

# **Durham County Board of Social Services**

## **Regular Session Minutes**

**October 23, 2024**

The Durham County Board of Social Services monthly meeting was held on Wednesday, October 23, 2024. The DSS Board Meeting was hybrid, in-person attendance in Conference Rooms 2421/22.

The following DSS Board members were in attendance:

Chair Commissioner Wendy Jacobs, Vice Chair Jacqueline Beatty-Smith, Charles I. Mitchell, Wendy Sotolongo and Dionne Moore.

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

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

DSS staff attending included: Candice Leathers, Felicia Cameron, Jackie Proctor, Meghan Russ, Nancy Santos, Quannah Jackson-Brown, Shontelle Smith, LaVelle Chesney, Susan Lee, Pamela Purifoy, Tonia Gay, Emma Perry, Lee Little, Carole Trimble, James Hart, Christie McMillian, Laura Foy, and Montrella Springfield

Danielle Briggs, Senior Assistant County Attorney was present.

Chair Commissioner Wendy Jacobs called October 23, 2024, regular meeting to order followed by the reading of the decorum .

## **Public Comments**

Sheryl Smith, Minister Raziq Zaidi, Nation of Islam, and Amanda Wallace, was present. Attendees were given five minutes to voice their concerns.

## **Approval of the Agenda**

Chair Commissioner Wendy Jacobs asked board members to review the approval of the proposed agenda. Vice Chair Jacqueline Beatty-Smith offered the motion to approve the proposed agenda and Board member Wendy Sotolongo seconded.

The agenda was unanimously approved.

<b>Board member</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Abstained</b>
Chair Commissioner Wendy Jacobs	Yes		
Vice Chair Jacqueline Beatty-Smith	Yes		
Board member Charles I. Mitchell	Yes		
Board member Wendy Sotolongo	Yes		
Board member Dionne Moore	Yes		

## **Approval of Minutes**

The minutes of the September regular meeting were unanimously approved. Board member Wendy Sotolongo offered the motion for approval of the minutes from the September regular meeting followed by the second from Vice Chair Jacqueline Beatty-Smith.

<b>Board member</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Abstained</b>
Chair Commissioner Wendy Jacobs	Yes		
Vice Chair Jacqueline Beatty-Smith	Yes		
Board member Charles I. Mitchell	Yes		
Board member Wendy Sotolongo	Yes		
Board member Dionne Moore	Yes		

## **Finance Division Presentation**

### **Assistant Director Margaret Faircloth was unavailable.**

A copy of the presentation will be placed with the minutes.

### **Christie McMillian, Senior Accountant/Supervisor and Laura Foy, Administrative Officer**

DSS Finance Division is responsible for implementing fiscal regulations and policies, budget development, account oversight, and managing revenues and expenditures.

DSS Finance/Fiscal Division works with County Finance and Administrative offices.

DSS budget is primarily funded with Federal, State and County dollars. Programs administered by DSS and legislation over 50 different program budget lines are in the DSS Budget. Some federal and state funds are capped, others open-ended provide federal or state participation with the county matching funds.

Finance/Fiscal Division has several units which consist of Budget, Special Projects & Reconciliation Unit, Reimbursement Unit, and Procurement Unit.

DSS expenditures to the State for reimbursement are submitted the 1571.

Day sheets are used for reporting staff's time by using a combination of service codes and program codes to help determine reimbursement. Correct coding is important.

Non-Emergency Medical Transportation assists customers with transportation to appointments and other Medicaid coverage services. Medicaid recipients must complete a transportation assessment to determine eligibility.

Three units work together under one division to support the DSS division's financial needs.

Chair Commissioner Wendy Jacobs thanked staff for their presentation and how the units were broken down displaying the importance of work.

Vice Chair Jacqueline Beatty-Smith commented on the informative presentation and thanked staff.

### **Chair Report**

Chair Commissioner Wendy Jacobs entertained a motion regarding the proposed meeting dates for the November and December regular meetings due to the holidays. The proposed meeting dates are Tuesday, November 26, 2024, and Tuesday, December 17, 2024, at 9:00am. Board member Charles I. Mitchell offered the motion and Board member Wendy Sotolongo seconded.

<b>Board member</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Abstained</b>
Chair Commissioner Wendy Jacobs	Yes		
Vice Chair Jacqueline Beatty-Smith	Yes		
Board member Charles I. Mitchell	Yes		
Board member Wendy Sotolongo	Yes		
Board member Dionne Moore	Yes		

### **Director's Report- Director Maggie Clapp**

Director Maggie Clapp submitted a written report.

One highlight, Staff were authorized to assist with DSNAP for western North Carolina due to the hurricane. Staff within FEI, Medicaid and CATD were eager to assist. Buncombe County requested Child and Family Services staff to assist for two weeks with home visits.

The federal government visited last month to audit Medicaid. Durham was one of five counties chosen to view day sheets. North Carolina is the only state using day sheets. No issues found with the federal audit.

Board member Wendy Sotolongo inquired about staff going to western North Carolina in person for home visits.

Director Clapp conveyed staff will be going to western North Carolina for child visits. They were able to secure hotels for two social workers for several weeks. DSNAP is a call center set up by the State to provide funding for food.

The DSS Board thanked staff for working with DSNAP and those assisting in child visits.

### **Family Economic Independence (FEI) – Latoya Chambers, Interim Assistant Director**

Interim Assistant Director Latoya Chambers submitted a written report.

Management and staff with FEI worked on Saturday assisting with DSNAP and had a pilot with timeliness. Recertifications for food and nutrition services for September, October and November have been extended. Caseworkers can assist with applications and interviewing, which is a big help. Interim Assistant Director Chambers acknowledged FEI staff for working hard with DSNAP and units joining together to keep services moving forward.

Chair Commissioner Wendy Jacobs thanked FEI staff assisting with DSNAP and participating in the welcoming week with immigrants and refugees along with El Futuro. Chair Commissioner Jacobs serves on a national Immigration Task Force and Durham County was asked to present in the welcoming week activities.

Director Maggie Clapp introduced Cynthia Cason, new Assistant Director for Medicaid. The DSS Board welcomed Cynthia Cason as Assistant Director.

### **Medicaid –Assistant Director Cynthia Cason**

Assistant Director Cynthia Cason submitted a written report.

Medicaid entered a second round of audit review of cases for the single audit and based on the review, no findings are anticipated, currently waiting for the final report.

Long term care has been busy visiting nursing home facilities. There has been improvement in communication and working relationships. The Long Term Care Unit is fully staffed and plans to invite staff from nursing facilities to DSS.

Approximately 15,000 applications have been received for Medicaid Expansion. Staff are working with community partners to ensure eligible citizens apply for Medicaid.

Assistant Director Cason informed the DSS Board on the second page of the written report under program outcomes for special assistance for the aged and disabled the month should be September. The Medicaid Report Card was passed for the month of September with 98% timeliness rate.

Chair Commissioner Wendy Jacobs acknowledged the outreaches at El Futuro Hispanic Heritage Kermes and community churches. The DSS Board thanked Medicaid staff for their continuous hard work.

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

Interim Assistant Director Kimberly Lincoln submitted the CATD report.

Interim Assistant Director Kimberly Lincoln recognized Senior Public Information Officer Pamela Purifoy for coordinating the League of Women Voters to come to DSS on National Voter Registration Day. Tables were set up so people could register to vote.

The Quality Assurance Teams continue to support program service areas. Medicaid clinics have been implemented for one on one opportunity to review and access staff's understanding of program processes. Training courses are being developed and implemented in other program areas.

Vice Chair Jacqueline Beatty-Smith applauded Pamela Purifoy for the coordination of the National Voters Registration Day.

Chair Commissioner Wendy Jacobs commented on the details of the report about what's transpiring within the division and tracking the work. Even with the challenges work continues.

Chair Commissioner Jacobs mentioned Ride to the Polls, people can call to receive a ride so they can vote. Chair Commissioner Jacobs stressed the importance of early voting because you can register and vote at the same time.

Senior Public Relations Officer Pamela Purifoy constantly submits information on Twitter reminding people to vote. One was sent about the advantages of early voting. Senior Public Relations Officer Purifoy will contact the individuals who were passing out information in the lobby.

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

Assistant Director Jovetta Whitfield submitted a written report.

The On-Site Permanency Planning Consult was September 25, 2024, The Regional Child Welfare Consultant shared there were no findings on the IV-E cases submitted for federal reviews.

Chair Commissioner Wendy Jacobs congratulated staff. There was a comment about having limited resources for families being an ongoing problem. The RHYSE Center is the new assessment center that supposed to be available for parents and families through appointments or walk-ins. DSS staff is aware of the center and will look at the programs offered.

Director Maggie Clapp is scheduled to meet with Angela Nunn and will inquire about the RHYSE Center.

Deputy Director Valery Dambreville highlighted staff assisting Western Carolina and possible challenges with reassigning cases to other workers. Staff continue doing a great job.

Chair Commissioner Wendy Jacobs acknowledged the foster care numbers going down, which is a positive sign. Staff have put effort into this for the



last few months. Meetings have been scheduled to address some of the barriers and staff are moving forward to improving in that area. There is an effort to keep children together with families, therefore, the numbers are increasing in home services which is balancing out. A steady number of reports are coming in and the majority are behavioral issues.

Deputy Director Valery Dambreville conveyed there is a strong effort to deal with non-judicial cases through preventative efforts. Staff could proactively assist families to align with the Family First Prevention Act.

Board member Wendy Sotolongo asked about legislation helping targeted wrap around services for older teenagers with behavioral problems. Has there been any increase in the number of services available? The State is not providing additional resources.

Chair Commissioner Wendy Jacobs inquired about pulling out different data points. Assistant Director Jovetta Whitfield indicated it would be how many kids are coming or going maybe receiving home services. The priority is keeping children safe.

### **Aging and Adult Services (AAS) – Assistant Director Travis Williams**

Assistant Director Travis Williams submitted a written report.

Assistant Director Travis Williams highlighted AAS staff going out within the community meeting with clients and partners.

Supervisor Tammie Tate is a member of the Durham Comprehensive Aging Plan and was recognized for outstanding leadership and commitment to Durham's Comprehensive Aging Plan.

The In-Home Services audit was conducted last month and there were no findings.

Program Manager Lee Little and staff attended the HOPWA Conference in Washington, DC. Currently, staff are analyzing how to better utilize HOPWA funds to improve service to clients..

The Low Income Energy Assistance Program (LIEAP) will begin in December and continue until March.

The State requires quarterly monitoring of facilities, but staff visit monthly, to make sure clients are receiving the services necessary for the care.

Chair Commissioner Wendy Jacobs welcomed Assistant Director Travis Williams and acknowledged his attendance at the Dementia Forum. Chair Commissioner Jacobs mentioned the impact relating to in-home care aide's shortage. Program manager Meghan Russ conveyed the salary for in-home aides is minimum which is outlined in vendor contracts. The in-home care aides probably receive \$10.00 per hour, however, the vendor might receive \$22.00 per hour. Chair Commissioner Jacobs requested additional information on funds vendors receive. Vendors can receive private payments for other clients. DSS is the funding source for our clients.

### **Finance - Assistant Director Margaret Faircloth**

Assistant Director Margaret Faircloth submitted the Finance Report.

Assistant Director Margaret Faircloth asked if there were any questions.

Finance staff presented to the DSS Board earlier in the meeting. The DSS Board applauded the staff for detailing the responsibilities of the Finance Division.

Assistant Director Faircloth conveyed there are multiple audits in process and the County is working hard to complete the single audit. AAS staff were commended on their focus and quick turnaround on some items submitted to the Compliance Analyst. The audit results have not been received.

Chair Commissioner Wendy Jacobs mentioned challenges due to the budget freeze. There are no concerns, items that are underspending, the funds are moved to support other areas if needed.

### **Operations – Senior Operations Officer Kelly Inman**

Senior Operations Officer Kelly Inman submitted the Operations Report.

Several items highlighted included the Strategic Planning Session. The leadership team worked on Strategic Planning and met with the County to make sure DSS was aligned with DCo 2029 Initiatives.

DSS is moving into the Veterans space acquired due to the department relocating. For the next few months staff will be moving closer to their supervisors and additional staff for Medicaid Expansion will be accommodated.

The new IT Manager will start October 21, 2024.

Child Support Staff participated in the National Night Out and support other community outreach.

DSS staff in conjunction with the County received donations for Western North Carolina and facility staff assisted with distributing to various entities.

Chair Commissioner Jacobs asked about the veteran services' space available. There are six offices and eight cubicles. Aging and Adult Services staff will be relocated to that area due to office sharing.

The DSS Board expressed gratitude to staff for participating in community outreach.

### **Vacancy Report – James Hart**

James Hart submitted the Vacancy Report.

With approximately two months left in the year, the vacancy rate has averaged out at 11.5%. Staff are working on filling critical positions in leadership roles as well as CPS.

Employee appreciation is being planned at the county level.

Staff were recognized for their hard work in the different areas especially around retaining staff.

Within strategic planning the focus for the new year includes helping to support supervisors and staff.

Chair Commissioner Wendy Jacobs requested reporting on individual departments' vacancies in terms of trends and issues not related to DSS. HR Analyst James Hart agreed to provide the information.

Vice Chair Jacqueline Beatty-Smith thanked James Hart and Leadership for the hard work provided daily.

Chair Commissioner Wendy Jacobs thanked management for attending the meeting and entertained a motion to move to close session. Vice Chair Jacqueline Beatty-Smith offered a motion to move to closed session and Board member Wendy Sotolongo seconded. A unanimous vote from the DSS Board. The DSS Board returned to regular session and adjourned.

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