

Durham County Board of Social Services

Regular Session Minutes

January 20, 2021

The Durham County Board of Social Services monthly meeting was held on Wednesday, January 20, 2021 at 3:00 p.m. The DSS Board Meeting was virtual due to COVID-19.

The following DSS Board members were in attendance:

Chair Commissioner Wendy Jacobs, Vice-Chair Dr. Monique Holsey-Hyman
Board members: Janice P. Paul, Jacqueline Beatty-Smith and Charles I. Mitchell.

The DCDSS Department was represented by the following:

Director William Rose, Deputy Director Catherine Williamson-Hardy, Chief Operations Officer Kelly Inman, Assistant Directors: Krystal Harris, Jovetta Whitfield, Rhonda Stevens and Janeen Gordon. DSS staff attending included Latoya Chambers, Candice Leathers, Meghan Russ, Nancy Santos, Kalindra Ellerbe, Lee Little, Quannah Jackson-Brown, Sharyn Flood, Pamela Purifoy, Elizabeth Granby, John Kenion, Shontelle Smith, Lynn Thomas, Darlene Whitfield, and Loretta Roberts.

Chair Commissioner Wendy Jacobs called the January 20, 2021 regular meeting to order.

Public Comments

No public comments

Approval of the Agenda

Chair Commissioner Wendy Jacobs asked the board members to review the agenda. Board member Janice P. Paul offered the motion to approve the agenda and Board member Charles I. Mitchell seconded. Director William Rose added the IT Update under New Business. Board member Janice P. Paul offered the motion to approve the amended agenda and Board member Jacqueline Beatty-Smith seconded.

The revised agenda was unanimously approved by voice vote.

Board member	Yes	No	Abstained
Chair Commissioner Wendy Jacobs	Yes		
Vice-Chair Dr. Monique Holsey-Hyman	Yes		
Board member Janice P. Paul	Yes		
Board member Jacqueline Beatty-Smith	Yes		
Board member Charles I. Mitchell	Yes		

Approval of Minutes

The minutes from the regular meeting on December 16, 2020, were approved by the DSS Board. Board member Charles I. Mitchell offered a motion to approve the minutes and Vice-Chair Dr. Monique Holsey-Hyman seconded.

The minutes were unanimously approved by voice vote.

Board member	Yes	No	Abstained
Chair Commissioner Wendy Jacobs	Yes		
Vice-Chair Dr. Monique Holsey-Hyman	Yes		
Board member Janice P. Paul	Yes		
Board member Jacqueline Beatty-Smith	Yes		
Board member Charles I. Mitchell	Yes		

Chair Report

Chair Commissioner Wendy Jacobs was the legislative delegate for the Board of County Commissioners at the NC Association of County Commissioners Legislative Conference. All the Health and Human Services related goals were approved and at the next meeting the top five goals will be shared.

Director William Rose stated that the NC Association of County Directors of Social Services are also finalizing their legislative goals. The Medicaid liability issue has been included for counties to limit paybacks for Medicaid cases. Director Rose plans to connect virtually with the legislators in February.

Medicaid Transformation

Director William Rose shared a Power Point presentation with the board members. Medicaid will be shifting from a public fee-based service to private managed care. The social determinants of health (SDOH) will be factored in and the private managed care will be person-centered. Department of Social Services (DSS) will determine if the client is qualified and if approved the client will speak with an enrollment broker to choose from one of the following plans: (1) WellCare (2) United Healthcare (3) Healthy Blue (4) AmeriHealth Caritas (5) Carolina Complete Health.

Medicaid is controlling the cost moving forward. The primary drivers for the SDOH are: (a) Housing (b) Interpersonal Violence (c) Transportation and (d) Food Insecurity. The Prepaid Health Plans (PHP) will conduct social determinants of health assessments and the referrals will go to NCCARE360 for services needed. Duke Community Health is leading the Healthy Opportunity Pilot in Durham.

The Enrollment Broker will be Maximus and if a PHP is not chosen, the recipient will be auto enrolled. The Medicaid recipient can change their PHP up to 90 days after being enrolled. Open enrollment will be Monday, March 15, 2021. The PHP's will be presenting their companies to the board members at the virtual meeting on Wednesday, March 17, 2021. There will be outreach efforts to provide information to the community in February. A virtual townhall will be held in early April.

Assistant Director Rhonda Stevens added that a support line will be set up for the DSS agencies to call and ask questions. Assistant Director Krystal Harris stated that she will be following up with United Healthcare regarding community outreach with the clients.

Director Report

Director William Rose submitted a written report.

Director William Rose informed the board members that a new ongoing partnership was created with Duke University Medical School. The Leadership Team participated in an orientation presented to the second-year medical students interested in learning about community organizations and services.

Assistant Director Janeen Gordon has reached out to the landlords regarding the housing situation. A very productive meeting was held with the Landlord Association. This will give an opportunity to engage with the landlords on the housing side combined with the client side regarding rental assistance.

Director William Rose shared with the board members that the Goal 2 Budget Meeting was held in early January. The county Budget Office requested the department to complete a budget exercise to reflect a reduction of 3, 5 and 7% over the holidays. The budget this year is very tight due to potential revenue impact. This budget exercise will prepare and layout different scenarios in case they determine that revenues would be impacted due to the pandemic. Director William Rose reiterated that this is an exercise not a directive at this point.

The following guiding principles were used to determine the best way to reduce the budget:

- ❖ Scenario #1 – **7%** reduction which is roughly \$1.6M - reduces budget by cutting \$1.2M in county optional services (Eviction Diversion, Emergency Assistance, Meals on Wheels, Pauper Burial Program and assistance given to senior centers). A few operational funds can be cut with little impact. The department was able to negotiate a system to reduce the amount allocated for salaries and achieve savings through a hiring freeze (saving \$100,000/month) and vacant positions. This will reduce the salary line items by \$400,000 to help make the difference.
- ❖ Scenario #2 – **5%** reduction with all optional services remaining
- ❖ Scenario #3 – **3%** reduction of \$60,000 - \$70,000 in local emergency assistance while continuing Eviction Diversion and Meals on Wheels

Director William Rose explained that the total savings from the hiring freeze is being tracked in the Managing for Results (MFR) report. The following concerns were discussed at the Goal 2 Budget Meeting: (a) the Foster Care agreement with the County funding the cost from the previous year did not happen due to the cyber malware attack preventing the ability to have the budget meetings and the impact of COVID-19. This is a mandated service and it will be revisited. (b) Special Assistance cannot be determined until after the budget estimates.

Director William Rose reported that currently we are in Phase 2 of the Medicaid Corrective Action Plan and 57 positions were requested and approved in last year's budget. Phase 3 would have been effective on Thursday, July 1, 2021; however, it will be resubmitted as an expansion request. The 17 positions remaining may not be funded. Director William Rose added that he would be in favor of renegotiating Phase 3 and putting emphasis on the quality assurance and control aspect.

Chair Commissioner Wendy Jacobs expressed that the board members will make the budget reduction a standing agenda item for discussion. She shared concerns about cutting rental assistance and Meals on Wheels when we are

implementing Medicaid Transformation which focuses on the social determinants of health and to define the labeling of the fund centers.

Vacancy Report

A report was provided to the DSS Board members.

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

Assistant Director Rhonda Stevens submitted a written report.

Chair Commissioner Wendy Jacobs commended the department for the 100% timeliness areas and inquired about the Medicaid certification. Assistant Director Rhonda Stevens sent an email to follow up on the Medicaid Corrective Action Plan and the representative is out of the office. There is a tentative State meeting scheduled on Thursday, January 28, 2021 to discuss a review that was held in the County. The department was involved in a legislative audit last year and based on the results may possibly need to go into a corrective action. Assistant Director Rhonda Stevens is hoping that some of the best practices put in place due to the current corrective action will make a difference in this review.

The department is currently filling new positions and obtaining the recommendations which will assist with the Medicaid work.

Customer Accountability and Talent Development – Krystal Harris, Assistant Director

Assistant Director Krystal Harris submitted a written report.

Chair Commissioner Wendy Jacobs acknowledged the challenges in the department. Assistant Director Krystal Harris stated that the department is excited to have submitted two recommendations of expert candidates for the Staff Development Specialist positions in Adult Medicaid.

Chair Commissioner Jacobs inquired about the electronic benefits transfer (EBT) trafficking incident. Assistant Director Krystal Harris explained that the individual used their EBT funds at the store to receive money instead of buying merchandise. The vendor has been trading cash for the EBT funds. The federal government had the store under surveillance for several months and was monitoring the number of transactions within a week and month with the same individual using their EBT card. The vendor was shut down and will no longer

receive EBT funds at the store. The Program Integrity department is currently assisting with recouping any fraudulent benefits exchanged for cash from this vendor.

Child and Family Services – Jovetta Whitfield, Assistant Director

Assistant Director Jovetta Whitfield submitted a written report.

Chair Commissioner Wendy Jacobs inquired if the department has any specific challenges. Assistant Director Jovetta Whitfield answered that the department will be reconvening internally to discuss the family visits that will resume on Monday, February 1, 2021. This conversation will address concerns due to the COVID-19 surge in the community and how to safely reengage the family visitations. The attorneys notified the department that the deadline is approaching. Chair Commissioner Wendy Jacobs suggested to include this topic in the COVID Updates.

Aging and Adult Services – Lee Little, Program Manager

Assistant Director Janeen Gordon submitted a written report.

Director William Rose commended the department for all their hard work in processing the Emergency Rental Assistance and Hope Program applications.

Chair Commissioner Wendy Jacobs expressed her gratitude for how the department engages with the community and partnering efforts.

Assistant Director Janeen Gordon informed the board members that the department is preparing for the next level of money {American Rescue Act} headed their way if it is passed. She reached out to Dustin from the Triangle Apartment Association and he is willing to work closely with the department to begin engaging a wide range of landlords across the county to ensure the expectations and include the residents.

Chair Commissioner Wendy Jacobs inquired about the reduction of the Meals on Wheels waiting list from 432 to 196 recipients. Assistant Director Janeen Gordon explained that it was due to the Families First and Cares Act funds. The department worked the list and was able to move numerous recipients to the traditional Home and Community Care Block Grant. The individuals that were not interested in Meals on Wheels were referred to other food insecurity sites within the community for resources.

Business Operations – Kelly Inman, Chief Operations Officer

Chief Operations Officer Kelly Inman submitted a written report.

Chief Operations Officer Kelly Inman informed the board members that we are six months into the fiscal year, which will make our target 50% for expenditures and revenue. We are a little high on expenditures at 56% and revenue at 60%. The reason our expenditures are up is attributed to the Emergency Rental Assistance and Hope Programs.

The department is focusing on finishing up the single audit. The DSS area had the following findings in the initial report: 1) two instances in the second party process where corrections were observed and not corrected timely (2) some documentation errors were found within the Medicaid single audit. Chief Operations Officer Kelly Inman was excited to announce that County Finance is very pleased with the department's work. The internal audit for Foster Care and Adoption was completed and the results will be available later this week. The Child Support area has two retirements: Lauryetta Gentry is retiring after 30 years of service and Paula Drew-Estes previously retired from Child Support and returned to work with Durham County for 8 years. The department is hoping to move into the new Alliance space on Monday, February 1, 2021.

Chair Commissioner Wendy Jacobs had a follow up question regarding the new approach in meeting with the courts. Chief Operations Officer Kelly Inman explained that there is usually a quarterly check-in with the judges. Program Manager Quannah Jackson-Brown wanted to bring the judges together to discuss virtual opportunities. The judges are not comfortable with the coordination it will take with the Clerk of Court and ensuring everyone has the technology. Board member Janice P. Paul inquired if in-person hearings are being held. Program Manager Quannah Jackson-Brown answered that the hearings are being held and she is very concerned about the availability of technology for the community members. The department can do virtual pre-trial establishments to negotiate and receive information from the parties to move forward on establishment cases only. There are some hurdles with the order to show calls. An individual could not be held in contempt of court and taken into custody if they are appearing virtually. Board member Janice P. Paul inquired if all the district court judges are rotating through Child Support court. Program Manager Quannah Jackson-Brown answered that Judge Jones and Judge Rhinehart are currently rotating and alternating in court.

New Business

IT Update

Director William Rose wanted to give the board members an IT update. Program Manager Kalindra Ellerbe stated that the tablets will be ready by next Thursday, January 27, 2021. She inquired if the board members wanted to download the multi-factor authenticator to their personal cell phones or be assigned a key fob. Deputy Director Catherine Williamson-Hardy asked Program Manager Kalindra Ellerbe to explain to the board members about the use of their personal cell phones as it relates to the county's Mobile Device Security Policy. The policy states that personal cell phones may be subject to a public record request. Program Manager Kalindra Ellerbe will be sending the board members a copy of the policy, so they can decide on using the multi-factor authenticator or a key fob to access the network. Vice-Chair Dr. Monique Holsey-Hyman and board member Janice P. Paul inquired if the county emails could be sent to their personal email addresses. Director William Rose stated that he will check with Information Services and Technology and the Legal department to assess this concern and follow up with the board members.

Unfinished Business

COVID Update

Director William Rose shared that there is a surge in the agency regarding staff testing positive or being exposed over the last four weeks. The federal government has approved a 115% FNS benefit for six months. The public health emergency declaration has been extended for 90 days and the department will continue to get COVID-19 guidance from NC DHHS. The Child Protective Services, Child Welfare workers and Adult Protective Services staff that are interested in receiving the COVID-19 vaccine will be scheduled per the instruction of NC DHHS Secretary Mandy Cohen. The paperwork was submitted last week for the Emergency Rental Assistance program to receive a portion of the \$25B federal dollars in housing. The new bill passed over the holidays. Director William Rose received an email after the paperwork was reviewed and the number from Accounting was inactive. A new form will be resubmitted with the active number to treasury tomorrow. Durham County will possibly obtain \$900,000 - \$1,000,000 for emergency rental assistance.

Director William Rose suggested that Chief Operations Officer Kelly Inman inquire about any new public health guidance at the Tactics meeting on Friday, January 22, 2021 regarding the February and March surge. Deputy Director Catherine Williamson-Hardy added that on the State conference call this morning there was a presentation about COVID-19 and the vaccine. A request

was made for the entire DSS staff to be moved up on the timeframe to receive the vaccine due to being essential staff. The request will be submitted to the committee who determines the groups in each phase. Chair Commissioner Wendy Jacobs inquired if an internal public relation campaign could be done when the protective services staff receive their vaccines. Director William Rose answered that the leadership team would be interested in organizing this effort.

Board Action Items

Budget update
March Medicaid Transformation

Chair Commissioner Wendy Jacobs wished everyone a safe and peaceful day and thanked everyone for their hard work in the community.

The Board Meeting went into executive session. Board member Janice P. Paul read Article 33C NCGS 143-318.11 (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. General personnel policy issues may not be considered in a closed session. A public body may not consider the qualifications, competence, performance, character, fitness, appointment, or removal of a member of the public body or another body and may not consider or fill a vacancy among its own membership except in an open meeting. Final action making an appointment or discharge or removal by a public body having final authority for the appointment or discharge or removal shall be taken in an open meeting. the meaning of Chapter 132 of the General Statutes. Director William Rose will join the executive session.

Respectfully submitted

Chairperson _____
Date

Secretary to the Board _____
Date