**Durham County Board of Social Services**

 **Regular Session Minutes**

**May 28, 2025**

The Durham County Board of Social Services regular meeting was held on Wednesday, May 28, 2025, in Conference Room A with a hybrid option.

The following DSS Board members were in attendance:

Vice Chair Jacqueline Beatty-Smith, Commissioner Stephen Valentine, Wendy Sotolongo, and Dionne Moore.

Chair Dr. Charles I. Mitchell received an excused absence from the board meeting.

The Durham County Department of Social Services was represented by: Director Maggie Clapp, Deputy Director Valery Dambreville, Assistant Directors: Jovetta Whitfield, Travis Williams, Bila Louima, Latoya Chambers, and Senior Operations Officer Kelly Inman.

DSS staff attending included: James Hart, Shontelle Smith, Natasha Harcum, Anthony Sturdivant, Jackie Proctor, Candice Leathers, Theresa Long, Pamela Purifoy, Crystal Anderson, Laura Foy, Shewanda Edwards, Emma Perry, Tonia Gay, Contessa Sawyer, and Loretta Roberts.

Senior Assistant County Attorney Danielle Briggs was present.

Vice Chair Jacqueline Beatty-Smith called the regular meeting to order on May 28, 2025, and read the decorum.

Commissioner Stephen Valentine requested a motion to excuse Chair Dr. Charles I. Mitchell from the meeting. Board member Wendy Sotolongo seconded. The DSS Board excused Chair Dr. Charles I. Mitchell with a unanimous vote.

**Board member Yes No Abstained**

Vice Chair Jacqueline Beatty-Smith Yes

Commissioner Stephen Valentine Yes

Board member Wendy Sotolongo Yes

Board member Dionne Moore Yes

**Public Comments**

Vice Chair Jacqueline Beatty-Smith asked for public comments. Five minutes were allotted for attendees to speak. Amanda Wallace requested confirmation that visits are happening fairly. Antoinette Hawes expressed her concern about CPS informing the parents of their rights and addressing the timeframe of the visits.

**Review and Approval of the Agenda**

Vice Chair Jacqueline Beatty-Smith asked the board members to review the proposed agenda for approval. Board member Wendy Sotolongo made a motion to amend the agenda to remove the Child and Family Services division insight and the Board Chair Report. Commissioner Stephen Valentine seconded the motion to approve the amended proposed agenda. The amended agenda was unanimously approved.

**Board member Yes No Abstained**

Vice Chair Jacqueline Beatty-Smith Yes

Commissioner Stephen Valentine Yes

Board member Wendy Sotolongo Yes

Board member Dionne Moore Yes

**Review and Approval of the Minutes**

Vice Chair Jacqueline Beatty-Smith asked the board members to review the regular meeting minutes from April 23, 2025. Commissioner Stephen Valentine made a motion to approve the minutes from April 23, 2025, and any necessary corrections. He apologized for his absence at the last meeting. Board member Wendy Sotolongo seconded. The DSS Board approved the minutes with a unanimous vote.

**Board member Yes No Abstained**

Vice Chair Jacqueline Beatty-Smith Yes

Commissioner Stephen Valentine Yes

Board member Wendy Sotolongo Yes

Board member Dionne Moore Yes

**Director’s Report - Director Maggie Clapp**

Director Maggie Clapp submitted a written report.

Director Maggie Clapp is waiting for the budget of the federal government and state. She will inform the board members of the impact on the department. A meeting was held recently for the Fatherhood Initiative and a position will be reclassified for this program. May is IMC Recognition Month for staff. Director Maggie Clapp expressed her concern about the Medicaid cuts. The CFSR federal audit for Child Welfare and the state has selected Durham County as a pilot site. Vice Chair Jacqueline Beatty-Smith inquired about the length of time for the pilot. Director Maggie Clapp stated that she would send the information to the board members.

**Review and Approval of the Board Reports**

Vice Chair Jacqueline Beatty-Smith asked the board members to approve the board reports. Commissioner Stephen Valentine made a motion to approve the board reports. Board member Wendy Sotolongo seconded. The board reports were approved by the DSS Board with a unanimous vote.

**Board member Yes No Abstained**

Vice Chair Jacqueline Beatty-Smith Yes

Commissioner Stephen Valentine Yes

Board member Wendy Sotolongo Yes

Board member Dionne Moore Yes

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

Assistant Director Latoya Chambers submitted the FEI report.

Assistant Director Latoya Chambers highlighted that May is Income Maintenance Appreciation Month and staff are celebrating with various activities. Assistant Director Latoya Chambers reported that this is the fourth month that FEI passed the MOU performance standards for Work First Cash and Food and Nutrition Services. Work First Cash applications timeliness was 100% and recertifications timeliness was 100%. Food and Nutrition Services passed applications timeliness for expediting and processing with 96.84%, regular processing with 97.11%, and recertification timeliness with 97.37%. All parameters exceeded the state’s 95% expectation for the MOU.

The Child Care Team started pulling from the waitlist effective May 1, 2025, with sessions on Tuesdays and Thursdays. The team has taken 172 applications, issued 31 vouchers, denied 13 applications over the income limit, and has 28 pending applications. The waitlist has decreased to 133 families. The Child Care Team has some vacancies and is working diligently to fill these positions. Child Care and Subsidy Services staff attended the inaugural More than a Job NC Conference from April 3 – 4, 2025. Assistant Director Latoya Chambers recognized Crystal Anderson as the Nutrition and Work First Family Services Program Manager effective May 27, 2025. Commissioner Stephen Valentine requested that the board members be notified in real time of the changes from the federal government that impact the department. Vice Chair Jacqueline Beatty-Smith congratulated Crystal Anderson and acknowledged the division’s hard work.

**Medicaid – Assistant Director Cynthia Cason**

Assistant Director Cynthia Cason submitted the Medicaid report.

Program Manager Jackie Proctor informed the board members that the agency passed the April 2025 Medicaid Report Card for Medicaid for the Disabled (MAD) with a timeliness rate of 98%, and Other (45-day processing) with a timeliness rate of 97%. The state’s expectation is 90%. Special Assistance for the Aged (SAA) timeliness rate for April 2025 is 100% and the state’s expectation is 85%. Special Assistance for the Disabled (SAD) timeliness rate for April 2025 is 97% and the state’s expectation is 85%.

Medicaid celebrated IMC Month and staff engaged in the activities. Medicaid Expansion for the state has 76,647 individuals and Durham County has 16,804 residents enrolled. Commissioner Stephen Valentine inquired about the number of applications received being lower for the population served and higher from Duke University Hospital. Program Manager Jackie Proctor answered that the applications from Duke and Duke Regional are taken by outpost workers and sent to the agency. The applications are lower due to clients coming in to apply and applying online through the ePass website.

**Customer Accountability and Talent Development (CATD) – Assistant Director Bila Louima**

Assistant Director Bila Louima submitted the CATD report.

Assistant Director Bila Louima highlighted that Child and Family Services QAT social workers collaborated with the DSS county attorneys providing support with several legal trainings. She was excited to report that 80% of the social workers registered for this legal training. Vice Chair Jacqueline Beatty-Smith asked about the duration of the training. Assistant Director Bila Louima replied that the training is all day and involves content training and skill application.

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

Assistant Director Jovetta Whitfield submitted the CFS report.

Assistant Director Jovetta Whitfield highlighted May as Foster Care Month and IMC Month. She also mentioned that GAP and LINK activities will occur next month. HR will inform her of the start date for the dedicated position for weekend visits. One family graduated from the Homebuilders Program on May 21, 2025. Board member Wendy Sotolongo inquired about the concerns of the definition of eligibility. Assistant Director Jovetta Whitfield answered that was the primary focus at the last peer pod meeting. Vice Chair Jacqueline Beatty-Smith asked about the Fatherhood Initiative. Assistant Director Jovetta Whitfield replied that the program is in the beginning stages and a position will be posted upon approval.

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

Assistant Director Travis Williams submitted the AAS report.

Assistant Director Travis Williams highlighted that Adult Protective Services (APS) achieved 100% for abuse and neglect, and 100% for APS evaluations involving financial exploitation. Since January, CIP (Crisis Intervention Program) has consistently achieved 100% for emergency and non-emergency applications. The county received $25,000 for CIP funding. The AAS division meeting was held on April 16, 2025, with presentations from several community partners.

**Operations – Senior Operations Officer Kelly Inman**

Senior Operations Officer Kelly Inman submitted the Operations Report.

Senior Operations Officer Kelly Inman highlighted the life cycle replacement of equipment. A three-day Spring Clean-up was held in May for DSS work and storage areas. There will be a carpet cleaning project in June. A countywide sheltering exercise will be on June 17, 2025. The supervisor in Program Integrity, Sheila Dorsett, announced her retirement. Program Integrity has collected over $1,000,000 in claims. Child Support is planning a phone blitz to aid in a final push for payments toward arrears to meet incentive levels. The Medicaid requirement for individuals to cooperate with Child Support starts on July 1, 2025. Board member Wendy Sotolongo requested an update on the social worker position. Senior Operations Officer Kelly Inman stated the position was approved and posted twice but had issues with recruitment. Commissioner Stephen Valentine inquired if other partners across the government will be participating in the training in June. Senior Operations Officer Kelly Inman responded that Emergency Management organized the exercise and will include Public Health, the Fire Department, and the Sheriff’s Office.

**Finance - Assistant Director Margaret Faircloth**

Assistant Director Margaret Faircloth submitted the Finance Report.

Shewanda Edwards commented that County Manager Claudia Hager presented the budget on May 12, 2025, and resulted in a reduction of 15 FTE positions. A contract training was held with County Finance contract staff. Finance is working diligently with two internal staff members to complete 60 contract renewals by the beginning of the fiscal year. May is the last service month to draw down staff funding allocations from the state. Finance is looking at coding, evaluating daily, and making the appropriate adjustments.

**Vacancy Report – James Hart, Employee Retention & Engagement Manager**

James Hart, Employee Retention & Engagement Manager submitted the DSS Vacancy Report.

James Hart highlighted that the vacancy rate has consistently been 11%-12%. A large number of the vacancies are due to internal promotions. There is an uptick in Medicaid vacancies. He acknowledged the commitment of staff and their great work in areas with vacant positions. He also applauded the supervisors for filling vacancies during the annual performance review period. The recommended budget was presented, and the merit included will have an impact on staff retention. Vice Chair Jacqueline Beatty-Smith thanked James Hart for his hard work.

Vice Chair Jacqueline Beatty-Smith recognized the accomplishments and commitment of all the staff and the challenges being faced on behalf of the board. She commented on everyone to keep up the good work.

Board member Wendy Sotolongo offered the motion to move into a closed session and read N.C.G.S. 143-318.11 (a)(6). Commissioner Stephen Valentine seconded.

**Board member Yes No Abstained**

Vice Chair Jacqueline Beatty-Smith Yes

Commissioner Stephen Valentine Yes

Board member Wendy Sotolongo Yes

Board member Dionne Moore Yes

Respectfully submitted,

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Chairperson Date

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Secretary to the Board Date