

DURHAM COUNTY BOARD OF SOCIAL SERVICES
Minutes
September 26, 2011

The Durham County Board of Social Services held its regular meeting on Wednesday September 26, 2011, 8:30 a.m., at Duke Street in Conference Room 2221. The following DSS Board Members were in attendance: Chairman Stan Holt, Vice Chairman Commissioner Joe W. Bowser and Board member Newman Aguiar. Mrs. Carolyn Carver-Tann resigned from the DSS Board.

The DCDSS Department was represented by the following: Interim Director Ms. Gail Perry, Mr. John Holtkamp, Ms. Antonia Pedroza, Ms. Rhonda Stevens, Mrs. Lynn Thomas, Ms. Myca Blandford, Mrs. Wilda Carter-Neville, Mrs. Cynthia Cason, Mrs. Pinkie Davis-Boyd, Mr. David Elin, Ms. Esther Headen, Ms. Betty Greene, Ms. Markette Hester, Ms. Linda Hicks, Mrs. Carol Hunt, Ms. Betty Hughes, Mr. Gary Meares, Ms. Marie Scott, Ms. Shauna Shaw, Ms. Hazel Spruill, Mr. Bob Wallace, Mrs. Darlene Whitfield, Ms. Jovetta Whitfield and Ms. Montrella R. Springfield.

Assistant County Attorney Kathy Everett-Perry and Assistant County Attorney Thomas Jordan attended the Board meeting.

Members of the public: Ms. Virginia Bridges from the News and Observer, Ms. Samiha Khanna from the Independent Weekly and Ms. Melody Butts from the Herald-Sun were present.

Board Chair Stan Holt called the meeting to order. Chair Holt asked attendees for a brief introduction on behalf of new board member Newman Aguiar.

The agenda stands approved as written.

Public Comments

No public comments.

Community Initiatives - RBA Report

Carol Hunt thanked the Board for the opportunity to report on Community Initiatives. There have been changes in Community Initiatives which include:

- DSS School Social Workers reduction in salary;
- DSS School Social Workers additional responsibilities specified by Durham Public Schools (DPS);

- DSS School Social Workers are being used as truancy officers. School Social Workers are spending a lot of time completing paperwork. Truancy cannot be coded which means federal dollars cannot be pulled down for reimbursement and;
- DSS School Social Workers accepting jobs at DPS.
- The cost for social workers is approximately \$800,000 per year. Federal dollars can be pulled down if the child/children are receiving Medicaid. The County is funding a large portion of the \$800,000. Interim Director Perry has scheduled a meeting with Community Initiatives Staff to discuss concerns.
Currently, the schools do not have truancy officers; however, there are school resource officers. Truancy court is being held at DPS and some cases are forwarded to judicial court. Dennis Ellis works with students.
- Share Your Christmas will be managed by the Volunteer Center this year. In the past, Ms. Hunt received applications from individuals in the community requesting assistance for Christmas. Interim Director Perry has contacted staff at the Volunteer Center to discuss this issue.

Low Income Energy Assistance Program (LIEAP) - Wilda Carter-Neville

- LIEAP provides a one-time annual vendor payment to help eligible families pay their heating expenses.
- 2011-2012 allocation for Durham is \$320,833 which will serve approximately 1,067 households.
- Eligibility Criteria for LIEAP is based on certain non-financial and financial requirements.
- Vulnerability meaning a household must be vulnerable at the time of application.
- Income change from 110% - 130% of the poverty level.
- Everyone must apply.
- Checks will be sent to vendors not to clients.
- Applications will be taken from December 1st through March 31st. December 1st through January 31st applications will be available for individuals 60 years of age or older and those receiving services from the Department of Aging and Adult Services. Benefits are based on household situations at the time of application. Eligible households whose primary heating source is fuel oil, kerosene or LP gas will be approved for a one-time vendor payment of \$400.00.

- Eligible households whose primary heating source is coal, electric, natural gas or wood one-time payment to vendors is \$200.00.
- In the past approximately 4000 households received LIEAP because they qualified if receiving services from Food and Nutrition.
- Partnerships with Crisis Intervention, Duke Energy (Share the Warmth) and the Interagency Emergency Committee.

Chair Stan Holt thanked Mrs. Carter-Neville for the information presented at the DSS Board Meeting.

Approval on Minutes

Replace minutes with notes for the August meeting. The notes from the August meetings were approved with correction.

The minutes from the September 1, 2011 call meeting were approved with the following corrections:

1. Page 1, 6th paragraph, removed whether;
2. Page 2, 3rd paragraph, sentence changed to, " Missing one of the three board members could delay the process";
3. Page 3, 3rd paragraph, sentence changed to "After the closed session ends, the session was opened and the board reconvened". and;
4. Paragraph 4, Chair Stan Holt seconded the motion.

Minutes from the September 1, 2011 call meeting were approved with noted changes.

Interim Director's Report - Gail Perry

1. Interim Director Gail Perry welcomed Board member Newman Aguiar back to the DSS Board.
2. Interim Director Perry welcomed Toni Pedroza back to DSS.
3. Catherine Williamson-Hardy was selected for the Assistant Director of Customer Accountability, Communications and Development. Mrs. Williamson-Hardy will begin October 31, 2011. Mrs. Williamson-Hardy has worked in several capacities at Durham County DSS.
4. DSS Slogan - Achieving Excellence through PRAC (Partnerships, Relationships, Accountability and Celebrations).

5. Interim Director Perry has established multiple partnerships in the community:
 - Durham's Partnerships for Children
 - Lincoln Community Health
 - Volunteer Services
 - United Way of the Greater Triangle Women's Leadership Council
 - General Services
 - Public Health
 - Durham Juvenile Crime Prevention Council
 - Steering Committee for the Human Services Complex
 - Grandparents Conference
6. Time has been expended speaking with staff, attending various meetings, meeting state representatives and facilitating meetings.
7. Restructuring
 - Child Protective Services
 - Review programmatic processes and procedures and;
 - Increase the number of investigative supervisors.

DSS Board Chair Report - Chair Stan Holt

1. Currently two vacancies on the DSS Board. The State will re-open a second appointment and the Board of County Commissioners will make an appointment.
2. Working with Human Resources on recruitment for the Director.
3. Chair Holt and Assistant County Attorney Kathy Everett-Perry will work on the procedures for closed sessions.

Assistant Director's Report

Family Economic Independence - Rhonda Stevens

1. Grandparents Conference
 - Approximately 100 attended the conference:
 - Positive feedback was received.
 - Mr. Holtkamp reported other counties were impressed by the BOCC members attending the conference.
 - Vice Chair Bowser acknowledged staff for a great job on the conference.
2. Child Care Services Wait List
 - Board member Aguiar noticed the growth in the numbers on the wait list.
 - Interim Director Perry met with Laura Benson, Executive Director, Durham's Partnership for Children. Conversations will continue on this issue.

- Funding is not available to purge the waiting list.
- Approximately \$586,000 was returned.
- In Dec. 2010, Child Care Services Association terminated services for approximately 200 children. Of those 200, two families qualified to apply with DSS under child welfare services (due to parent's medical conditions). One family applied and received services with DSS.
- More people are requesting assistance with child care.
- Vice Chair Bowser asked management to inform the BOCC and setup a guarantee if funds run over.
- Board member Newman Aguiar requested sharing the wait list information to the community and offered his assistance.

Family Safety and Permanency - John Holtkamp

1. Upcoming events

Foster Parent Recruitment

Currently, DSS have 76 foster parents. There are foster parents outside of Durham County. These foster parents care for special needs children and children relocated for safety reasons.

Currently, half of the foster parents can accept children.

2. LINKS Celebration

Chair Stan Holt applauded staff for the great celebration.

3. Adult Guardianship - Durham Center is no longer accepting adult guardianship. DSS is not equipped to manage mental health clients. Assistant County Attorney Tim Jordan will forward information received from the State.

Board member Newman Aguiar inquired position vacancies and concerns from staff. Track staff resignations and report to the DSS Board quarterly. Interim DSS Director Perry will retrieve information for the board.

Customer Accountability Division - Lynn Thomas

- Congratulations to staff in the Customer Information Center (CIC)! A total of 22,000 calls received and 303 dropped calls, giving CIC a 1.4% dropped call rate.
- Quality Assurance staff preparing for Food and Nutrition Audit.
- Continue to work on streamlining process for contract monitoring.

Chair Stan Holt asked for additional comments or questions. The DSS Board meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted

Chairperson

Date

Secretary to the Board

Date