

DURHAM COUNTY BOARD OF SOCIAL SERVICES

Minutes

March 25, 2009

The Durham County Board of Social Services held its regular meeting on Wednesday, March 25, 2009, 8:00 a.m., at the Main Street facility in Conference Room 609 Right. The following members were in attendance: Chair Gladys Dunston, Mrs. Gloria S. Green, Commissioner Joe W. Bowser and Vice Chair Newman Aguiar. The Departments were represented by the following: Mr. Sammy R. Haithcock, Ms. Sharon Hirsch, Ms. Toni Pedroza, Ms. Rhonda Stevens, and Ms. Montrella R. Springfield. BOCC Chairman Michael Page was present.

Mr. Stan Holt received an excused absence.

Mr. Matthew E. Milliken, reporter from *The Herald-Sun* attended the DSS Board Meeting.

The meeting was officially called to order by Chair Gladys Dunston. Chair Gladys Dunston asked for the minutes to be reviewed by the DSS Board. The minutes were approved with a motion from Vice Chair Newman Aguiar and seconded by Board Member Gloria S. Green. The DSS Board voted to approve the minutes as written.

Public Comments

No public comments.

Chair Gladys Dunston asked for additions or corrections to the agenda. One addition to the agenda: Request to Disposal of Original Records Duplicated by Electronic Means - Adoption Case Records and Adoption Subsidy Case Records.

DSS Director Sammy R. Haithcock presented the DSS Board a request to dispose adoption case records and adoption subsidy case records. Adoptions cases dated back to 1935 and adoption subsidy case records dated back to 1980. Permanent images and film of the documents are available for viewing.

A motion was made by Vice Chair Aguiar to dispose of the adoption case records and adoption subsidy case records to the North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources, understanding that the records have been imaged. The motion was seconded by Board Member Gloria S. Green. DSS Board approved the Request to Disposal of Original Records Duplicated by Electronic Means - Adoption Case Records and Adoption Subsidy Case Records.

Presentation to BOCC Chairman Michael D. Page

DSS Director Sammy R. Haithcock presented Commissioner Michael D. Page with a plaque in recognition of his services on the DSS Board 2004-2008. Mr. Haithcock wished Commissioner Page great success as he leads Durham County Board of County Commissioners. Commissioner Page enjoyed supporting and working on the DSS Board during his tenure. Commissioner Page acknowledge the benefits while from working along with staff. DSS Board Chair Gladys Dunston acknowledged Commissioner Page's compassion for DSS and the Durham community. DSS Board Chair Dunston thanked Commissioner Page on behalf of the DSS Board. DSS Board Member Gloria S. Green thanked Commissioner Page for assisting with her nomination to the DSS Board. DSS Board Vice Chair Newman Aguiar spoke on behalf of staff and personally as he recognized the commitment and value placed on DSS received from Commissioner Page. Commissioner Joe W. Bowser asked Commissioner Page to continue assisting DSS.

Chair Report

Chair Gladys Dunston addressed the recent loss of staff member Matthew Zick, Social Worker, Child Protective Services.

DSS Board Member Stan Holt sent regrets of a school related conflict which prohibited him from attend the meeting.

A budget session was held on March 19, 1009 for the DSS Board facilitated by Antonia Pedroza. An additional session is scheduled for March 27, 2009. Ms. Pedroza provided a detailed look at the budget to better prepare the DSS Board for the presentations to the County and Board of County Commissioners (BOCC).

Board members attended the Leadership Academy Breakfast on March 19, 2009 at Duke Street.

Chair Dunston encouraged other board members to attend a meeting on April 7, 2009 at 3:00 p.m. to follow up on DSS Director's recruitment.

Director's Update - Mr. Sammy R. Haithcock

Mr. Haithcock proceeded reporting on the following:

1. Recruitment for Assistant Director's Vacancy

- a. Eighteen applicants met requirements. The interviewing process should be complete by the end of April. He feels confident someone will be in place by the first of June.

2. Stimulus Update

Currently there has not been a specific confirmation of available funding. The expectation is funding to:

- A. Increase funds for food assistance administration;
- B. Provide child care subsidy;
- C. Increase reimbursement for certain foster care costs;
and
- D. Increase reimbursement for certain child support expenses.

3. Transition from Community Boards

Mr. Haithcock is transitioning out of community boards and initiatives in which by virtue being DSS Director. These include Lincoln Community Health Clinic Board, Juvenile Crime Prevention Council (JCPC), Ten Year Plan to End Homelessness, Durham Urban Ministries Board, Durham Workforce Development Board and JobLink, Project Access of Durham County, and Durham's Partnership for Children. Mr. Haithcock will appoint designees to serve until a director is hired, or, as appropriate, will recommend replacements from staff. This will provide continuity of involvement by the agency until a new director is in place.

4. Child Care Spending

Last year our state child care subsidy funds were underspent by 2% (about \$400,000). It is the agency's priority to avoid under expenditure this year. The process has been closely monitored and adjustments made timely, we have not been experiencing an anticipated drop in children served despite being on a waiting list for over a month. There is a risk overspending our allocation this year. A request has been made for additional funds to cover any overspending. Staff are reviewing records to re-verify eligibility for on-going cases which will result in some cases being dropped due to ineligibility.

A proposal has been sent to the partnership to continue the relationship as is, therefore, DSS is currently waiting for a response from the partnership. Another agency has submitted a proposal for Smart Start. Vice Chair Aguiar asked if the DSS Board need to be involved at this point. Mr. Haithcock is awaiting recommendations and will report back to the DSS Board.

Commissioner Bowser requested the number of children on the waiting list. There are approximately four hundred.

Budget proposal to the DSS Board included 10% reduction requested by the county manager. There are currently no jobs lost at DSS.

A letter was drafted to the County Manager concerning the budget reductions. There were reductions in mandatory services. The plan is to monitor these programs and spending very closely, if spending should exceed projections inform the county manager immediately.

Commissioner Bowser questioned the spending on outside contract services. Ms. Pedroza replied there is a large amount of funding to outside contracts. Commissioner Bowser requested information on contracts.

Voting conditionally, a motion was made to send the letter to inform the County Manager and Board of County Commissioners of the proposed cuts as modified. Chair Dunston seconded and the approved by the majority vote.

Mr. Haithcock appealed to the media not to publish the numbers until the county manager has reviewed the report.

Chair Dunston and Vice Chair Aguiar commended staff on the budget. Board Member Green asked how can the county manager override what the agency presents. Mr. Haithcock informed that the budget is present on April 3, 2009

Communications - Sharon Hirsch

Sharon Hirsch reported legislative updates and will continue to monitor.

The Leadership Academy graduation date is June 18, 2009 from 9 to 10:30 am in room 2120 at Duke Street.

April is Child Abuse Prevention Month, activities are listed below:

- a. "A Good Parent Is" art contest for children in the 3rd and 5th grades in Durham Public Schools. The award ceremony this year will be held at the North Regional Library on **April 23** at 11 AM. The theme for this year's artwork is "Children are a treasure" and Commissioner Page is the keynote speaker.
- b. The 13th Annual Child Abuse Prevention Walk will be on **April 30**.
- c. The Partnership Series workshop on **April 29** is also dedicated to sharing information about child welfare and child care.

