

**DUPLIN COUNTY BOARD OF SOCIAL SERVICES
BOARD MINUTES**

Regular Scheduled Meeting
Thursday January 23, 2020
8:30 AM

The Duplin County Board of Social Services met in a regular scheduled meeting on January 23, 2020 at 8:30 a.m. in the Local Agency's Administrative Conference room located at 423 North Main Street in Kenansville, N.C. Prior and Public Notice of the meeting was given in accordance with G.S. 143-318.12

Board members present for today's meeting were Mr. Mike Wallace, Chairman, Mr. Jesse Dowe, Ms. Angela Mainor, and Ms. Ila Davis. Mr. Gary Ange participated by phone. Also present for the meeting were Mr. Davis Brinson, County Manager; Ms. Pam Brame, County HR Director; Ms. Susan Thigpen, DSS Director; and Ms. Angie Miller, DSS Administrative Assistant. The invocation for today's meeting was given by Susan Thigpen.

New Business

Budget Report – Expenditures remain on track at this time. The agency has spent 39% of the budget for this state fiscal year. There are some expenditures and revenues that have not been posted yet from November/December 2019 and these expenditures have been added to the report provided to the Board on this date. Mr. Dowe confirmed with Mr. Brinson that there are adequate funds within the budget to cover the shortfall in Social Security expenses that resulted from a data entry error.

The agency is working diligently to ensure that we are utilizing the budgeted funds for our building repairs for 2019-2020. Challenges continue to exist with getting estimates in order to move forward with repairs. The agency was able to get an estimate to cover replacement of all windows over a four year period, with replacement starting in this budget year, but we are awaiting confirmation from the county office that we will be able to enter into the long-term contract with that business for the entire repair over multiple years.

Income Maintenance and Child Support - Income Maintenance began accepting applications for the LIEAP program on December 1, 2019 for the elderly and disabled and started accepting applications from everyone on January 1st. The new staff have been trained in this program and are being utilized for the administration of these funds. We have not had to contract with any extra staff this year to assist our agency with this program. As of this date, we have not spent all of our funds.

Daycare continues to work actively to add new children from our waiting list. This has been challenging due to getting no responses from many of the notices that are being sent out notifying clients that funds are now available. Many of the letters have been returned with no forwarding addresses and/or staff have been unable to reach clients by phone so Social Services has been sending out second notices. Our spending is increasing to better match our allocation for 2019-2020 and the agency will continue to add children from the waiting list until all children have been removed or the agency has reached a spending coefficient of 100%.

Personnel - A total of six employees resigned or were terminated in the month of December and there were also six new hires. There are currently six social worker vacancies in Child Welfare at this time. Social Services is hoping to use the third QA/Trainer position as an on-call position for evenings during

continue at the state and federal level regardless of system issues and proof that delays are solely related to system problems is required in order to avoid audit findings from state reviews.

Judicial District IV, including Duplin, Sampson, Onslow, and Jones Counties continues to meet regularly as part of our Permanency Collaborative and our district has been recognized as one of the stronger ones in the state. We have active participation from Social Services agencies, attorneys, foster parents, and GAL. Judicial District IV Social Services Directors will be discussing the possibility of creating a state-wide collaborative with the North Carolina Association of County Social Services (NCACDSS) to include all judicial districts so we can truly examine state-wide challenges and determine what factors we can best influence.

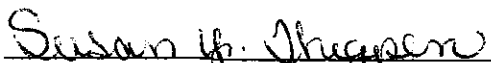
Social Services will be participating in the Point in Time count of the homeless population within the county. Since Ms. Thigpen was not pulled into this project until a few months ago there has not been enough time to strategize on ways to best reach our homeless population so the 2020 count will be conducted at Social Services involving all individuals who come into the agency for services. Two interns will be handling this project from January 30th – February 5th.

Board members talked with Ms. Brame and County Manager, Mr. Brinson regarding high turnover in 2019. Forty-eight employees left the agency or been terminated in the past 12 months. This has been identified as a perpetual problem and has been an ongoing topic of discussion in Board meetings for the past three years or more. Mr. Brinson will be requesting a salary study in the next budget year but there is no quick fix to this problem. The Board agreed that a survey of agency employees to assess job satisfaction and factors contributing to turnover will be helpful in identifying and addressing the problem. Ms. Brame will be developing the survey to be completed anonymously. An email will be sent to all employees with the link to the survey and will confirm that the survey is being conducted at the request of the Social Services Board and Chairman, Mr. Mike Wallace. A list of potential questions has been created and Board members were provided with drafted questions. The Board would like for the final survey to be sent out as quickly as possible to begin identifying strategies to improve retention of employees. A motion was made by Mr. Dowe, seconded by Ms. Mainor and approved by the Board to recess this meeting until January 30, 2020 to allow time to review survey questions for agency staff. The motion was approved and the meeting was recessed.

The Board Meeting resumed from recess on January 30, 2020 at 2:00 for discussion and finalization of the questions to be included in the staff survey. After much discussion, the decision was made to include six scaled questions and seven open-ended questions. Mr. Mike Wallace and Ms. Angela Mainor will attend the next agency meeting, scheduled for Friday, February 7th at 10:00 and 2:15 to present the survey and explain the Board's interest in determining the agency's strengths and challenges in retaining employees. Ms. Brame will be presenting results of the survey at the next Board meeting.

Motion was made, seconded and passed to adjourn the meeting until our next regular scheduled meeting on February 27, 2020 at 8:30.


Mr. Mike Wallace, Chairman


Director & Clerk to the Board

The foregoing minutes were adopted on February 27 / 2020