

# **Durham County Board of Social Services**

## **Regular Session Minutes**

**June 21, 2023**

The Durham County Board of Social Services monthly meeting was held on Wednesday, June 21, 2023, in conference rooms 2421 & 2422 with a virtual option as well.

The following DSS Board members were in attendance:

Vice Chair Dr. Monique Holsey-Hyman; Board members:

Jacqueline Beatty-Smith, Charles I. Mitchell, and Janice P. Paul.

Chair Commissioner Wendy Jacobs received an 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: Jovetta Whitfield, Rhonda Stevens, Cynthia Cason, Margaret Faircloth, and Janeen Gordon.

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

Danielle Briggs, Senior Assistant County Attorney was present.

James Hart, DSS Human Resources Analyst attended the meeting.

Vice Chair Dr. Monique Holsey-Hyman called the June 21, 2023, regular meeting to order and read the Public Charge.

### **Public Comments**

Public participation: Lorissa Seibel attended the meeting.

No public comments.

Vice Chair Dr. Monique Holsey-Hyman asked the board members to approve an excused absence for Chair Commissioner Wendy Jacobs. Board member Janice P. Paul offered a motion to excuse the absence of Chair Commissioner Wendy Jacobs and Board member Jacqueline Beatty-Smith seconded.

The excused absence was unanimously approved.

<b>Board member</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Abstained</b>
Vice Chair Dr. Monique Holsey-Hyman	Yes		
Board member Jacqueline Beatty-Smith	Yes		
Board member Janice P. Paul	Yes		
Board member Charles I. Mitchell	Yes		

### **Approval of the Agenda**

Vice Chair Dr. Monique Holsey-Hyman 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 Janice P. Paul seconded.

The agenda was unanimously approved.

<b>Board member</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Abstained</b>
Vice Chair Dr. Monique Holsey-Hyman	Yes		
Board member Jacqueline Beatty-Smith	Yes		
Board member Janice P. Paul	Yes		
Board member Charles I. Mitchell	Yes		

### **DSS Board Presentation and Recognition**

Vice Chair Dr. Monique Holsey-Hyman asked Board member Janice P. Paul to come forward. Vice Chair Dr. Monique Holsey-Hyman acknowledged Board member Janice P. Paul six-year contributions to the DSS Board and Durham County Department of Social Services. Board member Janice P. Paul knowledge of State legislation, judicial policies, local government, and legal background was a great access to the DSS Board. Board member Jacqueline Beatty-Smith awarded Board member Janice P. Paul with a plaque.

Director Maggie Cveticanin presented a token of appreciation. Board members conveyed their appreciation to Board member Janice P. Paul for serving on the DSS Board and wished her success. Board member Janice P. Paul will be missed. DSS management expressed gratitude and wished her well. Board member Janice P. Paul stated it was an honor and privilege to serve on the DSS Board and will miss everyone. The DSS Board has gone through multiple things during her six-year tenure, including hiring directors, COVID, program changes, housing, tax relief, energy and the list goes on. Board member Janice P. Paul thanked staff for assisting the DSS Board and she will miss serving the community. Board member Janice P. Paul appreciates everything staff do for the citizens of Durham County and have compassion for staff. Board member Janice P. Paul thanked the DSS Board and DSS for the tokens of appreciation. Vice Chair Dr. Monique Holsey-Hyman moved forward the approval of minutes.

### **Approval of Minutes**

Vice Chair Dr. Monique Holsey-Hyman asked the board members to review and approve the minutes from the regular meeting on May 17, 2023.

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

The minutes were unanimously approved.

<b>Board member</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Abstained</b>
Vice Chair Dr. Monique Holsey-Hyman	Yes		
Board member Jacqueline Beatty-Smith	Yes		
Board member Janice P. Paul	Yes		
Board member Charles I. Mitchell	Yes		

## **Chair Report**

Vice Chair Dr. Monique Holsey-Hyman indicated the DSS Board will not report this month.

## **Director's Report**

Director Maggie Cveticanin submitted a written report.

Director Maggie Cveticanin proceeded with Continuous Coverage Unwinding – CCU funding received from the State for unwinding will be utilized for the stipend program. The funds will assist Medicaid Expansion due to the increase in staff's workload. The stipend will be used for exempt staff in other areas providing compensation to support Family Economic Independence. The amount is \$177,356.00 and will be available June 2024.

Chief Operations Officer Kelly Inman added DSS will receive the regular 50% funding for Medicaid and the \$177,000 would be used to pay the difference. No county dollars will be needed.

Deputy Director Catherine Williamson-Hardy mentioned there is a very specific type of expertise required to make the impact on the work pending. You can review Assistant Director Rhonda Stevens' report which indicates a significant number not meeting expectations with the shortage in staff and increase in work. Also, there is a soft launch to return some normalcy in DSS lobbies. We have employees who have been here three years and have never served clients in person due to COVID. This has been a paradigm shift; we have new staff and there are challenges. Therefore, we wanted to use internal staff with the expertise and the dollars can't be supplanted but extended and that's why we are focusing on the overtime model with a significant amount needed. We are very thankful to have the opportunity to do this as well as other things that will be highlighted in terms of big initiatives around hiring. We are trying to take a multiple approach to a real problem.

Director Maggie Cveticanin and Assistant Director Jovetta Whitfield attended a child welfare training in Asheville hosted by NCACDSS. The presentations related to organizational leadership new practice standards established last year to guide practice improvements by state, county stakeholders, youth, and families. We will be working with teams to implement components within the performance measures for child welfare staff.

Board member Janice P. Paul asked about the changes. The changes relate to behavior and the work on how DSS communicate not with just clients, but how

social services supervisors and leaders communicate with assessing the situation and implementation. So, the three areas of focus is communication, assessment, and implementation. Along with planning because there are five areas which will be impacted. The practice is Safety Organized Practice which will be the model. Training of behavioral changes will begin with leaders and then workers.

Director Maggie Cveticanin attended NCACDSS Executive Board Meeting on June 8, 2023. The focus was on six Local Management Entities/Managed Care Organizations launched in May 2022 to improve health care for children, youth, and families served by the child welfare system. As part of the initiative LME/MCO engaged NC Child Welfare subject matter experts that include County DSS leaders and providers to develop a statewide solution to the current pressing challenges of the service delivery system.

Lobbies expanded hours on June 1, 2023, and we continue to see increase of in-person appointments. Staff are required to work in the office two or more days per week.

Two successful All Staff Sessions were convened . Approximately 232 staff participated on May 23<sup>rd</sup> and 197 on May 24<sup>th</sup>. There was a brief introduction from the Director and staff asked questions relating to leadership and program changes . The sessions will be continued in the future.

Assistant Director Janeen Gordon's retirement event was held on June 20, 2023. Well wishes were conveyed for her dedicated service to Durham County DSS. Assistant Director Janeen Gordon and family will be relocating to Florida. Assistant Director Gordon has enjoyed her tenure at Durham County DSS. Board members thanked her for dedicated services and commitment to the agency.

The final MAG Compensation report is complete, and a meeting is scheduled with Human Resources review the results.

Director Cveticanin completed two months as Director and has enjoyed working in the Durham community, amazing team and DSS Board. She worked with staff to process a paper application for family Medicaid and worked with Child Welfare to review hot line assessments. She plans to meet with each team to understand day-to-day tasks.

Board member Janice P. Paul inquired about advertisement for the assistant director's position. Advertisement is currently on DCo website and linked to

several other sites such as Indeed and other job boards. Candidates should have at a background in public administration, masters preferred, in terms of managing service programs specifically aging and adult services at least a mix of skills would be applicable. Board member Paul asked if the position categorized with the Deputy Director. The Deputy Director's position is for Aging and Adult and Child Welfare. Vice Chair Dr. Monique Holsey-Hyman inquired about the salary range. Salary ranges have changed due to the MAG study, the minimum is about \$120,000.00 and the maximum is higher. This will have to be based on the new information published, and other assess.

Vice Chair Dr. Monique Holsey-Hyman congratulated Director Cveticanin on her two months leadership. The idea of the chatting with staff, giving them the opportunity to ask questions was wonderful.

HR Analyst James Hart reported that the vacancy rate has been dropping steadily and with the County Manager's proposal should add some stability as staff are waiting in anticipation of salary increases. The department is working on hosting a job fair next month and will share more details at a later date. The department's goal is to fill key positions and continue to promote staff from within.

HR Analyst James Hart stated that over the summer the data will be analyzed to see the impact of the sign-on bonuses for Income Maintenance and Child Welfare divisions. The combination of internal management competencies, pay-for-performance measures to ensure the salaries are appropriate to the market, a 7% salary increase, merit increases, and the final proposal range will help with retention. Salary adjustments will be made after the completion of the compensation study if needed.

Chair Commissioner Wendy Jacobs inquired if there was an influx of new graduates. HR Analyst James Hart answered that many graduates are applying and hopefully the job fair will capture more of them. He is working on finishing the internship project.

Director Maggie Cveticanin applauded HR Analyst James Hart and Deputy Director Catherine Williamson-Hardy for coming up with a plan after she asked them to quickly come up with an idea for an in-person job fair.

Vice Chair Dr. Monique Holsey-Hyman thanked Assistant Director Jovetta Whitfield for speaking with her Child Welfare students in the past and she informed everyone that she will be teaching the course this summer and again in the fall.

Board member Jacqueline Beatty-Smith asked if the Deputy Director's position for Social Services on hold. HR Analyst James Hart replied that this term is used when positions need more thought around the job description and structure. This will also give Director Maggie Cveticanin more time to learn the processes and procedures. Director Maggie Cveticanin responded that she wanted to take the first 30-45 days to ensure a concise process of being thoughtful about what was being put into the job description and bringing the new person on board.

Vice Chair Dr. Monique Holsey-Hyman moved forward with reports for the Assistant Directors.

### **Family Economic Independence (FEI) – Emma Perry , Program Manager**

Assistant Director Rhonda Stevens submitted a written report in her absence.

Program manager Emma Perry reported the week ending June 4, 2023, Food and Nutrition Services (FNS) application timeline rate was 90.38% and the goal is 95%. FNS recertification timeliness rate for May 2023 was 95.24% and the goal is 95%. Durham passed May Medicaid Report Card. Medicaid has passed the report card since April 2020. Timeliness for Work First application for May was 87.98% and goal is 95%. Recertification timeliness for Work First in May was 100% and the goal is 95%. The Redetermination Team will have an on-site meeting. Staff attended the World Hunger Day event at Durham Central Park and provided information on DSS. A food giveaway is planned for June 28, 2023, on-site for Hunger Awareness.

Board member Janice P. Paul asked about changes since COVID emergency ended in terms of expenditures and wait list in Child Care. Program manager Tonia Gay replied there have not been any significant changes, examining ways and policies to creatively solicit applications. There has been a discussion about funding for parents looking for work, unfortunately the policy has not been rewritten relating to the request.

Board member Jacqueline Beatty-Smith acknowledged the great job supporting the vacant supervisory unit functions and the division. What is the status? James Harts reported there are several positions to be filled, however, waiting on information relating to the pay ranges. This is affecting a few factors hindering us from moving forward.

Vice Chair Dr. Monique Holsey-Hyman mentioned people applying and have not received a response. They are questioning how they would know if being considered for the job. It is difficult to give a timely status. James Hart suggested connecting with applicants and he will follow-up on the status.

**Customer Accountability and Talent Development (CATD) – Cynthia Cason, Interim Assistant Director**

Interim Assistant Director Cynthia Cason submitted a written report.

Interim Assistant Director Cynthia Cason highlighted CATD Spring Fling event was a success. Staff reconnected, played games, talked and ice cream was served. It was a floating event, and all staff had an opportunity to attend. Staff was appreciative and good feedback was received.

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

Assistant Director Jovetta Whitfield submitted a written report.

Assistant Director Jovetta Whitfield asked the Board if they had any questions.

Board member Jacqueline Beatty-Smith commented on the great job with the various activities, specifically Annual Foster Care Month celebration at the Durham Bulls Stadium. She had an opportunity to speak with foster parents and some of the children. Also, Backpack for Kids program distribution of school supplies that will be held July 26<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup>. How are the school supplies obtained and are groups need to volunteer. Board member Beatty-Smith will speak with Assistant Director Whitfield about a couple of organizations interested in participating. The Volunteer Center handles the gathering of school supplies and distribution. Assistant Director Whitfield will forward the contact information. For the first-time year-round schools will be included which is the reason distribution will be early. In August for traditional students. The distributions will be held at Yates Baptist Church. Over 500 referrals to the program which surpasses the previous 300 referrals.

Board member Janice P. Paul posed a question about a suitcase shortage for foster children. Assistant Director Jovetta Whitfield relayed young adults are utilizing backpacks and duffle bags. Unfortunately, storage space is an issue, but donations are received from the community. Program manager Shontelle Smith indicated a lot of donations are received throughout the year because of Deborah Cousin's community outreach.

Board member Janice P. Paul received inquiries relating to the need for car seats, cribs, and other items. Assistant Director Whitfield suggested calling the main number to speak with Shontelle Smith or Natasha Harcum. Usually during the holiday additional items are received which covers half the year. DSS is affiliated with Congregations in Action which gets the message out to the churches in the community.



Assistant Director Jovetta Whitfield informed the DSS Board there is nothing in Senate Bill 21 about foster care rate increase. It is in Senate Bill 20 what passed and as a result there will be an increase in foster care rates and administration. For example, it was \$514.00 per month for ages 0-5 now going up to \$702.00, ages 6-12 was \$654.00 now \$742.00, 13 -21 was \$698.00 now \$802.00, but not special needs that will be dealt with independently. This will also be the same rate for adoption subsidy. The change is effective July 1, 2023. Vice Chair Dr. Monique Holsey-Hyman requested a copy of the Senate Bill to utilize in classes. In addition, the first time for the State, they will provide to unlicensed kinship families. The State will pay 50% and DSS will pay 50%. Durham County is fortunate to have County Commissioners to support the budget for kinship families.

Deputy Director Catherine Williamson-Hardy mentioned working at the State and one of the big things was getting kinship support, especially with the racial inequities and culturally individuals caring of families. In the minority communities, it's normally grandma who can barely make it and would never think about a license to care for a grandchild or other children. Durham was already addressing the issue. There was additional conversation surrounding federal and state funding.

### **Aging and Adult Services (AAS) – Janeen Gordon, Assistant Director**

Assistant Director Janeen Gordon submitted a written report.

Assistant Director Janeen Gordon highlighted the Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS (HOPWA) funds are going quickly and rental assistance. The past six months approximately \$2,000,000.00 has been distributed in the community. This is important because with the fiscal year ending DSS has allocated \$150,000 or more of the Eviction Diversion Program County funds.

We don't have the final numbers, but a drastic change for the community. Over the past three years \$30,000,000.00 has been utilized to help with rental assistance and eviction prevention in the community. This is going from \$30 million dollars and \$2 million dollars in the last six months to about \$150,000.00 for the next fiscal year is going to be a substantial change for the community.

Chief Operations Officer Kelly Inman shared the number was passed on May 1, 2023. May and the first three weeks of June estimated. We have spent direct to client 4.4 million dollars and the maximum we have is \$6.4 million. The remaining balance direct to client is approximately \$2 million as of what predicted for the end of June. The average over the last six month of spending \$327,000 ranging from \$570,000, down to what we are guessing June will be about \$150,000, six months left of funding. Also, going from having \$180,000.00 a year of county dollars dedicated to eviction diversion to what was spent for the past six months will be an adjustment. People who have or maxing out ERAP benefits because there is a maximum amount of 18 months across 1.0 and 2.0 program. Additional funding and eviction diversion for county dollars are being added to get through the year. The community will be experiencing the same with rental assistance like unwinding of Medicaid and FNS.

Board member Janice P. Paul conveyed terms of causes and what's going on with people out of work or staying home due to child care. What support are you receiving from the housing authority and are they making referrals to DSS. There has been communication about vouchers being update. Assistant Director Janeen Gordon mentioned the housing authority is expanding some of their housing to have additional units. That would be helpful due to rising cost. A meeting was held last week and for people with a 50% AMI and below, there is a shortage of about 30,000 affordable housing units.

Vice Chair Dr. Monique Holsey-Hyman pointed out issues people in the community are having relating to housing including landlords refusing vouchers.

Assistant Director Gordon talked about numbers coming in for SAM In-home Program. Two new employees are in the process of completing training. AAS is projected to have 100 more evaluation for Adult Protective Services. This is the highest year due to the aging community. AAS is returning to mandated services versus services that are essential to the community. It has been a difficult task for staff to make sure they are in the right space and working with the Director to make sure we have everything we need.

Vice Chair Dr. Monique Holsey-Hyman questioned the 18 months that could be lost. Also, do the case manager know when people are getting to that point and are they referred to other entities. There is a maximum amount they can received. There are community resources available like the Salvation Army and churches.

Board member Jacqueline Beatty-Smith asked challenges in AAS with increased workloads. Are you dealing with ACS and HCC supervisors exceeding the recommendation for supervisor to social worker ratio? Assistant Director Janeen Gordon replied staff have been handling the workloads for years and that is why there is a need for more staff in both areas. A supervisor must be in place to add more staff.

Assistant Director Jovetta Whitfield informed the Board, on July 1, 2023, the State will be implementing new screening and response in doing new case decision. One of the decisions the State is recommending relates to saying anything inappropriate or sensitive that can impact seeing children. Automatic abuse case screening will increase the number of reports and currently there is only one unit in child welfare. Currently, there are five workers, and this will increase cases going to In-Home because they are removing services recommended due to saying anything inappropriate or sensitive. The screening will affect the Forensic Unit. The changes are occurring during the budget year; therefore, we might have to come back and request positions. Assistant Director Jovetta Whitfield wanted to add to the Board's radar.

Vice Chair Dr. Monique Holsey-Hyman asked with the new screening methods, cases are screened as they come in and need a certain screening mechanism that go automatically to child abuse case. Assistant Director Whitfield have not seen the tool and don't know when the State intake system is going to take place. Staff have given feedback and the date of implementation has not been established. There are some changes in the definition of abuse, some are due to the totality report and looking how they can eliminate fatalities due to safety. The goal is to keep children with their families and not bringing them into foster care.

Program Manager LaVelle Chesney reported driving under the influence becomes an automatic investigation and screen for physical injury. They don't have to be charged, if they are stopped on suspicion of driving under the influence, no matter whether they meet that legal limit or not, it is automatically screened in and accepted for a physical injury case which makes it an investigative assessment.

Deputy Director Catherine Williamson-Hardy indicated this will be a huge shift for Child Welfare because anyone can make a mistake. The big focus was why services are recommended versus screening them in to work with the family so it can potentially increase depending on what happens when children come in the system.

Program manager Chesney specified it removed the criminally charged, it became an injurious environment which was a family assessment that fell under neglect. But now you don't have to charged it is a physical injury which is an investigative assessment which is either a substantiated or unsubstantiated. There will be an increase in RIL placements because any physical injury substantiated is an automatic RIL placement.

Assistant Director Jovetta Whitfield will keep the DSS Board posted.

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

#### **Assistant Director Margaret Faircloth**

Chief Operations Officer Kelly Inman and Assistant Director Margaret Faircloth submitted a written report.

Assistant Director Margaret Faircloth conveyed the county director's letter was received with updates on foster care payments. The budget is being reviewed to see if there is a need to make increases in foster care payments.

Another item is the single audit and information has been submitted to County Finance. Assistant Director Faircloth acknowledge Interim Assistant Director Cynthia Cason, Assistant Director Rhonda Stevens, and Program Manager Candice Leathers for helping to retrieve the information.

Working hard to submit contracts to County Finance and since the budget has been adopted reviewing the budget line for any changes.

Chief Operations Officer Kelly Inman reported one position was approved in the budget. Approximately, \$279,000 was cut from contracted services. Contracted services assist with community partnerships like Center for Senior Life. The County overall was asked to find \$2.2 million to help with the compensation study and that was significant for DSS. DSS might have to come back at mid-year to request assistance. The RFP process has been completed for new information providers.

### **Vacancy Report**

HR Analyst James Hart submitted a written report.

James Hart reiterated a lot of hiring packages will be moving in the next couple of weeks for critical positions. The updated information on the pay balance is in place and staff are working on an internal procedure to maintain the pay

philosophy where it affects position compressed. This will move staff who are underneath the new minimal to a 7% increase and depending on their performance evaluation they could receive up to an additional 4%.

We are taking a new approach to be competitive and working on a hiring career event for Family Economic Services. A subcommittee which include management and staff were working to development of the event.

DSS will continue to conversate with County Human Resources about different initiatives. Also, focus on the importance of training and developing supervisors, along with review exit interview information.

Board member Jacqueline Beatty-Smith stressed the importance of reviewing exit interviews. It is something being discussed and establishing the stay interview, retrieving the information while people are here.

Deputy Director Catherine Williamson-Hardy specified Wake County has over 600 employees in their economic service area, which is more than our agency. Durham is remarkably different that Wake County. Staff in Wake are in the office a minimum of two days a week.

Vice Chair Dr. Monique Holsey-Hyman asked if staff have additional information to share with the DSS Board and thanked everyone for attending the DSS Board meeting. The meeting was adjourned through a majority vote.

Respectfully submitted,

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Chairperson

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Date

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Secretary to the Board

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Date