

**DURHAM COUNTY BOARD OF SOCIAL SERVICES**  
**Minutes**  
**April 25, 2012**

The Durham County Board of Social Services held its regular meeting on Wednesday, April 25, 2012 8:30 a.m., at 300 N. Duke Street in Conference Room 2221. The following DSS Board Members were in attendance: Chairman Stan Holt, Vice Chairman Commissioner Joe W. Bowser, Board member Newman Aguiar, Board member Jane Volland and Board member Dr. Tara L. Fikes.

The DCDSS Department was represented by the following: Interim Director Gail Perry, Ms. Antonia Pedroza, Ms. Catherine Williamson-Hardy, Ms. Linda Hicks, Mrs. Lynn Thomas, Mr. David Elin, Ms. Betty Hughes, Mr. Bob Wallace, Ms. Marie Johnson, Ms. Cynthia Cason, Ms. Pinkie Davis-Boyd, Ms. Mary Flounoy, Ms. Jovetta Whitfield and Ms. Diane Fening.

Assistant County Attorney Kathy Everett-Perry attended the Board meeting.

**Members of the public:** Mr. Ray Gronberg from the Herald-Sun as well as Kelly O'Hara and Tommy Harris from WTVD Channel 11 were present.

Board Chair Stan Holt called the meeting to order. Attendees were asked for a brief introduction.

**Agenda**

Item IX., on the agenda, discussion of the audit report, will be moved to the end of the agenda.

**Public Comments**

No public comments.

**Approval of Minutes**

Board member Newman Aguiar moved to approve the March minutes. Board member Jane Volland seconded. The minutes were approved.

## RBA Presentation: Quality Assurance Team - Lynn Thomas

- The Quality Assurance and Training team is trying to insure that excellent processes are put into place at DSS. The primary purpose and goals are to reduce risk factors to our clients and the agency ensuring that excellent service is provided.
- The purpose of training is to provide comprehensive, current and relevant training to our employees.
- New Medicaid Transportation unit came to the Customer Accountability division on April 9, 2012. Their role is verifying Medicaid eligibility for clients that are in need of transportation to medical appointments, as well as, working with Access buses and the American Red Cross to provide transportation. They are currently authorizing over 100 one-way trips a day.
- Training: New systems have been implemented to capture data.
- The Policy and Procedure manual was just updated. It will be put up on the intranet in about four days. There is a built-in open book test that staff will take.
- Quality assurance is supporting arm in form of reviewing records and DSS processes. Quality Assurance looks at things in a holistic manner-not just individual record.
- Contract monitoring - External monitoring takes place offsite. Internal monitoring in place to make sure the agency is doing what is necessary to make sure the contract can be fulfilled.
- It is their role to assist programs in meeting their RBA goals. Build record review tools based on what the state and federal government are looking for and they embellish that whenever they can to look further and deeper at things that are also important to the agency.
- The division will be recruiting two new supervisors.
- There is a need for a stand-alone unit to conduct quality assurance.
- The contract oversight committee is made up of Toni Pedroza and Ms. Thomas as well as other program managers, and assistant directors.

Written report included in the board packet.

Next month Child Placement will present at the DSS Board Meeting.

## Assistant Director's Report-Customer Accountability and Program Development - Catherine Williamson-Hardy

Mr. Aguiar noted that the calls dropped percentage has gone up even though call volume has gone down. Ms. Williamson-Hardy said that she has the supervisors and program manager analyzing that and will report back next month.

Mr. Aguiar asked about the decrease in scanning. Ms. William-Hardy said that they are prepping records in preparation for scanning, so next month you will probably see uptick in scanning.

Written report included in the board packet.

## Interim Director's Report - Gail Perry

- Interim Director Perry announced that it was Administrative Professional's Day and that the agency was honoring them today. It is also National Child Abuse Prevention month and there will be a walk beginning at 10:30 am from DSS on Main Street to DSS on Duke Street and back tomorrow, April 26, 2012. There is a fundraiser after the walk.
- Ms. Perry has met with bilingual staff and they are excited about the bi-lingual testing and certification that will be beginning May 8, 2012.

Mr. Aguiar asked what procedure we have in place to see if complaints are increasing. Ms. Perry said that in the leadership meeting they decided to have Montrella Springfield track the calls that come to the interim director. Mr. Aguiar would like for Ms. Perry to share those results with the board.

Ms. Perry reported on the progress of the county in their strategic planning. They are going to roll everything out at the same time. DSS will be putting their five strategic plans into our work goals. The first year plan will be rolled out in July. Chair Holt said that by September it will be good to see how DSS is aligning with the county goals. Mr. Aguiar said that the board should be involved in setting priorities that are consistent with the county's strategic plan. Ms. Perry suggested that someone come to one of the board meetings to engage the board in the decision making process. Vice Chair Bowser suggested Michael Davis. Ms. Perry will invite him.

DSS had to give up some space in the new building to accommodate Veteran's Affairs. Another issue is the amount of our parking spaces in the basement of the building got cut in half.

## DSS Board Report - Chair Stan Holt

- Several board members attended the legislative delegation meeting with the county commissioners and our legislative delegation. Two of the four agenda items were those we put forward. The delegation will try to advocate for things we want but they don't have the votes in the general assembly. The advice was given to work with all our associations: the County Commissioners Association, the DSS Directors Association and the Board of Social Services Association. Ms. Volland has agreed to step up and do some of that work. Chair Holt said if we could get the associations to talk to their county delegations about the needs and priorities we could swing the votes in the General Assembly. Ms. Perry is going to see if DSS has paid for a membership to the Board of Social Services Association.
- Chair Holt reminded the rest of the Board that he will be here for just two more meetings. He is a board appointment so the Board will vote on a replacement. The county is responsible for getting applications. Vice Chair Joe Bowser will let the clerk's office know that this is coming up.

### Transition

- Chair Holt reported that they have come up with an employee participation aspect to the search process for a new DSS director. 25% of DSS staff will participate in forums with the candidates on May 16<sup>th</sup> from 9 a.m.-12 p.m. There will be four sessions; one with each of the candidates. Program managers and assistant directors will be in attendance. A percentage of staff names (based on program size) will be randomly drawn from the program.
- Catherine Williamson-Hardy said that there is a two session two-day Leadership Academy May 14-17 that supervisors and program managers will be attending, so that May 16<sup>th</sup> day will be problematic. She will look into changing the timing.

### Assistant Directors' Update

#### Budget - Antonia Pedroza

- Toni Pedroza presented to the County Manager and he was complimentary about how DSS utilized and moved fast in order to maximize resources.

- Vice Chair Bowser asked about child care spending and Linda Hicks said that they are at 101%. Child Care did get a little more IV-E-funding. Vice Chair Bowser commended that all the money was spent and encouraged them to keep it up.

### **Family Economic Independence - Rhonda Stevens (Written Report)**

Board member Aguiar said it was good to see the hires in the Family Economic Independence Division. Dave Elin reported that the one Work First vacancy has been filled since the report was done.

### **Family Safety and Permanence Division - (Written Report)**

- Bob Wallace shared that the Senior celebration will be on May 24<sup>th</sup> at 11:30 at St. Phillips. All are invited.
- Jovetta Whitfield shared that the Foster Care Board meeting will take place after recognitions and celebrations and the annual walk is May 19<sup>th</sup> at 9:00 am from the flat parking lot to the Farmer's Market.

Mr. Aguiar said that foster care is being considered as one of the indicators in the gang reduction strategy that Jim Stuit is working on through the Criminal Justice Resource Center. He suggested that it will be a good opportunity to engage, because there are a lot of city and county leaders on that steering committee. Chair Holt protested that he doesn't agree that foster care is an indicator. Ms. Whitfield will try to speak with Jim Stuit.

Jane Volland reported that GAL and DSS in four counties did a study and one of the people involved said that Facebook is the best way to get some data on foster children after they leave care.

Ms. Pedroza wanted the Board to know that there was recently a collection of over \$23,000 in child support in one lump sum.

### **Audit Discussion**

The Board received the audit a month ago. Ms. Perry and Ms. Pedroza were asked to put into detail some of the new internal controls that are being implemented to make sure that some of the conditions that were discovered in the audit were never discovered again. The other piece is that the investigation is still occurring at the sheriff's office for any criminal conversations. Part of this discussion will be relating to that and so that will be in closed session with Kathy Everett-Perry.

Ms. Pedroza passed out a PowerPoint presentation. She explained the procurement card ("P card"), which is a county issued credit card. DSS started using them in December. Training was provided to all employees who use the P cards. At DSS, since so many people are using them, the accounting department keeps the P cards until they are needed. There is a system and process to reconcile statement and purchases. Signed client receipt forms must be obtained for any purchase made on a client's behalf. The authorization forms that supervisors or managers sign off on contain more detail than they used to so that if third party is reading it, it would be absolutely clear. Purchases are pre-authorized by supervisors.

Emergencies are an exception to this process. Gift cards are purchased with the P card to use after hours, only for clothing, food and bus passes. If an emergency situation arises after-hours and there are no supervisors available to sign the form before the purchase, the form will be signed the next day. Reconciliation for the gift cards occurs when the gift cards run out.

Board member Aguiar expressed concerns about what is in place to prevent the inappropriate use of these cards. Ms. Pedroza says the PowerPoint speaks to the recommendations of the audit. Mr. Aguiar said what came across in the audit was a lack of understanding of appropriate use of funds. He suggested training for staff to report if something has been done that seems inappropriate. He also recommends testing the processes to make sure that the accountability we expect is there.

Vice Chair Bowser had a concern that the director's gift card usage was not addressed by the auditor. It was agreed that the County Finance office should report to the Board chair if they are aware of an inappropriate action on the part of any director of DSS.

Ms. Pedroza addressed the hiring of temporary employees. When it is feasible, temporary employees will be hired through HR procedures, developing a relief pool instead of using a third party agency.

Board member Jane Volland made a motion pursuant to general statute 143-318.11(a)(3) to move into closed session to consult with the County Attorney's office. It was passed.

The board moved back to open session. No action was necessary from matters discussed in the closed session.

Motion made and seconded to adjourn the meeting. The meeting was 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