

DURHAM COUNTY BOARD OF SOCIAL SERVICES
Minutes
June 22, 2011

The Durham County Board of Social Services held its regular meeting on Wednesday June 22, 2011, 8:30 a.m., at Main Street in Conference Room 609 Right. The following DSS Board Members were in attendance: Chair Gladys Dunston, Vice Chair Gloria S. Green, Mrs. Carolyn Carver-Tann, Mr. Stan Holt and Commissioner Joe W. Bowser. Commissioner Bowser left the meeting after approximately 30 minutes.

The DCDSS Department was represented by the following: Director Gerri Robinson, Mr. John Holtkamp, Ms. Betty Hughes, Mrs. Robyn Riley, Ms. Rhonda Stevens, Mrs. Lynn Thomas, Ms. Catherine Pleil, Ms. Betty Hughes and Ms. Montrella R. Springfield.

Deputy County Attorney Thomas Jordan attended the Board meeting. **Members of the public:** Ms. Victoria Peterson and Ms. Jackie Wagstaff. Ms. Melody Butts from the Herald-Sun was present.

The meeting was called to order by Chair Gladys Dunston.

Board member Stan Holt requested moving the Chair and Director's Report before the Assistant Director's Report on the agenda.

Public comments from Victoria Peterson and Jackie Wagstaff: Ms. Peterson and Ms. Wagstaff met with DSS and a representative from the County Attorney's Office previously concerning the custody of two children. The biological father was requesting custody of the children due to the mother's incarceration. The children are not in DSS custody. Chair Dunston informed the attendees that issues such as those presented to the Board are assigned to the DSS Director for follow up. The Director, in turn, follows up and reports back to the board regarding actions taken. Ms. Dunston reiterated that the Board has no authority in this area. The attendees stated that they were appealing to the Board to review their concerns because they were not satisfied with responses provided by the Director and the assistant county attorney assigned to the case. Chair Dunston again reiterated the Board's lack of authority in the situation and again assigned the matter to the Director for follow up as cited earlier.

The DSS Board approved the minutes from June 22, 2011.

Report on Building Organizational Trust - Willie Ratchford, WPR Consulting

WPR Consultant Services was selected to assist with the development, implementation and facilitation of strategies and actions to address some of the agency's challenges identified in the 2010 Employee Satisfaction Survey. A report was provided with recommendations.

- The information evaluated was from the 2010 Employee Survey.
- Mr. Ratchford refers to the 80/20 rule. 80% of staff are happy and 20% are not happy.
- Director Robinson inherited things that happened before her time and now she is being held responsible.
- Five issues
 1. Lack of Trust
 2. Poor Communication
 3. Lack of Concern about Employees
 4. Lack of Knowledge about Staff's Work
 5. Lack of Team Work
- Staff was invited to meet with the consultant in focus groups, leadership meetings and division meetings. Mr. Ratchford met with approximately 90% of staff.
- Action Teams were established to assist staff.
- Questions from the Board
 - **What were examples of the challenges identified?** Some supervisors do not know how to talk to staff. They are hiding in areas watching staff. Soft skills training for supervisors is recommended.
 - **What is the Board's role?** Let the Director do her job. One Board member did not agree. Continued work on organizational trust should go a long ways to address other problems.
- Do staff perceive the Board as micromanaging the Director? Staff are watching the Board and the Board is perceived as to micromanaging the director. Perceptions are experienced as truth. One Board member commented on the changes in leadership at DSS. Mr. Ratchford acknowledged that changes have taken place but the issues presented by staff existed before the arrival of the current Director. One Board member expressed that receiving mail from staff after they depart the Department as inappropriate.

The Board member went on to state that this type communication has colored some of the Board members perception on what is going on in the agency. The Board member went onto raise the question regarding how Board handle gripes. The Consultant's response was not to entertain them. These issues should be referred to the Director or County HR. Chair Dunston emphasized following the guidelines from the State.

- The Vice Chair stressed the importance of informing staff of the Board's role particularly compliance with the Board's Governance Policy. It was further noted that staff are given an opportunity to discuss any concerns at their exit interview with County Human Resources.
- Chair Dunston expressed thanks to Mr. Ratchford for the report.

East Durham Community Initiative (EDCI) - John Holtkamp/Rhonda Stevens

- ❖ Mr. Holtkamp and Ms. Stevens are involved with the EDCI Project.
- ❖ There is approximately a one hundred twenty block area in East Durham that has been identified.
- ❖ Catherine Pleil presented on Prevention/EDCI Family Support Services.
- ❖ Prevention /EDCI will provide the same services offered in the original Prevention program, but in the East Durham area, and with the addition of 2 Prevention social workers.
- ❖ Prevention / EDCI social workers will partner with Family Economic Independence and Community Initiatives, as well as community partners and the family to meet the following goal:
The Prevention/EDCI initiative is to engage at-risk families, with children, in East Durham in order to promote safety, financial stability, academic success, and well-being.

❖ **Safety:**

- ✚ 94% of families who have received Prevention/EDCI services will not receive a CPS report, substantiated, or found in need of services, within one year of the intervention; and
- ✚ 97% of families who have received Prevention/EDCI services will not receive a CPS report resulting in an out of home placement within one year of the intervention.

❖ **Financial Stability:**

- ✚ 100% of at-risk Work First, Child Only recipients (kinship caregivers) will be referred for Prevention/EDCI support services; and
- ✚ 100% of Prevention/EDCI recipients will be referred to Family and Children Medicaid, Food and Nutrition Services, and Work First, when there is an unmet need.

❖ **Academic Success:**

- ✚ 90% of Prevention/EDCI child recipients will have 3 or less unexcused absences;
- ✚ 90% of Prevention/EDCI child recipients will have 100% caregiver participation in school conferences; and
- ✚ 80% of Prevention/EDCI child recipients will be performing at grade level.

❖ **Well-being:**

- ✚ At case closure, families and EDCI partner referral agency will report an increase in the family's use of problem solving strategies and an increase in the family's awareness of community resource, as evidenced by pre and post-test questionnaire.

Chair Dunston suggested connecting with the business community to offer mentoring for children and families.

Chair Report - Chairperson Gladys Dunston

Chair Dunston thanked the DSS Board for their support during her tenure as chairperson. "It has been a marvelous journey. It will be strange not spending a Wednesday during the month at DSS". Chair Dunston acknowledged excellent information presented to the DSS Board from the divisions and the assistance from the Assistant to the Director. The Chair's Vision is to see DSS acknowledged for the Great Agency it is thanks to the Director and her management team and staff.

Board Member Holt thanked Chair Dunston for a great job during her tenure. Vice Chair Green agreed the Chair shared knowledge and achieved a lot. Board member Carver-Tann thanked the Chair for the warm welcome received when she was appointed to the Board and went on to applaud Chair Dunston as a role model and hard worker.

The newly appointed Board Member is Nancy J. Love.

Chair Dunston urged DSS Board Members to continue representing the agency on the Advisory Committee for the National Children Study.

Results from the DACCA Task Force were distributed by Rhonda Stevens. Notebooks have been delivered to the County Manager. Chair Dunston thanked the Board for assuming responsibility for this project. Many thanks to Ms. Stevens and staff for the emphasis placed on the task force. The County Manager will forward information after the review by the Board of County Commissioners. Chair Dunston conversed with Board Members about continuous support of the DACCA Task Force and members decided not to continue; now it is up to the County Manager and others. Board member Holt was disappointed the DSS Board did not review the document before forwarding it to the County Manager. Chair Dunston noted that the DACCA Task Force made the decision regarding submission of the report.

Director's Report

- 2011 Employee Survey is complete and 74.1% of staff completed the survey.
- Approximately \$2M will be sent back to the General Fund. Some line items were overspent and others were under spent.
- Social Services Business Officer I and Assistant Director, Customer Accountability - Telephone screening interviews are scheduled for the first full week in July. Target date for filling the position is mid-August.
- Please be reminded of the upcoming All Staff Meeting scheduled for 9:00 a.m. - Noon, Tuesday July 12, 2011 @ Hillside High School.
- Director Robinson will be participating in the County Strategic Planning Initiative.
- Smart Start and More at Four funding were cut by the state.
- At the request of the County Manager, the Director presented the Department's competitive procurement model to the County Manager and his leadership team. DCDSS' procurement policies and procedures as well as monitoring tools were shared. The County Manager mandated that all Departments develop a more specific and inclusive procurement and monitoring process. Several Department heads have already replicated DCDSS material.

Customer Accountability - Lynn Thomas

(Detail report submitted in Board Packet)

- ❖ A total of 19,493 calls in May, 441 were not picked up which gives the center a 2.3 dropped call rate.
- ❖ Program Integrity fell short of their goal which was 650, they are currently at 523.
- ❖ Convening the Action Team which will consist of staff from Customer Information Center, Quality Assurance and Program Integrity.

Family Economic Independence - Rhonda Stevens

(Detail report submitted in Board Packet)

- o DACCA Wait List 1,537 families, 2155 children.
- o Title IV-E Children served - 41
- o Homeless Children served - 22 families/30 children
- o Food and Nutrition Services visited TROSA and seven applications were taken. Six individuals were seen at Urban Ministries. FNS staff handed out 220 lunches on June 9th at Duke Street for Hunger Awareness Day.
- o Work First is requesting a board member to replace the Chair on the Work First Planning Committee.
- o Medicaid records are being sent to One Source for scanning.
- o An action team has been formed within the division with representation from each program.

Family Safety and Permanency - John Holtkamp

(Detail report submitted in Board Packet)

- The Division Action Team continues to work on ways to ensure communication and trust improves. The action plan should be completed by the end of June.
- Self studies are completed for Accreditation.
- Chief Judge Marcia Morey has convened a work group consisting of Family Court Judges, County Attorney representatives, DSS representatives, GAL's, Parental Attorneys and Court staff to review procedures.
- Drug Treatment Court's State funding has ended.
- Bob Wallace, Program Manager in Adult Services is retiring at the end of June.

Chair Dunston asked if other business needed to be discussed, if not a motion to adjourn the meeting. Vice Chair Green offered the motion and Board Member Carver-Tann seconded. The meeting was adjourned by majority vote.

Respectfully submitted

Chairperson

Date

Secretary to the Board

Date