

Durham County Board of Social Services

Regular Session Minutes

April 17, 2024

The Durham County Board of Social Services monthly meeting was held on Wednesday, April 17, 2024, in conference rooms 2421/2422 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, Charles I. Mitchell, and Wendy Sotolongo.

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

Assistant Directors:, Rhonda Stevens, Latoya Chambers (Interim), Margaret Faircloth, Jovetta Whitfield, and Senior Operations Officer Kelly Inman, Cynthia Cason (Interim), Kimberly Lincoln (Interim).

DSS staff attending included: Candice Leathers, Meghan Russ, Lee Little, Nancy Santos, Jacqueline Proctor, Kalindra Ellerbe, Felecia Cameron, Quannah Jackson-Brown, Shontelle Smith, LaVelle Chesney, Susan Lee, Michelle Wolff, Carole Trimble, Lynn Thomas, 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 April 17, 2024, regular meeting to order at 3:10 pm.

Public Comments

A public comment from Antoinette Hawes of 5610 Catskill Court Durham, NC 27713. Ms. Hawes is promoting the Black Mothers' March on May 12, 2024. She is standing in solidarity with supporting mothers and networking in keeping children with their parents to prevent them from going into the custody of Child Protective Services.

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 Wendy Sotolongo seconded.

The agenda was unanimously approved.

<u>Board member</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Abstained</u>
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		

Approval of Minutes

March 20, 2024, regular meeting minutes will be available on May 15, 2024.

Chair Report

Chair Commissioner Wendy Jacobs recognized Director Maggie Clapp, Assistant Director Jovetta Whitfield, and Deputy Director Valery Dambreville for attending the Board of County Commissioners meeting on

Monday, April 15, 2024, for the proclamation for Child Abuse Prevention Month. All of the comments were very powerful and focused on the importance of lifting a lot of the social determinants of poverty, the stress on families, and the need for resources to help keep families together. This community issue needs support.

Chair Commissioner Wendy Jacobs requested to move up the June meeting to June 12, 2024, or another date for planning the celebration for Vice Chair Dr. Monique Holsey-Hyman. The Board members will hold this date. Senior Assistant County Attorney Danielle Briggs will be revising the public charge to make it specific to DSS with some proposed language and be consistent with the statutes. Montrella Springfield sent Chair Commissioner Wendy Jacobs the DSS Board Policies, Procedures, and Guidelines for the DSS Board that was initially adopted in 2013. Chair Commissioner Wendy Jacobs proposed to review and update the policies at the next meeting or possibly schedule an extra meeting in May. The May 15, 2024, meeting will only consist of reading the department reports and having a second consent agenda to focus on the policies. Board member Jacqueline Beatty-Smith agreed to an abbreviated meeting with the reports and to discuss the policies and procedures. Board member Charles I. Mitchell agreed to discuss the policies and procedures at the May meeting as well. Board member Wendy Sotolongo inquired about Senior Assistant County Attorney Danielle Briggs or someone else providing proposed changes. Chair Commissioner Wendy Jacobs responded that she sent the information to Senior Assistant County Attorney Danielle Briggs that she received from Montrella Springfield to be reviewed and included in the virtual meetings. Senior Assistant County Attorney Danielle Briggs will make the revisions and send them to the board members a week before the meeting. There was a consensus to focus on reviewing the DSS Board Policies and Procedures at the regular meeting on May 15, 2024.

Chair Commissioner Wendy Jacobs stated that a DSS Board Appointment position is posted on the Durham County Boards and Commissions website. The application deadline is May 31, 2024.

Division Insight – Child and Family Services – Assistant Director Jovetta Whitfield

A very informative PowerPoint presentation from Social Work Program Manager Carole Trimble and Social Work Supervisor II Michelle Wolff about CPS Intake and Collaborative Services. This presentation consisted of a day in the life of an intake social worker, the intake policy, and the role of Social Work Supervisor II Michelle Wolff. The PowerPoint presentation will be sent to the board members.

Director's Report

Director Maggie Clapp submitted a written report.

Director Maggie Clapp distributed a handout to the board members about the NC-DHHS updates.

State Highlights

- ❖ Approximately 14,000 veterans and their families are likely eligible for the state's newly expanded Medicaid benefits. To ensure North Carolina veterans receive the support they are eligible for, NC-DHHS will help veterans who are newly eligible for Medicaid apply for Food and Nutrition Services.
- ❖ A federal judge has denied North Carolina state officials' motion to dismiss a lawsuit challenging the state's use of in-patient psychiatric treatment for children in foster care.
- ❖ NC-DHHS in partnership with the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction will be working together to implement the Summer Electronic Benefits Transfer (Summer EBT, S-EBT or "SUN Bucks" program) for summer 2024 to provide food dollars during the summer months to qualifying low-income families with school-aged children.

Local Highlights

- ❖ Hosted all staff luncheons on April 9, 2024, and April 18, 2024, to thank staff for their work during the air quality issue. Director Maggie Clapp thanked Board member Wendy Sotolongo for attending the April 9, 2024, luncheon. Chair Commissioner Wendy Jacobs will be attending the April 18, 2024, luncheon.
- ❖ Director Maggie Clapp shadowed a Child Protective Services (CPS) social worker on a visit, Foster Care Licensing, Medicaid, and Family Economic Independence (FEI) staff. In May, she will shadow Aging and Adult Services (AAS) and Customer Accountability and Talent Development (CATD) staff.
- ❖ Durham and Wake counties were selected for a pilot starting in the fall involving Cordata's Identity system. Cordata IDENTITY is a software platform that streamlines communication between healthcare providers and child welfare agencies, improving outcomes for vulnerable children while maintaining data security and privacy.
- ❖ Director Maggie Clapp met with Director Ryan Smith from the Holistic Empathetic Assistance Response Team (HEART) on April 10, 2024, to discuss partnering with them on the neighborhood project.

Director Maggie Clapp announced that Assistant Director Rhonda Stevens is retiring on April 30, 2024, after 26 years of service and her retirement celebration will be on Monday, April 29, 2024. Director Clapp is excited that FNS Program Manager Latoya Chambers has agreed to be Interim Assistant Director over FEI.

Chair Commissioner Wendy Jacobs congratulated Assistant Director Rhonda Stevens for her huge milestone and many years of commitment and leadership at DSS. She also thanked Interim Assistant Director Latoya Chambers for stepping up.

Vice Chair Dr. Monique Holsey-Hyman thanked Director Maggie Clapp and Assistant Director Jovetta Whitfield's team for all their hard work around Child Abuse Awareness Month.

Chair Commissioner Wendy Jacobs inquired if DSS has a role in tracking or promoting the SUN Bucks program. Assistant Director Rhonda Stevens answered that DSS will be responsible for distributing the S-EBT cards and contacting the individuals who utilize the P.O. Box 810 Durham, NC 27702 address.

Chair Commissioner Wendy Jacobs asked if DSS is partnering with Durham County Veteran Services. Director Maggie Clapp replied that she would be contacting Director Lois Harvin-Ravin.

Chair Commissioner Wendy Jacobs is excited about the collaboration with Ryan Smith and the HEART program and thanked Director Maggie Clapp for partnering with them. Director Maggie Clapp and Interim Assistant Director Cynthia Cason will hopefully share next month about working with the jail to get individuals enrolled in Medicaid on-site.

Vacancy Report

HR Analyst James Hart submitted a written report.

HR Analyst James Hart complimented HR Generalist Patrick Draughn for doing an excellent job helping to facilitate the work with the hiring managers in his absence. Human Resources is moving into a new phase of candidate pools for the Income Maintenance Caseworker positions in FEI and Medicaid. The HR department is also working on the child welfare turnover. Currently, an 11% vacancy rate is trending close to the 10% vacancy rate goal. HR Analyst James Hart is optimistic about where DSS will be heading into the summer and is focusing on more work around retention with the UNC School of Government.

Chair Commissioner Wendy Jacobs applauded HR Analyst James Hart and everyone for the huge achievement of the 11.11% vacancy rate, which has been the lowest since September 2021. Chair Commissioner Wendy Jacobs

asked HR Analyst James Hart about the work with the UNC School of Government. HR Analyst James Hart responded that DSS had some exploratory meetings at the end of last year with the UNC School of Government in building an internal retention area, doing a holistic assessment of the agency, surveys to assess the climate, and having strategic goals and initiatives that address staffing needs and retaining employees.

Chair Commissioner Wendy Jacobs stated that the internal retention area will help the process of updating the strategic goal areas for the agency. The board members will discuss this further. She asked HR Analyst James Hart to speak more about the survey of the agency's climate. HR Analyst James Hart explained that UNC School of Government has models used from other counties assessing the agencies as a whole that revealed good information and data. The internal retention area will be looking at anything specific to Durham and any revisions needing to be made. HR will be taking the feedback to move forward with the next steps. Board member Jacqueline Beatty-Smith said that she is glad that the mission, vision, and core values are included in assessing to determine the strengths and weaknesses of the organization. She will be interested to see the models used for the agency's climate surveys. HR Analyst James Hart will have more information as the process progresses. Vice Chair Dr. Monique Holsey-Hyman asked about the previous climate survey. HR Analyst James Hart is unfamiliar with and does not have any specific information on what was used but will mention this to the UNC School of Government. Chair Commissioner Wendy Jacobs remarked that the UNC School of Government is the absolute best and thanked HR Analyst James Hart for his report.

Aging and Adult Services (AAS) - Valery Dambreville, Deputy Director

Deputy Director Valery Dambreville submitted a written report.

Deputy Director Valery Dambreville stated that two staff members attended a conference in California and relayed information about the elderly population and the housing process issue that is happening.

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

Interim Assistant Director Kimberly Lincoln submitted a written report.

Interim Assistant Director Kimberly Lincoln informed the board members that two interns are working in Permanency Planning Services and have one case each while supporting additional cases. One of them will graduate in May and this spot will be available in the fall for an additional intern from NCCU. The internship program will have an additional spot for an internal DSS employee who is interested and attending any school. The internship program will be opened up to other schools in the fall of 2025. The department is discussing incentives that could be offered to hopefully gain additional task supervisors. Vice Chair Dr. Monique Holsey-Hyman stated that this is good to hear because there are barriers for people going back to school to get their Master of Social Work. Interim Assistant Director Kimberly Lincoln said the only caveat is that the individual cannot intern in the same area that they currently work in.

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 that March is Social Work Month, and she received an email last week from Christy Roessler, Director of Outreach Foster Family Alliance of NC that Dana Hart-Raynor was awarded an Honorable Mention as the Most Amazing Social Worker of the Year in the statewide contest among hundreds of social workers that were nominated. Filicia High from the Adoptions Unit will be retiring on April 30, 2024, and had her retirement celebration today. She has served Durham County and another county for 18 years.

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

Assistant Director Rhonda Stevens submitted a written report.

Assistant Director Rhonda Stevens highlighted that FEI had a March Madness competition for work processed in various areas of the division. The winners of the competition had lunch provided by the director and received a recognition gift today. Director Maggie Clapp noted that this was a great idea.

Medicaid – Cynthia Cason, Interim Assistant Director

Interim Assistant Director Cynthia Cason submitted a written report.

Interim Assistant Director Cynthia Cason announced to the board members that Processing Assistant Supervisor, Natalie Pennington will be retiring on April 30, 2024, and has served the agency for 25 years. The Medicaid Applications Team processed over 2,500 Medicaid Expansion applications and also assisted their teammates, which exemplifies true teamwork within the department. The Medicaid Expansion participants will be at a total of 11,000 by April 30, 2024.

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

Senior Operations Officer Kelly Inman submitted a written report.

Senior Operations Officer Kelly Inman shared with the board members that the eCourts Odyssey system in Child Support goes live on April 29, 2024. Child Support has been working hard learning the process and she will give an update next month. A huge identity theft issue was discovered in Program Integrity and will be referred to the Sheriff's Office. The individual completed 170 fraudulent applications which ties up staff

processing time and keeps people who need the benefits from receiving them.

Business Operations (BO) – Margaret Faircloth, Assistant Director

Assistant Director Margaret Faircloth submitted a written report.

Assistant Director Margaret Faircloth highlighted that the trips for Non-Emergency Medical Transportation (NEMT) have increased with Medicaid Expansion and January was one of the highest trips for the entire previous year. The department has struggled with vendors and is working on adding three additional vendors. The city transportation is one of the vendors and the other two privately-owned vendors are working on their Minority/Women-owned Business Enterprises (MWBE) certifications. Administrative Officer Shewanda Edwards has worked very hard to add these vendors to assist our clients.

Chair Commissioner Wendy Jacobs asked Assistant Director Margaret Faircloth if she is receiving assistance from the county transportation director. Assistant Director Margaret Faircloth responded that she believes they were part of connecting them to the city transportation but will reach out to Director Ellen Beckmann.

Board member Wendy Sotolongo stated that she appreciates the highlights, the great data, and the awesome remarks provided by Assistant Director Rhonda Stevens. She is concerned about the 194 families waiting for new providers. Board member Wendy Sotolongo asked what Child Care Services is doing to find new providers and to help existing providers expand their capacity to take some of these children off the waiting list. Assistant Director Rhonda Stevens answered that there is a partnership event with the Child Care Services Association (CCSA) planned on April 25, 2024, to invite those families and assist them with locating providers.

Board member Wendy Sotolongo recognized Medicaid Expansion for the amazing ratio of the applications received versus the disposed applications. She stated that the department is working above and beyond.

Interim Assistant Director Cynthia Cason thanked Board member Wendy Sotolongo for the recognition.

Board member Wendy Sotolongo asked Assistant Director Jovetta Whitfield who is leading the family drug treatment court. Assistant Director Jovetta Whitfield replied that Judge Montgomery-Blinn would be the judge of the courtroom. The Justice Services Department will be writing the grant to receive the funding. Board member Wendy Sotolongo said that she appreciates all of the reports and that they are very helpful.

Board member Jacqueline Beatty-Smith inquired if exit interviews are being conducted to capture information when employees are leaving. HR Analyst James Hart answered yes, and this is the standard practice for any employee who separates from the agency. HR is more proactive about stay interviews and addressing any concerns before it becomes an exit interview. Both of the interviews are important, and HR is trying to have a balanced approach.

Vice Chair Dr. Monique Holsey-Hyman asked if workers know that they can contact HR after following the chain of command. HR Analyst James Hart replied that staff are aware, and the county has certain policies and procedures. HR is available to receive and address any questions that staff may have.

Chair Commissioner Wendy Jacobs thanked Director Maggie Clapp and Assistant Directors Margaret Faircloth and Rhonda Stevens for responding to the crisis around emergency rental assistance. This is a new crisis since all of the federal money has stopped. The fact that they were able to find \$130,000 will get us through to the end of the fiscal year for the city and the county. Hopefully, the city and the county will address this matter in the upcoming budgets.

Chair Commissioner Wendy Jacobs noticed that the ratios for spending and revenue were lower and asked Assistant Director Margaret Faircloth if this was an issue. Assistant Director Margaret Faircloth responded no and that the revenues are coming in a month behind what the spending is. A lot

of the percentages will be higher because the purchase requests are accounted for. The department is trending the same as the previous year.

Chair Commissioner Wendy Jacobs thanked the staff that participated and supported the Re-Entry Simulation that showed how many barriers formerly incarcerated people face after they are released.

Chair Commissioner Wendy Jacobs adjourned the April 17, 2024, regular meeting at 4:45 pm to a closed session.

- NCGS 143-318.11(a) (6) To consider the qualifications, competence, performance, character, fitness, conditions of appointment, or conditions of initial employment of an individual public officer or employee or prospective public officer or employee; or to hear or investigate a complaint, charge, or grievance by or against an individual public officer or employee.
- NCGS 143-318.11(a)(1) To prevent the disclosure of information that is privileged or confidential pursuant to the law of this State or of the United States or not considered a public record within the meaning of Chapter 132 of the General Statutes. Said information being confidential pursuant to NCGS 108a-80 and NCGS 7b-302.

Respectfully submitted,

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Chairperson	Date

_____	_____
Secretary to the Board	Date