

Durham County Board of Social Services Regular Session Minutes

June 24, 2026

The Durham County Board of Social Services regular meeting was held on Wednesday, June 24, 2026, in conference rooms 2421/2422 with a hybrid option.

The following DSS Board members attended:

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

Board member Dionne Moore received an excused absence.

The Durham County Department of Social Services was represented by Director Maggie Clapp, Deputy Director Bila Louima, Assistant Directors Margaret Faircloth, LaShonda Bacote, Shontelle Smith and Senior Operations Officer Kelly Inman.

DSS staff attending included: James Hart, Pamela Purifoy, Felica Cameron, Contessa Sawyer, Candice Leathers, Shewanda Edwards, Laura Foy, Nancy Santos, Meghan Russ, Anthony Sturdivant, Carole Trimble, Jackie Proctor, Tonia Gay, Anthony Poole, Mark Deer, Shayna Carson, Diamali Corbett, and Montrella R. Springfield

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

Joanne Pierce, Assistant County Manager

Brandon Truman, Human Resources

Call to Order

Vice Chair Jacqueline Beatty-Smith called the regular meeting to order and welcomed everyone to the meeting. Vice Chair Jacqueline Beatty-Smith read the decorum and moved forward with Public Comments.

Public Comments

Vice Chair Jacqueline Beatty-Smith opened the floor for public comments, allotting five minutes total.

Minister Rafiq Zaidi, Nation of Islam spoke about the engagement of fathers and attending the Board of County Commissioners' meeting.

Crystal Wilson described her experience with the PPR hearing, loss of visitation rights, and lack of resources or support from social workers.

Peter Eisenmann talked about harm to children and families. He also mentioned reunification of families and the child welfare system failure.

Amanda Wallace raised concerns about the accessibility of the meeting online. Participants, noting a delay in being admitted to the meeting, and questioning the board's commitment to community engagement. Amanda Wallace also criticized the allocation of funds for reunification and asked about the specific budget line items for family preservation.

Vice Chair Jacqueline Beatty-Smith acknowledged the comments from the public.

Vice Chair Jacqueline Beatty-Smith requested a motion for an excused absence for Board member Dionne Moore from the board meeting. The motion was made by Board member Commissioner Stephen Valentine and seconded by Board member Wendy Sotolongo. The DSS Board unanimously approved an excused absence for Board member Dionne Moore.

<u>Board member</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Abstained</u>
Chair Dr. Charle I. Mitchell	Yes		
Vice Chair Jacqueline Beatty-Smith	Yes		
Board member Wendy Sotolongo	Yes		
Commissioner Stephen Valentine	Yes		

Review and Approval of the Agenda

Vice Chair Jacqueline Beatty-Smith asked board members to review the proposed agenda for approval.

The proposed agenda was unanimously approved.

<u>Board member</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Abstained</u>
Chair Dr. Charle I. Mitchell	Yes		
Vice Chair Jacqueline Beatty-Smith	Yes		
Board member Wendy Sotolongo	Yes		
Commissioner Stephen Valentine	Yes		

Review and Approval of the Minutes

Vice Chair Jacqueline Beatty-Smith requested a motion to approve the minutes of the April and May regular meetings, along with the June Call Meeting.

<u>Board member</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Abstained</u>
Chair Dr. Charle I. Mitchell	Yes		
Vice Chair Jacqueline Beatty-Smith	Yes		
Board member Wendy Sotolongo	Yes		
Commissioner Stephen Valentine	Yes		

Board Chair Report

Vice Chair Jacqueline Beatty-Smith is currently serving as Interim Chair to the DSS Board.

Vice Chair Jacqueline Beatty-Smith emphasized the need to use downtime for self-care and rejuvenation along with enjoying family and friends. During daily routines internal and external remain vigilant and aware of your surroundings. Congratulations to graduates from the County Leadership Academy. Aging Gracefully Resource Fair was a success and thanks to all staff who participated.

Director's Report - Director Maggie Clapp

Director Maggie Clapp submitted a written report.

Director Maggie Clapp communicated the Dominique Moody Bill HB 114/SB 28 which is moving through the legislature and will impact all 100 counties.

Directors have met several times to ensure consistent state support and caps.

Directors are actively engaging with state leadership to address unknowns, advocate for monitoring and workforce support. Three counties have been divested and six counties on CAPS.

HOPWA will continue even though additional funding will come from DSS budget to cover some of the administrative costs.

There is a 10% decrease in ethnic benefits since April in Durham County affecting aging adults, child welfare and hunger. Staff are preparing for further Medicaid changes from state and federal level.

Director Clapp acknowledged staff for their work with the Aging Gracefully Resource Fair.

Board member Commissioner Stephen Valentine attended the Aging Gracefully Resource Fair and complimented staff for providing the residents with the information. Communicating with the vendors and attending the presentations were informative.

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

Assistant Director Latoya Chambers submitted the FEI report.

Program manager Tonia Gay highlighted Work First Cash application's timeliness, recertifications was 100% which exceeded the 95% expectation. The team is working diligently to meet expectations. Work First has been restructured, and staff have been moved to other essential areas.

Food & Nutrition Services passed application timeliness, for expedited processing with 96.7%% and regular timeliness processing was 96.06% and recertification timeliness was 98.10%.

HR1 requirements pertaining to the payment error rate as of February 2026 are 13.48%. The payment rate is decreasing, working towards 6%.

May was Income Maintenance Caseworkers Month. All IMC staff were invited to attend a floating breakfast on May 19, 2026, and engaged in fun activities.

Childcare staff attended the Families & Communities Rising (FCR) Family & Community Fest Day at Durham County Memorial Stadium on May 15, 2026.

Work First employment services had five participants to start work making from \$12.00 to \$16.00 an hour, both part, and full time.

DSS Hunger Awareness, June 24, 2026, food was given to residents at DSS. Staff will be at locations in the community as well. The event was advertised on social media, and other methods to inform the community.

Board member Commissioner Stephen Valentine requested information on implications for residents relating to HR1. Currently, the information is not available. Durham is doing an internal error rate monthly due to the state being behind several months. Conversations are continuing at the state level because this impacts all 100 counties.

Medicaid – Cynthia Cason, Assistant Director

Assistant Director Cynthia Cason submitted the Medicaid report.

Assistant Director Cynthia Cason introduced Diamali Corbett, new program manager over Adult Medicaid. Ms. Corbett was promoted from long-term care supervisor in Medicaid

Durham passed May 2026 Medicaid Report Card for the Disabled (MAD) with a timeliness rate of 97%, and other (45-day processing) with a timeliness rate of 97%. The state's goal is 90%.

Special Assistance for the Aged (SAA) timeliness rate for March 2026 was 94% and the state's goal is 85%.

Special Assistance for the Disabled (SAD) timeliness rate for March 2026 was 97% and the state's goal is 85%.

Customer Accountability and Talent Development (CATD) – LaShonda Bacote, Assistant Director

Assistant Director LaShonda Bacote submitted the CATD report.

Assistant Director LaShonda Bacote reported Medicaid training continues and achieved 100% compliance for second party reviews with the state.

Family Economic Services (FEI) is challenged with meeting the requirement for the second party reviews for households of five or more.

Selection package for the hearing officer position has been submitted to Human Resources. The new hire for the intern coordinator position started in June.

QAT Supervisor attended SAFE Training in Charlotte enriching forensic interviewing skills for older adults and individuals with disabilities.

QAT staff continue to assist Child and Family Services, and 46 CPS assessments have been completed.

The policy and practice coach started in January, and 16 coaching sessions and 5 field observations have been accomplished.

Second part reviews are challenging because of the volume of cases and number of individuals five or more. Everyone must be reviewed and the cases are prone to error.

Child and Family Services (CFS) – Shontelle A. Smith

Assistant Director Shontelle A. Smith submitted the CFS report.

Assistant Director Shontelle A. Smith reported twenty-eight children have been reunified with their parents.

The Fatherhood initiative was held on June 22, 2026. Two individuals participated and provided feedback.

There were three different retention activities for foster parents and children. Twelve families attended the event at Wheels.

Permanency planning continues to exceed expectations with 99.41% for both measures as it relates to outcomes.

Challenges with NC PATH remain with some documents uploaded in Word are not saved along with other issues.

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

Assistant Director Travis Williams submitted the AAS report.

Aging Gracefully Fair was held Saturday June 13, 2026, and Assistant Director Travis Williams expressed gratitude to the DSS Board for their support. Director Maggie Clapp and DSS staff were acknowledged for their support. BOCC were recognized for the Proclamation.

World Elder Awareness Day was June 15, 2026, celebrating seniors. Reports are coming in due to abuse, neglect and exploitation of elderly citizens.

Assistant Director Travis Williams conveyed Durham County continues to achieve 100% in the Crisis Intervention Program applications with a health-related crisis and 100% in applications without health-related crisis.

Durham received \$250,000 allotment from the state for the CIP program.

Durham DSS achieved 100% timeliness with APS evaluations, which state metrics require completion within 30 days.

The Aging and Adult Services Centralized Intake Team partnered with the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services to support the successful repatriation of an 18-year-old young man from the Republic of Congo. He arrived at RDU Airport on March 13, 2026. During the 90-day period he was hired at Chick-fil-A, staff helped with housing and he enrolled in English as a second language.

Finance – Margaret Faircloth, Assistant Director

Assistant Director Margaret Faircloth submitted the Finance Report.

HOPWA funding was approximately \$22,000 for the month of May. The budget was approved for FY26/27.

The single audit is complete with one finding related to DSS which was Material Weakness-Eligibility. A corrective action plan has been finalized.

HOPWA was expected to continue at the same rate of funding on the programmatic side, however, with the budget cut of \$94,000 there will not be additional funds. With the funds from the City, the program will continue at the same level.

Staff are working to submit contracts and work with vendors. An additional contract coordination will begin in July.

Assistant Director Travis Williams provided additional clarification regarding HOPWA. The social worker assigned to HOPWA accepted an internal position, therefore, the new employee will have to be trained for the program.

Operations – Kelly Inman, Senior Operations Officer

Senior Operations Officer Kelly Inman submitted the Operations Report.

Senior Operations Officer Kelly Inman reported IT and Facilities are getting ready to kick off a program for automating fleet reservation.

Child Support new Program Manager Thomasina Stewart started and is currently in orientation. Staff are meeting self-assessment scores at 75% or greater and MOU measures were met. Three out of five incentive measures were met and closing the gap on total collections. Staff are coming in on Wednesday making calls for collections.

Vacancy Report – James Hart, Employee Retention & Engagement Manager

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

Staff are completing internal deadlines as well as work plans, which are a huge part of retention. The vacancy rate is approximately 12%. Medicaid was recognized for retention of staff. There are challenges in other divisions. DSS head count is lower due to fifteen positions returned to the county which alters reclassification and repurposing positions. The new coaching and mentoring position in Child Welfare ensures the capacity to support staff.

Applications for the next leadership academy cohort will begin in July.

Vice Chair Jacqueline Beatty-Smith acknowledged detailed reports submitted from the divisions, the community engagements, exceeding goals and innovation along with hiring, repurposing and reclassifying positions.

Vice Chair Jacqueline Beatty-Smith thanked staff for continuous support to the Durham community and their presence at the DSS Board Meeting.

Vice Chair Jacqueline Beatty-Smith moved forward and read the statute for the closed session.

G.S. 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.

G.S. 143-318.11(a)(3) To consult with an attorney employed or retained by the public body in order to preserve the attorney-client privilege between the attorney and the public body, which privilege is hereby acknowledged.

The DSS Board voted unanimously to move to closed session.

<u>Board member</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Abstained</u>
Chair Dr. Charles I. Mitchell	Yes		
Vice Chair Jacqueline Beatty-Smith	Yes		
Board member Wendy Sotolongo	Yes		
Commissioner Stephen Valentine	Yes		

The DSS Board returned to regular session, no action was taken and the meeting was adjourned.

<u>Board member</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Abstained</u>
Chair Dr. Charles I. Mitchell	Yes		
Vice Chair Jacqueline Beatty-Smith	Yes		
Board member Wendy Sotolongo	Yes		
Commissioner Stephen Valentine	Yes		

Respectfully submitted,

_____ Chairperson	_____ Date
----------------------	---------------

_____ Secretary to the Board	_____ Date
---------------------------------	---------------