

Durham County Board of Social Services

Regular Session Minutes

January 22, 2025

The Durham County Board of Social Services monthly meeting was held on Wednesday, January 22, 2025. The DSS Board Meeting was virtual due to inclement weather.

The following DSS Board members were in attendance:

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

The Durham County Department of Social Services was represented by the following: Director Maggie Clapp, Deputy Director Valery Dambreville, Assistant Directors: Jovetta Whitfield, Travis Williams, Bila Louima, Latoya Chambers (Interim).

DSS staff attending included:, Pamela Purifoy, Jackie Proctor, Nancy Santos, Emma Perry, Laura Foy, Shewanda Edwards, Quannah Jackson-Brown, Anthony Sturdivant, Shontelle Smith, LaVelle Chesney, Carole Trimble, Susan Lee, Tonia Gay, and Montrella Springfield.

Senior Assistant County Attorney Danielle Briggs and Deputy County Attorney Geri Ruzage were present.

Chair Charles I. Mitchell called January 22, 2025, regular meeting to order and read the decorum.

Public Comments

Sheryl Smith and Antoinetta Hawes, Rashonda Pettiford, Amanda Wallace, Jamie, Minister Raziq Zaidi, Nation of Islam were present. Attendees were given five minutes to voice their concerns. Public attendees requested copies of the board reports submitted. The DSS Board was asked to increase time for public comments.

Approval of the Agenda

Chair Charles I. Mitchell asked board members to review the proposed agenda for approval. Board member Wendy Sotolongo offered the motion to approve the proposed agenda and Vice Chair Jacqueline Beatty-Smith seconded.

The agenda was unanimously approved.

Board member	Yes	No	Abstained
Chair Charles I. Mitchell	Yes		
Vice Chair Jacqueline Beatty-Smith	Yes		
Board member Commissioner Stephen Valentine	Yes		
Board member Wendy Sotolongo	Yes		
Board member Dionne Moore	Yes		

Approval of Minutes

The minutes of December 17, 2024, regular meeting were unanimously approved. Vice Chair Jacqueline Beatty-Smith offered the motion for approval of the minutes followed by Board member Dionne Moore second.

The minutes of December 17, 2024, meeting was unanimously approved.

Board member	Yes	No	Abstained
Chair Charles I. Mitchell	Yes		
Vice Chair Jacqueline Beatty-Smith	Yes		
Board member Commissioner Stephen Valentine	Yes		
Board member Wendy Sotolongo	Yes		
Board member Dionne Moore	Yes		

Chair Report

Chair Charles I. Mitchell expressed gratitude to everyone. Chair Mitchell emphasized the DSS Board Meeting moved virtually due to the inclement weather. Chair Mitchell conveyed the board meeting will be limited so division directors can handle the responsibilities and needs of staff and the community. Chair Charles I. Mitchell introduced and welcomed Commissioner Stephen Valentine to the DSS Board. Commissioner Stephen Valentine shared gratitude for the opportunity to serve on the DSS Board and staff.

Director's Report- Director Maggie Clapp

Director Maggie Clapp submitted a written report.

Director Maggie Clapp thanked Chair Charles I. Mithcell for the flexibility and understanding the need for the short meeting today.

Director Clapp informed the DSS Board during the County DSS Directors board meeting the State Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) had not been signed regarding meeting certain requirements. Information was forwarded to the DSS Board regarding performance measures required to meet monthly. Child Support is the only program monitored annually. Starting now through March all counties are monitored. If the counties do not meet the measures, they will go into a corrected action plan with the State. Durham is doing well with the measures in the MOU and will update the board monthly. Vice Chair Jacqueline Beatty-Smith inquired about who is responsible for performance measures. The assistant directors are responsible for their divisions. Meetings are scheduled weekly with steps and reports provided. Divisions have processes in place for the performance measures.

Commissioner Stephen Valentine inquired about if performance measures are not met, what is the time period for the agency to move into corrective action. Director Clapp relayed it would be quarterly, currently being monitored January, February and March, if the county fails for all three months they will be on cap starting April. Commissioner Valentine asked about time to make the correction. Director Clapp conveyed that the State has not decided and they will be attending the February Director's Meeting.

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

Interim Assistant Director Latoya Chambers submitted a written report.

Interim Assistant Director Latoya Chambers reported Food and Nutrition Services and Work First are a part of the MOU and will be measured. Each month timeliness is reported, and the expectations have to be 95% or above. The expectations are being met, and work continues on the processes.

Interim Assistant Director Latoya Chambers highlighted FEI assisted with referrals and gift distributions for 171 families during Share your Holiday.

FEI plans to engage in more community outreaches.

Vice Chair Jacqueline Beatty-Smith commented on exceeding and passing certifications.

Chair Charles I. Mitchell acknowledged the two hires in Family Economic Services and thanked staff for their hard work. FEI currently has two vacancies, but working diligently to get fully staffed.

Medicaid –Assistant Director Cynthia Cason

Assistant Director Cynthia Cason submitted a written report.

Program Manager Emma Perry highlighted Medicaid continues to pass the report card at 98% and the expectation is 90%. Special Assistance for Aged was 89% and the goal was 85%. Special Assistance for Disabled timeliness rate was 93% and the goal was 85%. Staff were recognized for the one year anniversary of Medicaid Expansion. Special Assistance Monitoring for FY24-25 is complete with no findings and waiting for final report.

Approximately 590,331 individuals are enrolled statewide including 15,996 in Durham County.

Chair Charles I. Mitchell acknowledged staff for their accomplishments with Medicaid Expansion.

Vice Chair Jacqueline Beatty-Smith asked about the impact with 15 vacancies. Program Manager Perry has not seen an impact, staff have continued to complete daily tasks. Director Clapp agreed Medicaid is doing an excellent job, there have been promotions and staff have resigned. Assistant Director Cynthia Cason has not mentioned any impact and overtime has decreased.

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

Assistant Director Bila Louima first official board meeting in her new position.

Assistant Director Bila Louima highlighted transitioning to new database for internal quality control no longer using excel spreadsheets. Chair Charles I. Mitchell welcomed Assistant Director Bila Louima.

Vice Chair Jacqueline Beatty-Smith asked about the need to develop the Foster Care Training Curriculum and who will be providing training. The State does not provide permanency planning training and the trainings they are providing are not accessible. There is a need for uniform training for current and new staff. The team will be providing a two day permanency planning training course to disclose state policies and Durham County practices.

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

Assistant Director Jovetta Whitfield submitted a written report.

Assistant Director Jovetta Whitfield mentioned Memorandum of Understanding with the State for Child and Family Services is centered around Home Visits. Durham has surpassed the goal, and it is a federal fiscal year being tracked beginning October 1st through September 30th. That is the measure the State looks at which was exceeded by 98% of which the goal is 95%. Monitoring will continue with foster care home visits and Child and Family Services is in a good position with the State. The state has acknowledged Durham is doing well being as a large county because other counties have not reached their goals.

Chair Charles I. Mitchell expressed gratitude to Assistant Director Jovetta Whitfield, CFS staff and the agency for making an extra effort to assist families in the Durham community.

Commissioner Stephen Valentine asked if there is a measure for reunification. Reunification is not part of the MOU measures, it is reviewed, maybe eventually the state will be monitoring. Currently they are evaluating the data systems in place due to the transition of Child Welfare Transformation and the state system moving into a different system. Reunification rates with 12 months, initiation and three others will be monitored for a total of five. Presently, they are only able to monitor foster care. DSS will be tentatively late moving into a new system which will cause a shift in how data is collected. The intake system will be changing, the ongoing case management system will be changing, and state transformation for all 100 counties. Board member Commissioner Valentine thanked Assistant Director Whitfield and looking forward to the additional data points which will be available, and that will be helpful as issues that are addressed in the community centered around reunification.

Director Maggie Clapp emphasized even though the State does not review reunification Durham DSS is and have a goal in place. Not only reunification, but the timeliness within the twelve months. Data will be shared with the DSS Board regarding reunification.

Assistant Director Jovetta Whitfield pointed out the timeliness is a collaborative with DSS and the Court system.

Director Clapp mentioned Safe Babies Court will begin in Mid-February. There are six identified cases, a meeting was held with the State about the mapping process, the judges and other staff are ready to move forward.

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

Assistant Director Travis Williams submitted a written report.

Assistant Director Travis Williams highlighted monitoring including Adult Protective Services, Energy Program and Special Assistance In-Home. Programs have maintained 90% with the minimum requirement at 85%. Staff are ensuring that clients receive the necessary services. Adult Protective Services After-Hours Unit was recognized for being available during the inclement weather for client's needs. CIP funds were exhausted in early December. Social Workers continue to find resources for people. The AAS team continue to go the extra mile for the citizens in Durham. The State sent out a reallocation survey to the counties to determine if counties with extra funds would reallocate funds to counties which had exhausted their funds. Durham requested \$500,000; however, a response has not been received at this time.

Chair Charles I. Mitchell extended appreciation to Assistant Director Williams and AAS staff for sharing resources due to the depletion of the CIP funds.

Chair Charles I. Mitchell thanked Assistant Director Williams for the AAS report.

Finance - Assistant Director Margaret Faircloth

Assistant Director Margaret Faircloth submitted the Finance Report.

Administrative Officer Shewanda Edwards reported for Finance, Staff working hard to compose the budget and meet the county deadline of February 21, 2025. The single audit is near completion, no additional documentation has been requested, no finding and waiting for final review. Administrative Officer Shewanda Edwards asked if there were any questions.

Vice Chair Jacqueline Beatty-Smith asked in regards of the audit awaiting review. Do they give a timeframe for completion. No timeline is in place, staff were out due to the holidays which possibly caused a delay.

Chair Charles I. Mitchell elated no findings relating to the audits and thanked Administrative Officer Edwards for the report.

Operations - Senior Operations Officer Kelly Inman

Senior Operations Officer Kelly Inman submitted the Operations Report.

Director Maggie Clapp will answer any questions due to Senior Operations Officer Kelly Inman absence.

Director Clapp mentioned DSS has been asked to cover carpet cleaning in the budget which happens every two years. Carpet cleaning for the Department of Social Services will be very expensive and this is a county building. The cost is around \$30,000 therefore, the plan is to contact the County about the concern.

Board member Commissioner Stephen Valentine inquired about the notification regarding carpet cleaning. The notification was received from General Services, DSS has to submit budget requests to General Services and Information Technology prior to final submission.

Vice Chair Jacqueline Beatty-Smith recognized new hires and promotions in Child Support.

Vacancy Report - James Hart

James Hart submitted the Vacancy Report.

Director Maggie Clapp reported the vacancy rate went up slightly due to retirements, promotions and currently at 11%.

Board member Commissioner Stephen Valentine inquired about the vacant positions being critical. Critical vacancies in Child Welfare, currently two supervisory positions.

Chair Charles I. Mitchell informed the public attendees there is a formal process for requesting documents. They will be released after being redacted.

Board member Commissioner Stephen Valentine suggested providing the public with information about the DSS Board's authority and responsibilities. Senior Assistant County Attorney Danielle Briggs was asked to assist if the DSS Board and agreed to the request. Chair Charles I. Mitchell indicated that the request will be taken into consideration.

Chair Charles I. Mitchell proceeded to move to closed session and read the statues. Motion made by Board member Commissioner Stephen Valentine and seconded by Board member Wendy Sotolongo.

The DSS Board returned to regular session no action taken.

The DSS Board Meeting was unanimously adjourned by the DSS Board members.

Respectfully submitted,

Chairperson

Date

Secretary to the Board

Date