**Durham County Board of Social Services**

 **July 20, 2022**

The Durham County Board of Social Services monthly meeting was held on Wednesday, July 20, 2022. The DSS Board meeting will be virtual until a later date.

The following DSS Board members were in attendance: Chair Commissioner Wendy Jacobs; Board members: Janice P. Paul, Jacqueline Beatty-Smith, and Charles I. Mitchell.

Vice Chair Dr. Monique Holsey-Hyman received an excused absence.

Durham County Department of Social Services was represented by the following: Director William Rose, Deputy Director Catherine Williamson-Hardy and Chief Operations Officer Kelly Inman; Assistant Directors: Krystal Harris, Rhonda Stevens, Jovetta Whitfield, and Margaret Faircloth.

DSS staff attending included: Candice Leathers, Latoya Chambers, Meghan Russ, Nancy Santos, Kalindra Ellerbe, Lee Little, Darlene Whitfield, Quannah Jackson-Brown, Shontelle Smith, LaVelle Chesney, Susan Lee, Quanesha Archer, Lynn Thomas, Christie McMillan, Pamela Purifoy, John Kenion, Emma Perry, and Montrella R. Springfield.

DSS Human Resources Analyst James Hart attended the meeting.

Senior Assistant County Attorney Danielle Briggs was present.

Chair Commissioner Wendy Jacobs called the DSS Board meeting to order on July 20, 2022, at 3:00 pm.

**Public Comments**

No public comments

**Approval of the Agenda**

Chair Commissioner Wendy Jacobs asked board members to review and approve the proposed agenda. Board member Jacqueline Beatty-Smith offered the motion to approve the proposed agenda and Board member Charles I. Mitchell seconded. Director William Rose requested additional items added to the proposed agenda. Board member Janice P. Paul moved to reopen the agenda to consider the two changes requested by Director Rose. The proposed agenda was amended with two items added under New Business. Reappointment of Dr. Monique Holsey-Hyman to the DSS Board. Adoption of the Energy Plan. Board member Jacqueline Beatty-Smith seconded.

The amended proposed agenda was unanimously approved by voice vote.

**Board member Yes No Abstained**

Chair Commissioner Wendy Jacobs Yes

Board member Janice P. Paul Yes

Board member Jacqueline Beatty-Smith Yes

Board member Charles I. Mitchell Yes

Chair Commissioner Wendy Jacobs asked the board members to approve an excused absence for Board member Dr. Monique Holsey-Hyman. Board member Charles I. Mitchell offered a motion to excuse the absence of Board member Dr. Monique Holsey-Hyman and Board member Jacqueline Beatty-Smith seconded.

The excused absence was unanimously approved by voice vote.

**Board member Yes No Abstained**

Chair Commissioner Wendy Jacobs Yes

Board member Janice P. Paul Yes

Board member Jacqueline Beatty-Smith Yes

Board member Charles I. Mitchell Yes

**Approval of Minutes**

Chair Commissioner Wendy Jacobs asked board members to review and approve the minutes from the regular meeting on June 15, 2022.

Board member Jacqueline Beatty-Smith offered a motion to approve the minutes and Board member Charles I. Mitchell seconded.

The minutes were unanimously approved by voice vote.

**Board member Yes No Abstained**

Chair Commissioner Wendy Jacobs 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 highlighted DSS nominations for two national awards. One related to Emergency Rental Assistance Program and Low-Income Homeowners Relief. These were grant programs managed through DSS. Other County departments were nominated for different awards. Durham County was nominated for almost half of the categories that existed within the National Association of Counties. Chair Commissioner Wendy Jacobs congratulated DSS staff in Aging and Adult Services and the departments and divisions which supported the programs. Chair Commissioner Wendy Jacobs acknowledged the challenges staff are going through with vacancies and increased workloads. Chair Commissioner Jacobs commended staff on behalf of the Board and emphasized the importance of self-care.

Chair Commissioner Wendy Jacobs mentioned the federal government did not renew the universal benefits for school lunch which was utilized during Covid. This is a bigger food security issue in the community.

Chair Commissioner Jacobs inquired about the legislative goals that will be submitted to the NC Association of County Commissioners.

Board member Jacqueline Beatty-Smith stressed the significance of staff implementing self-care mentally and physically due to the challenges. As a leader of organizations, Board member Jacqueline Beatty-Smith understands challenges can consume individuals. Board member Jacqueline Beatty-Smith acknowledged staff hard work and the two national nominations.

Board member Janice P. Paul was at the BOCC meeting when the awards were presented. The awards were well deserved, congratulations to DSS staff.

**Director’s Report**

Director William Rose submitted a written report.

Director William Rose highlighted the NACO awards and extended gratitude to all the departments, community partners for collaborating with DSS. Director William Rose thanked Chair Commissioner Jacobs for accepting the awards at the meeting in Colorado.

Director William Rose informed the DSS Board, Medicaid Expansion did not pass, however, further debate continues. It is still possible Medicaid expansion could pass, but there are concerns.

Another item maybe under legislative goals include the State Foster Care Medicaid Plan which has basically been placed on hold. Children in foster care will be receiving direct medical. The Director’s Association is advocating to get specialized foster care plan that helps meet the needs better for children in care. The DSS Board is aware of stories locating appropriate placements for children. This is a statewide problem. Durham is fortunate to have excellent working relationships with community partners. Durham has a shared position which assists with higher level service. DSS continues to experience complaints and problems with the rapid response team established by the State. The team is not moving fast enough if there is a situation, and the county ends up doing the work and locating a placement for the child’s needs. This creates a liability which is concerning. There was an issue in another county due to lack of resources and inability to secure proper placement. Director Rose stated Durham has been advocating for Foster Care Specialized Plan and this is a hot topic to keep watch at General Assembly.

The legislative goal regarding Medicaid Expansion is neutral at the County Director Social Services Association because of the potential impact and the tremendous workload increase. Durham recognizes the importance of getting more people insured. Director William Rose serves on the Lincoln Community Health Center Board. Lincoln Community Health Center serves a lot of uninsured people in the community.

The second legislative goal is improved System of Care for children which would deal with Foster Care, Child Protective and In-Home services. Child Welfare Transformation is moving forward and a lot of changes. It is important that the General Assembly continues to support with dollars needed for training and developing transformation practices. This needs to stay at the forefront.

The other two goals are equally important which is more equitable funding for Aging and Adult Services and Child Welfare from the State. The State has very little money in these services which are federal and state mandated services. County dollars are invested in Aging and Adult along with Child Welfare services. The request is for the State to bring more funding in these areas.

Director Rose will forward the four goals highlighted as part of the Durham County package from the County Manager’s Office.

Chair Commissioner Wendy Jacobs referred to the workforce issues. Director Rose thinks DSS has reached the tipping point with workforce issues. There are direct impacts to services, as well as staff. Director Rose wants the Board and County to know there are service issues in child welfare and economic services. These divisions have the most turnover. There are movements in other areas. Child Protective Services is very low staffed and social workers are overwhelmed. Assistant Director Jovetta Whitfield scheduled a division meeting July 21, 2022. Counties in the State are experiencing issues with recruitment and retention in child welfare. Social workers are choosing other careers because of the stress, long hours, paperwork, compliance issues, and difficult issues with families. James Hart, HR Analyst is working closely with Assistant Director Jovetta Whitfield. LaVelle Chesney was promoted to program manager in Child Welfare. A meeting was held to discuss incentives for after-hours social workers

FNS recertifications have been a challenge. Recertifications are behind, numerous calls to the Director’s Office complaining about delayed benefits. Vacancies, staff in training and audits are affecting FEI. Assistant Director Rhonda Stevens will provide additional information in her report.

Workforce issues will not be resolved overnight. DSS will be implementing sign-on bonuses in August. There are a lot of incentives from the County to assist with recruitment and retention.

DSS Leadership and Managers have been meeting regularly and doing different things in every division.

Director Rose informed the Board about expanding person services. Since Covid, and the parking garage, services have been provided differently at the agency. Customers can access workers virtual via telephone, computers are available and self-service. Interviews for services are handled on the phones. There have been some in person interviews in Aging and Adult Services with the Low-Income Tax Relief and ERAP programs.

Discussions have been around expanding in September which include slowly opening lobbies, however, there may be a pause due to ADA restrictions and the restrictions will not be lifted until after August 15, 2022, when the State order is lifted. Leadership needs to assess DSS ability to provide in person expanded service if there is a reduced workforce because customers will have a long wait time.

Director William Rose recognized DSS Leadership and Managers for their support during this stressful time. Director Rose emphasized self-care for all staff. The DSS Board will receive updates in August.

Chair Commissioner Wendy Jacobs thanked Director Rose and offered support from the DSS Board.

Chair Commissioner Jacobs inquired about help from the State. There have been some discussions at the State level because this is a statewide issue. FNS re-certifications received automated extensions that will help.

The USDA timing reports DSS have to meet is 95% which measures how FNS applications are processed timely. Durham has been in corrective action lately anywhere from 85-92%. The report include 16 large counties and the average was 84%. Everyone is struggling and the director’s association is trying to continue to help provide services efficiently.

Assistant Director Rhonda Stevens has reached out to other counties for help with processing applications and reviewing other strategies.

Deputy Director Catherine Williamson-Hardy shared one of the things, we're really trying to be mindful of in the midst of trying to meet these expectations, recognizing the humanity, people and what everyone is experiencing. We acknowledge that these are our expectations. This is what we're going for and the environment that we find ourselves in is working completely against us. People are at their wits end and most people are trying to do the best they can and even with that we're still failing. We're still having these findings and so it's really challenging us as leaders to speak to the quality and the timeliness. People need to eat, so we recognize these telephone calls are not just calls. The fact, people need to eat and at the same time, we also have to acknowledge that most staff are working beyond their capacity which is challenging. None of us have the right answer. So, we just need to end it on any given day, do the best work we can do, come up with the best idea implemented and then the next day try to do something even better.

Board member Jacqueline Beatty-Smith stated I'm so appreciative of and I know the board is as well, the transparency and we appreciate Deputy Director Catherine Williamson-Hardy and staff just sharing that information. I wish there was more we could do to assist because it can seem overwhelming most often. Thank you all for the transparency.

Chair Commissioner Wendy Jacobs asked if the County Manager was aware of the crisis at DSS? Chair Commissioner Jacobs inquired about other county departments assisting with phone calls and giving staff a break. Director Rose has been communicating with General Manager Joanne Pierce. General Manager Pierce has been advocating for DSS.

Director William Rose stressed the best take is to focus on recruitment and retention. Utilizing sign-on bonuses, strong pay bands can give opportunities that are not available in other counties. The great resignation is real, and it will be hard for industries including social services to bounce back.

Chair Commissioner Wendy Jacobs called attention to the importance of honesty, and offered support.

Director William Rose thanked FEI management and staff. Deputy Director Catherine Williamson-Hardy acknowledged administrative support staff.

Board member Janice P. Paul acknowledged staff and offered support.

**Vacancy Report**

HR Analyst James Hart submitted a written report.

HR Analyst James Hart communicated there are strategies the County has implemented with the pay range updates merit.

A sign on and retention bonus implemented extended out through the first two years of an employee’s tenure to hopefully assist with them staying. Parameters have been removed relating to who would qualify and looking forward to implementing in August. Currently, looking at the strategies of the group interviews and trying to do more efforts around mass hiring. If we can do that external help from other counties has been mentioned. Deputy Director Catherine Williamson-Hardy mentioned, the environmental piece.

We don't have control over great resignation, but would like to try to stay ahead of what's happening. There have been articles and research coming out about what the next phase, the great uncertainty. Companies may be losing staff or have lost staff because some of their revenues and profits are not what they projected. Private sector industries are having job cuts. Some of this is trickling down and some of the staff who have left the organization have replied and want to be rehired. They were recently hired by another firm and they have been let go.

This could positively affect DSS and so that's why it's important to highlight the things that have implemented and are trying to implement.

Some of the things implemented in child welfare have proven very beneficial. An inquiry from Wake County was received because they don't use internship experience currently to qualify as experience for some of their child welfare positions, which Durham implemented.

Chair Commissioner Wendy Jacobs thanked, James Hart for the information.

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

Assistant Director Rhonda Stevens submitted a written report.

Assistant Director Rhonda Stevens shared scheduled weekly check-in with supervisors and managers. Assistant Director Rhonda Stevens recognized Assistant Director Krystal Harris and Quality Assurance staff for assisting with food and nutrition applications and recertifications. Other counties have been contacted to join as temps to help with FNS. Interviews started in consideration to make sure they can start and help with FNS. DSS retirees have returned to help with phone calls.

Assistant Director Stevens highlighted the Hunger Awareness Event held on June 22, 2022. Staff delivered more than 140 bags of food to four different areas in the community. One place wasn't even on the list.

Durham did not pass the Medicaid Report Card for June. It was attributed to the Juneteenth holiday; it was not a state holiday. Director Rose has signed the document needed to send in for a waiver consideration to get those cases reviewed that were submitted.

Assistant Director Stevens thanked Latoya Chambers and the Applications Team. Management reached out to the Representative and told him to be on the lookout for the information to review and overturn has already been sent in to the State. Durham DSS received the third list of cases for the Medicaid Recipient Eligibility Determination Audit(REDA). The REDA audit will continue for the next 10 months. Staff are having to reviews, two separate audits in Medicaid. They read 20 cases, 18 were correct, waiting on a decision and one that was cited for an error we've sent in a rebuttal. Assistant Director Stevens sent that in today to have them revisit that on the other audit which was for May. There is one being mentioned, with concerns and part of it has to do with a policy change. Out of the 20 cases that we had for that audit, 15 were correct and five were cited in error.

One of the surprise reports was for February. The final report of what our numbers are, not looking good. Part of the issue is where we are at this point with staffing and trying to get everything done well.

Chair Commissioner Wendy Jacobs thanked Assistant Director Rhonda Stevens and all staff having all hands-on deck approach. Assistant Director Krystal Harris and staff were recognized for assisting FEI.

**Customer Accountability and Talent Development (CATD) – Krystal Harris, Assistant Director**

Assistant Director Krystal Harris submitted a written report.

Assistant Director Krystal Harris indicated FNS QAT staff is assisting with processing cases right now as well as doing some training. Family and Children's QAT staff is also assisting doing the same. CATD is very busy in QAT. CIC has two supervisor vacancies. We are trying to get them filled as quickly as possible because we don't want our staff without a supervisor for too long.
Assistant Director Krystal Harris, highlighted hiring of a compliance temp to assist Program Manager Lynn Thomas with compliance and privacy work, which has been a big help. Lyneisha Dukes started two weeks ago and has made a huge impact on the work already.

Chair Commissioner Jacobs applauded all the staff who is pitching in and helping FEI.

Chair Commissioner Wendy Jacobs acknowledged CATD for the positive information in the report.

Chair Commissioner Jacobs acknowledged Assistant Director Harris for the professional development and leadership training, along with the outreach and collaboration that’s been happening.

Assistant Director Harris conveyed with all that’s going on, as we talk about self-help and making sure the environmental factors that are impacting staff. Alanna Jones has been working with several divisions.

COVID corner support has been beneficial to the staff, supervisors and program managers helping them manage through changes. One thing that is being done with Customer Information Center staff with the change in leadership, a series of trainings on management change, how to transition change, and how to deal with change in the work place. Staff are having some self-guided trainings that help with that as well. Even though we're very busy trying to help with the work, we're still trying to find ways to help support professional development and self-care.

Chair Commissioner Wendy Jacobs thanked Assistant Director Harris, we all could use help with change management as previously highlighted, there's so much uncertainty.

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

Assistant Director Jovetta Whitfield submitted a written report.

Assistant Director Jovetta Whitfield conveyed even though they are experiencing a lot of vacancies in Child Protective Services and a few in the other areas, they did see some growth. Some positions are maintaining from month to month. Child Welfare will continue to partner with James Hart, HR Analyst.

Assistant Director Jovetta Whitfield is hopeful that positions will be filled, and people will be maintained. Management will be focusing more during this new fiscal year on retention.

The leadership team is going through speed of trust. Communication and trust so that we can work together and trust each other through this process, which will trickle down to frontline staff.

Thanks to Alanna Jones and Lynn Thomas from CATD for helping to facilitate that process.

Chair Commissioner Wendy Jacobs, thanked Assistant Director Jovetta Whitfield and inquired about doing retention bonuses beyond just the new staff, but for all our staff?

James Hart specified another round of retention bonuses will be at the beginning of next calendar year, around February or March.

James Hart mentioned the County is in the process of engaging for another compensation study. The process will try to aim to correct some of the compensation issues that have been created. It's part of the 10% increase in the pay ranges.

Director William Rose expressed the need to promote people to apply and perhaps take the job, and stay for a couple of years. That would probably need to come from the county HR side. It is an inexpensive way to send a message to reward loyalty and for employees that are performing. Director Rose stressed he would definitely advocate for that as going through the upcoming budget.

Assistant Director Jovetta Whitfield communicated the leadership team in Child Welfare looking at other internal things that may impact retention as well. They have a continuous quality improvement work group, which is led by the managers, and a representative from each area. Workers and supervisors participate on that work group to give insight and input. This is the procedures that might also impact retention because there is a lack of understanding or awareness of some things or interpretation which may cause frustration among staff, which causes them to want to leave. There are several strategies that Child Welfare continues to review other than just what the county is trying to do to from the financial aspect.

Director William Rose agreed and talked a lot about Child Welfare being so unique there are different ways to look at including work flexibility and increased management leave for our child welfare workers this year.

Director William Rose does not want to lose focus on other areas being understaffed. Strengthening Quality Assurance and Training to assist compliance in other areas. Additional staff in other areas with increased workloads would relieve pressure on current staff. There is data to back the outcomes and reduce audit liability. Changes cannot be implemented overnight, long-term plans that have to continue to work toward which is important. Director Rose commended Division Assistant Directors for enduring through these challenging times.

Board member Jacqueline Beatty-Smith asked how often QAT check-in with leadership? Director William Rose replied there is constant communication at the management level, and they are part of developing the strategic plan and performance goals.

Assistant Director Krystal Harris indicated there are 20 staff in QAT support FEI and 6 support Child Welfare service programs in DSS.

Director Rose assured the liability these programs are strong, but due to federal/state audits and county single audit, QAT has been the backbone. But the challenge with QAT is it's harder to justify those positions sometimes with budget because they are support positions. Impact is not seen as much as a social worker actually doing the casework when it comes from the county’s lens.

Director Rose pointed out QAT is definitely a critical part of DSS success, and one thing Assistant Director Krystal Harris doesn't have trouble recruiting in QAT.

Deputy Director Catherine Williamson-Hardy acknowledged a staff person from Aging and Adult Services for assisting FEI with recertifications.

Deputy Director Williamson-Hardy highlighted QAT doesn't have the staff to mentor and coach all the new staff that are coming in the agency. If we don't have the capacity to do casework, help the program, and keep the quality assurance work going, we have to make some hard choices. There are five or six staff vacancies. One person is training new staff, one is mentoring the new staff and the other three staff who would normally be doing QA quality reviews. We had to put a pause on that which was a hard decision to help get the work done.
Assistant Director Krystal Harris indicated there are only two for Aging and Adult and we just got the second one last budget year, and they have 18 programs.

**Aging and Adult Services (AAS) – Janeen Gordon, Assistant Director**

Assistant Director Janeen Gordon submitted a written report.

Program Managers Lee Little and Meghan Russ reported in the absence of Assistant Director Janeen Gordon.

Meghan Russ, Program Manager conveyed the Energy Outreach Plan was added to the agenda for approval. The 2023 outreach plan is utilized each year from the State. The committee along with the community partners, assist with maintaining relationships to ensure the Community knows how to apply for energy programs, LEIAP and Crisis Intervention.

Chair Commissioner Wendy Jacobs asked about types of mailings either within the Durham County tax bill or in the City of Durham water bills?

Program Manager Lee Little replied there are bulletins posted in various locations, but as far as having a mailing with the bills. He doesn’t think this has been done in the past but that's a good idea.

Chair Commissioner Jacobs suggested that might be one thing to look into, information doesn't get to all the residents.

Program Manager Little highlighted the Low-Income Homeowner Relief, outreach strategies have started for the program. Meeting with community agencies and getting those flyers in the mail to tax owners for this upcoming tax season.

Program Manager Little also highlighted June 16, 2022, Aging and Adult Services completed Community Resiliency Model training. Enhancing the culture within the agency, AAS division going to be utilizing those methods to further help staff deal with some of the issues in the future.

Chair Commissioner Jacobs inquired about the excessive heat predicted which would affect senior’s health because they are the most vulnerable. We are lucky here in our country that most of the people have fans or air conditioning. The other impact with our increasing aging population and the crisis which include nursing homes and adult care facilities that are understaffed. The abuse and neglect that's happening and then again our state legislature not stepping in to do anything about it.

Director William Rose stated this is on the radar of the Directors’ Association especially the last part about the concern with adult care homes, the staffing issues and the potential rise relating to neglect. The Aging and Adult Services Committee has that on their agenda.

Meghan Russ mentioned DSS received federal funds, about $4.3 million. The funds will be used for expanded eviction diversion and opening doors programs. Staff have been working with our IT department to launch the system that will be utilized to be able to approve these cases.
Many cases which would prevent evictions keep people housed, find housing for people, improve housing stability. AAS is looking forward to launching that program.

Chair Commissioner Jacobs thanked Program Manager Meghan Russ for the great news.

Chair Commissioner Wendy Jacobs entertained a motion to adopt the 2023 Energy Plan.

Board member Janice P. Paul offered the motion to adopt the 2023 Energy Plan. Board member Jacqueline Beatty-Smith seconded the motion.

Chair Commissioner Wendy Jacobs moved forward with a voice vote.

**Board member Yes No Abstained**

Chair Commissioner Wendy Jacobs Yes

Board member Janice P. Paul Yes

Board member Jacqueline Beatty-Smith Yes

Board member Charles I. Mitchell Yes

The voice vote was unanimous by the DSS Board.

Chair Commissioner Wendy Jacobs proceeded to Business Office Report.

**Business Operations (BO) – Kelly Inman, Chief Operations Officer**

Chief Operations Officer Kelly Inman submitted a written report.

Chief Operations Officer Kelly Inman highlighted the fact that Child Support has met four of five incentive measures that was exceptional and great. Congratulations to the Child Support Team!

Assistant Director Margaret Faircloth communicated getting everything closed from the last fiscal year. The final figures will not be available until the end of August. Single audits have started. There has not been an official kickoff for single audit yet, but we've already started supplying them with request. There is an internal audit in Child Support which kicked off last week.

Chair Commissioner Wendy Jacobs thanked Chief Operations Officer Kelly Inman and Assistant Director Margaret Faircloth.

Chair Commissioner Jacobs sent Congratulations to Child Support.

Chair Commissioner Jacobs continued with new business and the first item Dr. Monique Holsey-Hyman is eligible to serve another term on the DSS Board. Her next term will start officially August 1, 2022, and run until July 31, 2025.

Chair Commissioner Wendy Jacobs entertained a motion to approve Dr. Monique Holsey-Hyman’s reappointment.

Board member Charles I Mitchell, moved that the DSS Board approve the reappointment of Board member Dr. Monique Holsey-Hyman.

Board member Jacqueline Beatty-Smith seconded the motion.

Chair Commissioner Wendy Jacobs requested a voice vote.

**Board member Yes No Abstained**

Chair Commissioner Wendy Jacobs Yes

Board member Janice P. Paul Yes

Board member Jacqueline Beatty-Smith Yes

Board member Charles I. Mitchell Yes

The vote was unanimous by the DSS Board.

Chair Commissioner Wendy Jacobs, thanked, everyone and moved on to the 75/25 Medicaid issue.

Director William Rose needed to bring 75/25 Medicaid to the Board’s attention because this has been a rapidly developing issue with the State and the Federal government. In 2014, North Carolina was able to get enhanced Medicaid funding for DSS across the State. So basically, when received Medicaid Services, instead of getting the normal 50% reimbursement for our staff and our time, we were able to get 75%. In fact, it allowed counties often back at that time, to expand their Medicaid staff because of the increased revenue stream. It costs less, for the county to actually have Medicaid eligibility workers and supports staff. There was a lot of expansion going on at the time. And as time rolled on, apparently the State would submit their plan every year for counties to draw down the 75% reimbursement and we are a cost allocated system. The State would get approval every year from the Federal government that we could draw down these funds. Then in 2021 apparently there's a change in the guard at the federal level and they started to question North Carolina's formulas for drawing down the 75%. Basically, the question became were we drawing down too much of the 75%? Were we coding it to time that was really not eligible, so suddenly there has been a panic and a rush at the State to try to amend this to meet the federal guidelines. The Federal government said we must change this by October 1st, or we stand to potentially lose some of this funding? This is a statewide issue.
Our biggest thing right now, we want to avoid having to pay back any money that we've claimed over the last eight years.

Chief Operations Officer Inman echoed the information. They were in a meeting from 1:00 to 2:30 today to get information regarding the first installment.

Assistant Margaret Faircloth, and Assistant Director Rhonda Stevens have talked about this, and I did not have a formal presentation to show other than discussion. But during the meeting today I would like to share some of the slides that that we did go through. I'm not going through all of them but just a few key ones and give an overall view of what we are looking at right now.

Assistant Director Faircloth, presented timeline, back into 2014. Everything was good up until 2022 and they had been submitting plans yearly that were being approved.

The State understood that our cost allocation plan was sufficient, but when they asked for documentation in the spring of this year, we were not able to provide.

The State couldn’t provide them with the detailed information needed, and that's what has brought all of this to the forefront to see if we have been claiming more to the 75/25. They told us today that all counties must comply and if they don't, then we're at risk of losing the funding for the entire state. I think it's helpful for us to make sure that we're staying within the timelines of getting everything prepared. We are going to have to work with HR and align our job positions with the state’s job position. Then we have to determine if that position is eligible for the enhanced 75/25 versus the 50/50. So, if you are not eligible for the 75/25, you will still receive a 50/50 reimbursement from Medicaid. They have to update our system, which is how we report our expenditures back to the state and this is just a one-shot guidance, shared with us.

Guidance on how to determine was provided but it's going to be a lengthy process and there's going to be multiple trainings that staff in the Business Office will have to attend. We may have to look at some of our positions to make sure time is recorded correctly. We have to look at the job descriptions just to make sure we have certain wording containing this eligibility that supports being able to claim the 75/25. There is a template that was being utilized to give us some estimated cost.

Director Rose thinks there may be some reduced revenues from Medicaid to our agency through cost allocation, we were probably pulling down some 75% that we should not have been pulling down. The other big thing is that we are advocating with the State that we be held harmless as much as possible. We will look at our budget, even for this year, because this could potentially have impact for this year's budget in terms of our revenue. We have realized a little less revenue, we need to make provisions for that and, it's not that we won't get the 75%. We're talking about 50% potentially for somebody's activities, eligibility, and enrollment. It's basically for staff working in the NC Fast program. There's a lot of what kind of the criteria as well too that they're touching cases working overseeing cases, managing cases or processing cases for enrollment and eligibility.

Chief Operations Officer Inman verified there's really no question about our direct services staff. It's really about our support staff and being able to claim that enhanced reimbursement on them as a percentage of the whole. It was kind of down to the level of an eligibility and enrollment person, we would pay 75% on their copy. I do think though what we're initially looking at is that if anybody is doing any kind of eligibility and enrollment work, they're going to have to start doing a day sheet. I just say that here publicly, it's not popular information.

Chair Commissioner Wendy Jacobs was sorry to hear about this cause, especially within the context of retaining workforce and people, and jobs. Having to do a day sheet and that kind of thing will not be pleasant for some people and the timeline is incredibly short. Imagine what the job description then that's going to impact James Hart and a lot of people. How many staff is this going to impact and a ballpark of how much money do you think we're talking about?

Assistant Director Faircloth doesn't have the ballpark figure yet.
Our eligibility staff are already doing day sheets, so that's not going to be a change for them. I did send up an additional question about some of our QC staff. That's where the other day sheet possibility will come. As far as changes it's not going to be a lot of work in Durham. It's going to come where James Hart, HR Analyst and the Business staff have a lot of extra processes that they're going to have to do when reporting costs to the state. James Hart will have to be involved with this and then the initial setup of the job classifications, once we have them in there. Then just as new hires come in, we'll have to make sure that we stay within the job class. Once this is up and running September services will be reported in October.

The additional reporting process will be on the 1571 preparers.
Right now there are two people who prepared the 1571. What we will just have to look at timelines and what it's going to take them to separate out cost.

Chief Operations Officer Inman conveyed some more training next week and more confidence in using estimator tool, maybe in two weeks’ time.

Chair Commissioner Wendy Jacobs thanked them for working on this issue and asked staff to please keep the Board posted. I think this is something that we should hear about. As this plays out hopefully the State will hold DSS harmless.

Chair Commissioner Jacobs pushed back unfinished business to August meeting to go over Board Action Items. We were going to have to go through the board action items and look at that carefully and see what needs to be updated.

Chair Commissioner Jacobs thanked staff attending the meeting.

Director Rose informed Chair Commissioner Jacobs additional staff will be staying for the executive session.

Chair Commissioner Wendy Jacobs read the Statute: According to General Statute 143-318.11 AC, to prevent the disclosure of information that is privileged or confidential pursuant to the law of this state or of the United States, or not considered a public record within the meaning of Chapter 132 of the general statutes, the information is confidential pursuant to North Carolina General Statute108A-80 and 7B -302 A1. The DSS Board will move to a closed session.

Board member Janice P. Paul motioned that the DSS Board move into closed session as recited by Chair Commissioner Wendy Jacobs. Board member Jacqueline Beatty-Smith seconded.

Chair Commissioner Wendy Jacobs requested a voice vote.

**Board member Yes No Abstained**

Chair Commissioner Wendy Jacobs Yes

Board member Janice P. Paul Yes

Board member Jacqueline Beatty-Smith Yes

Board member Charles I. Mitchell Yes

The DSS Board returned to regular session with no action taken.

Chair Commissioner Wendy Jacobs adjourned the DSS Board meeting.

Respectfully submitted

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Secretary to the Board Date