact the supervisors and the new hires to address any deficiencies. These processes are on the economic services side and conversations have started on the services side regarding training courses available to identify what is needed and to see if training is available like the State has offered in the past. The main emphasis is ensuring to maintain the skillset of staff.

Director Maggie Cveticanin mentioned that the two-week training period was staff-driven through focus groups. Chair Commissioner Wendy Jacobs thanked Deputy Director Catherine Williamson-Hardy and Program Manager Candice Leathers for being innovative and setting the new hires up for success. Deputy Director Catherine Williamson-Hardy informed Vice Chair Dr. Monique Holsey-Hyman that the interns have reported on a survey that they are having a positive onboarding and orientation experience per Program Manager Lynn Thomas.

Board member Jacqueline Beatty-Smith asked if the new hires are shadowed by one staff member for the entire two weeks. Deputy Director Catherine Williamson-Hardy answered that the QAT trainer will be shadowing the new hires on how they are applying the training knowledge. The new hire will also sit with someone on staff to have some context on what they were trained on.

Chair Commissioner Wendy Jacobs thanked Program Manager Lynn Thomas for her fantastic report.

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

Assistant Director Jovetta Whitfield submitted a written report.

Assistant Director Jovetta Whitfield informed the board members about the monthly meetings with Durham Housing Authority regarding Foster Youth to Independence (FYI) and Family Unification Program (FUP) vouchers. The Regional Child Welfare Specialist is continuing to have Technical Assistance (TA) training in developing temporary safety agreements. Assistant Director Jovetta Whitfield developed a safety protocol for managing the staff and youth in the building during the day and in the evening due to displacements, disruptions, and anticipating placements. On October 2, 2023, the Child & Family Services staff presented at the International Conference. On October 3, 2023, Assistant Director Jovetta Whitfield met with Allies 4 Outcomes to discuss a Child Welfare contract that was reviewed in the fall of 2022 and hopefully will move forward and be implemented in January 2024. On October 5, 2023, there was a fatality, and a grief counselor was available on October 12, 2023, for staff to debrief and more sessions will be scheduled if necessary. The outcome measures and initiations of assessments for September 2023 were 87.5%. Thanks to Board member Jacqueline Beatty-Smith, on October 4, 2023, Richard D. Smith and Tyrone Couey met with the DSS Director Maggie Cveticanin and her senior staff to discuss a partnership fostering youth in and out of care creating a pipeline to historically black colleges and universities or the military.

This is lower than the previous month and will be assessed. The monthly home visits were 97.6% and the goal is 95%. The division continues to exceed in this area. None of the counties in our region or across the state has reached the initiation rate of 95%.

Chair Commissioner Wendy Jacobs asked if the DHA voucher program was different than the new state money for families that may be involved

in CPS cases. Assistant Director Jovetta Whitfield answered that this is different, and the ARPA funds would be prioritized for families involved in Child Welfare. The division is waiting for Housing for New Hope to send a letter to Director Maggie Cveticanin to be signed and apply to receive the funds from the State. The DHA voucher program is separate from this funding.

Chair Commissioner Wendy Jacobs noted that Lutheran Family Services providing traditional day services is promising. Assistant Director Jovetta Whitfield explained that Lutheran Family Services proposed a traditional day service, not a therapeutic day service. Lutheran Family Services reached out to Durham County initially and spoke to Wake County as well. Wake County is interested in collaborating with Durham County and is in the process of sending the proposal. Chair Commissioner Wendy Jacobs thanked Assistant Director Jovetta Whitfield for her report.

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 that he, Director Maggie Cveticanin, and Program Manager Meghan Russ attended the annual meeting for the North Carolina Coalition on Aging in September 2023. The meeting discussed combating abuse of adults and providing learning and highlights of the aging population. The State approved their budget, and the division will receive APS essential funding which will help some of the adults and guardians in APS. An information session was held that included the County Attorney, the faculty, and the physicians of Duke Hospital regarding guardianship and APS. There will be an upcoming subsequent meeting to tour the Social Services building. Interim Assistant Director Lee Little also attended the Dementia Inclusive Forum in September 2023.

Chair Commissioner Wendy Jacobs wanted Interim Assistant Director Lee Little to elaborate on some of the changes that will happen with certain programs relating to Medicaid Expansion. Interim Assistant Director Lee

Little said that since there will be an abundance of new applications there will be an indirect amount of people requesting Medicaid Transportation. Generally, Medicaid direct clients will need additional transportation assistance for substance abuse, dialysis, and regular medical appointments due to Medicaid Expansion. There have been challenges with APS and a natural trend for the last couple of years in August and September that the reports increase. In December, the reports decrease and tend to rise in January. Interim Assistant Director Lee Little informed the board members that the Low-Income Energy Assistance Program {LIEAP} has started.

Chair Commissioner Wendy Jacobs questioned Director Maggie Cveticanin if she had heard of a follow-up with the city and county about rental assistance. Director Maggie Cveticanin will find out and inform the board members. Chair Commissioner Wendy Jacobs thanked Interim Assistant Director Lee Little for his report.

Business Operations (BO) – Margaret Faircloth, Assistant Director

Assistant Director Margaret Faircloth submitted a written report.

Assistant Director Margaret Faircloth informed the board members that the department is still working diligently with County Finance on posting the revenues. County Finance identified the issue and will implement a procedure to prevent problems going forward.

Chair Commissioner Wendy Jacobs mentioned that she noticed the large signage on the doors and inquired about how things were going. Director Maggie Cveticanin replied that no incidents have been reported and she met with General Services to have higher desks installed with more security in the lobbies and throughout the building. Chief Operations Officer Kelly Inman stated that Nighthawk Security has new processes in place with a no-tolerance approach.

Chief Operations Officer Kelly Inman said that the department is involved with the Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) selection for the SAP replacement. Chief Operations Officer Kelly Inman remarked on a BOCC

agenda item for Monday night, October 23, 2023, that the case management tool, Northwoods Traverse, will be bought through the State Carahsoft contract and will need funding approval through September 2025 which will be encumbered with ARPA funds.

Chair Commissioner Wendy Jacobs thanked Assistant Director Margaret Faircloth and Chief Operations Officer Kelly Inman for their report.

Chair Commissioner Wendy Jacobs adjourned the October 18, 2023, regular meeting at 4:12 pm to a closed session.

Respectfully submitted,

Chairperson

Date

Secretary to the Board

Date