**Durham County Board of Social Services**

**October 19, 2022**

The Durham County Board of Social Services monthly meeting was held on Wednesday, October 19, 2022. The DSS Board meeting will continue to be virtual until further notice.

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

The Durham County Department of Social Services was represented by the following: Interim Director Sarah Bradshaw, Deputy Director Catherine Williamson-Hardy and Chief Operations Officer Kelly Inman; Assistant Directors: Rhonda Stevens, Jovetta Whitfield, Margaret Faircloth, Janeen Gordon, and Cynthia Cason.

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 Attorneys Danielle Briggs was present.

Chair Commissioner Wendy Jacobs called the October 19, 2022, DSS Board meeting to order at 3:03 pm.

Chair Commissioner Wendy Jacobs welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Chair Commissioner Wendy Jacobs read the Public Charge. The Board of the Durham County Department of Social Services asks its members and citizens to conduct themselves in a respectful, courteous manner, both with the Board and fellow citizens. At any time, should any member of the Board or any citizen fail to observe this public charge, the Chairman will ask the offending person to leave the meeting until that individual regains personal control. Should decorum fail to be restored, the Chairman will recess the meeting until such time that a genuine commitment to the public charge is observed.

Chair Commissioner Wendy Jacobs asked everyone to state their name and address before speaking.

**Public Comments**

Elizabeth Simpson resides at 804 Berkley Street, Durham NC 27705. Ms. Simpson spoke on behalf of Emancipation NC and Thrive Tribe. Ms. Simpson supports the report on county level reforms to DSS which was forwarded several weeks ago. Chair Commissioner Jacobs informed the group Director William Rose was retiring from DSS.

The calls in the report relating to Child Welfare Reform are mainstream ideas reflecting the direction of federal policy.

In 2018, the federal government passed the family First Prevention Services Act which recognize the unnecessary family separations inflicted in double trauma on children and families.

This was to help state child welfare agencies transition away from foster care placements to keeping children with their families or kinship caregivers. Title IV-E funds were expanded, which were traditionally earmarked for Foster and Group Home services, to include prevention services to keep children who are eligible for foster care in their family home.

Several states have already transitioned to prevention services using Title IV- E funds. Evidence based practices such as home builders, family centered treatment and similar programs are eligible for federal reimbursement under Title IV-E. These programs provide in home services to families addressing critical needs like adequate housing, nutrition, and substance abuse treatment. Often, children are at risk of removal not because of parental abuse, but because their parents are poor and struggling to meet their families need. Intervention services have been shown to significantly reduce the number of children placed into foster care or group homes, reduce childhood delinquency, increase long term family placement, and lower abuse events for children who are being abused. Elizabeth Simpson asked the DSS Board to keep the information in mind during the DSS Director recruitment.

Chair Commissioner Wendy Jacobs thanked Elizabeth Simpson for the comments.

Chair Commissioner Wendy Jacobs inquired about additional public comments.

**Approval of the Agenda**

Chair Commissioner Wendy Jacobs proceeded to move forward with the review and approval of the proposed agenda.

Board member Janice P. Paul moved the acceptance and approval of the proposed agenda. Vice Chair Dr. Monique Holsey-Hyman seconded.

The proposed 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**

Chair Commissioner Wendy Jacobs requested minutes received from September 21, 2022, approved by the DSS Board.

Board member Jacqueline Beatty-Smith moved approval of the minutes from the September 21st regular meeting. Board member Charles I. Mitchell seconded.

The minutes were unanimously approved through 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 Commissioner Wendy Jacobs acknowledged Interim Director Sarah Bradshaw. Interim Director Sarah Bradshaw has worked closely with Director William Rose to assume leadership beginning November 1, 2022.

Chair Commissioner Jacobs recognized Deputy Director Catherine Williamson-Hardy and all the staff involved in Director William Rose’s surprise retirement event. Chair Commissioner Jacobs pointed out the DSS Board members participation along with Commissioner Carter’s song. The event was amazing, filled with decorations, food, and staff.

Chair Commissioner Wendy Jacobs acknowledged the Director’s report in his absence and asked if board members have comments or questions. Board member Janice P. Paul requested spotlights from the assistant directors.

**Family Economic Independence (FEI) – Rhonda Stevens**

Family and Nutrition Services (FNS) passed the FNS timeliness last week, which had not happened in months.

The DSS Board congratulated FEI staff.

**Child and Family Services – Jovetta Whitfield**

The annual holiday kick-off for Thanksgiving and Christmas referrals ended October 14, 2022. The Volunteer Center will begin gathering information. If anyone is interested in sponsoring a family, please let staff know and they will be referred to the Volunteer Center.

The DSS Board agreed to sponsor a family, Vice Chair Dr. Monique Holsey-Hyman will take the lead. Assistant Director Jovetta Whitfield will reach out to Adrian Clark at the Volunteer Center.

November is National Adoption Awareness Month. An event will be planned to recognize and support DSS youth achieving permanence through adoption. There are approximately twenty adoptions.

**Customer Accountability and Talent Development (CATD) – Interim Assistant Director Cynthia Cason**

Deputy Director Catherine Williamson-Hardy reintroduced Interim Assistant Director Cynthia Cason. Cynthia Cason retired from DSS after 30 years and returned to assist in various areas.

Interim Assistant Director Cason greeted everyone and indicated she looks forward to learning more about CATD.

Program Manager Lynn Thomas reported Quality Assurance and Training started working with IS&T to move Excel spreadsheets to an automated database. Staff are excited about the transition. IS&T staff have been phenomenal partners in this process.

Chair Commissioner Wendy Jacobs thanked Interim Assistant Director Cynthia Cason and Program Manager Lynn Thomas.

**Aging and Adult Services – Janeen Gordon**

One highlight, the Low-Income Homeowner Relief Program. Details of progress within the program was submitted and more people applying this year. Another highlight, the Special Assistance Programs is back, and staff are working towards a plan to be able to remove clients from the wait list.

The State has provided some funds required for the offset services previously paid for and what is being paid for now. Clients in facilities, as well as those receiving the in-home portion amount increased the January 1, 2022.

The budget had to be amended and Business Operations Officer Kelly Inman has been working to make sure clients are receiving the correct amount. No funding from the State for adequate staffing due to increase clients from the wait list.

Chair Commissioner Wendy Jacobs thanked Assistant Director Janeen Gordon for the information.

**Business Operations – Margaret Faircloth, Kelly Inman**

Assistant Director Faircloth reported finishing the single audit and getting documents to Finance.

Also, working with the State regarding start date for issuing CIP and LIEAP payments. DSS completes the eligibility process, but the State draft the checks for most of the vendors. Staff have worked hard with vendors to compare notes relating to information coming from the State. Meeting have been held with vendors to keep them informed.

Business Operations Officer Kelly Inman reported on the 75/25 Medicaid reimbursement. The State was being asked by the Federal government to reevaluate every position in which we were claiming 75% reimbursement for Medicaid.

When preliminary numbers were completed, the effect was about $100,000 per month of revenue which nine months of impact, $900,000. Recently the State said this fiscal year, agencies will be held harmless.

We will have to make adjustments in the budget going forward and the State has not sent detail information. Hopefully, by April, May, June we will be compensated so that is not a revenue loss for this fiscal year.

Business Operations Officer Kelly Inman mentioned the special assistance program is mandated but unfunded. Adjustments can be done to provide money for clients, however, no funding for additional staff. Additional staff request must be presented to the Board of County Commissioners to make sure service delivery is available.

Chair Commissioner Wendy Jacobs suggested speaking with the County Budget staff, County Manager and General Manager Joanne Pierce. The first budget retreat is scheduled for November.

Chair Commissioner Wendy Jacobs entertained approval of the board reports. Board member Janice P. Paul moved for approval of the board reports and Board member Jacqueline Beatty-Smith seconded.

**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

The board reports were unanimously approved by the DSS Board’s voice vote.

Chair Commissioner Wendy Jacobs continued to the closed session.

The DSS Board will adjourn into closed session under

NCGS 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. 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.

Senior Assistant County Attorney Danielle Briggs recommended completing the first request in closed session, returning to open session and return to closed session for the second request because they are two separate issues.

Vice Chair Dr. Monique Holsey-Hyman motioned to move into closed session in pursuant to North Carolina General Statutes 143 - 318.11 A. Board member Charles I. Mitchell seconded.

Chair Commissioner Wendy Jacobs moved forward with a 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

The voice vote was unanimous.

The DSS Board returned to regular meeting. No action taken.

Respectfully submitted

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Chairperson Date

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Secretary to the Board Date