

June 25, 2024

The Alamance County Social Services Board met for its regular monthly meeting on this date. The meeting was held at HSC Building (1st Floor) 319 N. Graham Hopedale Rd., Burlington NC with the following in attendance were: Mr. Timothy Britt, DSS Board Chair; Ms. Candy Snyder, DSS Board Member; Dr. Darrell “Bud” Warner, DSS Board Member; Commissioner Craig S. Turner, DSS Board Member; Ms. Tyronna Hooker, DSS Board Vice-Chair; Ms. Candice J. Gobble, DSS Director; Ms. Danae Pickard, Economic Services Division Director; Ms. Lynette Wellons, Assistant Director of Services; Ms. Virginia Hunker, Fiscal Officer; Mr. Robert Ring, HR Director; and Ms. Jamie Hamlett, DSS Attorney were present.

Mr. Timothy Britt, DSS Chair opened the meeting.

Public Comment:

None

Consent Agenda: Timothy Britt, DSS Board Chair

May 2024 items on the consent agenda approved. Dr. Darrell Warner made motion to approve and seconded by Ms. Tyronna Hooker, Vice-Chair.

Staff Reports:

Fiscal: Virginia Hunker

	MAY 2024	% OF BUDGET	PRIOR YTD	% OF BUDGET
REVENUES	\$10,366,622.00	91%	\$11,606,300.00	84%
EXPENDITURES	\$19,367,772.00	76%	\$18,224,420.00	70%

Budget Highlights (County) – The 2024-2025 Budget was adopted on June 18, 2024.

- Merit Pay will continue with no changes from the current year – “Meets Expectations” earns a 2% increase and “Exceeds Expectations” earns a 3% increase on the employee’s date of hire
- A Cost-of-Living Adjustment (COLA) of 3% will be effective July 1st
- Phase II of the Market Salary Study is funded at \$400,000 for the next one-third of our organization (to kick off in 3rd quarter)
- The new holiday pay for those working on calendared holidays goes into effect with the 4th of July holiday
- The property tax rate was adjusted from 43.2 cents to 46.9 cents with additional funding for ABSS

Fraud: See report –

Unit	May 2024	May 2023	Current YTD	Prior Fiscal Year
Fraud	\$186,288.79	\$3,090.00	\$397,335.02	\$33,648.00

Services – Ms. Lynette Wellons/Assistant Director of Services -

Adult and Family Services -

Assistant Director Wellons reported World Elder Abuse Awareness Day will be observed on June 15, 2024. Adult Unit partnered with Always Best Care to host informational session for community partners as it relates to Adult Services. Adult Staff will present to Triad Retirement Living.

Adult Quarterly Audit was performed – there was one case audited and the unit received perfect score – no infractions.

Child Support – (Statistical Report Information) – see report.

Unit	May 2024	May 2023	Current YTD	Prior Fiscal Year
Child Support	\$988,662.81	\$975,480.89	\$10,152,144.80	\$9,812,955.59

Assistant Director Wellons reported Child Support recently completed State DRA audit – five cases were pulled and all passed successfully.

Child Welfare –

Assistant Director Wellons reported the following:

- County Audit – Foster Care passed; Adoptions had three cases with missing items that could not be produced, due to age of cases and record keeping of those cases. We currently have safeguards in place for current cases. We have finding of \$18k – we will have new baseline in the next month.

Economic Support: Ms. Danae Pickard

Ms. Danae Pickard, Economic Services Division Director reported on the following:

Energy Outreach Plan –

The Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) is a federally funded block grant program that is comprised of three different programs: Crisis Intervention Program (CIP), Low-Income Energy Assistance Program (LIEAP) and Weatherization.

To maximize the success of this program, outreach to county residents through key community partner stakeholders, each county department of social services is required to develop an

implement an Energy Program Outreach Plan. This plan is a framework to assure that eligible households are made aware of the assistance available through these programs.

Each county must form an outreach planning committee that creates the opportunity for county level collaboration to discuss and plan how to effectively reach county residents to inform them of the services provided by the energy programs. The committee should meet at least twice yearly; September for outreach planning related to LIEAP and April to review the outcomes related to LIEAP and to plan for outreach activities for summer weather.

The planning committee consists of partners from public libraries, housing authorities to local churches and food pantries.

Over the past year, we have processed over 8,000 applications, all with part-time staff processing applications. We are launching into the CIP summer program, if you know of anyone who is in need, please have them complete the application. The funding should come through the 1st of July.

There have been some changes with CIP Program this year, applicants no longer require a health component to access these funds. The majority of these cases require quick turn-around due to “cut off” notices. We usually are able to turn around these applications within an 18-hour window with current part-time staff.

The plan does require board chair and director signature, but no board action needed.

Question: What does the budget look like for CIP since you processed 8,000 applications within the past 12 months?

- We are not sure of the funding as of yet – but we typically run through the funds pretty quick. The majority of customers are usually eligible for \$600.*

Action: Plan signed by DSS Director and DSS Board Chair, Timothy Britt.

Operations – Director Candice J. Gobble

Administrative Support/Personnel: Robert Ring

See Statistical Report – as of May 31, 2024

Vacancies	25
New Hires	6
Interagency Transfers	2
Resignations	8

As of June 25, 2024 – Alamance County DSS has 26 job openings. Out of the 26 job openings, there are a total of 9 Child Welfare SW positions (7 – Assessors and 2 –FC).

Question: If you have 5 good staff, will you be able to hire since you are on the line with unfunded positions?

- Yes, we are in constant conversations with County Manager. .*

Question: Would ABSS School SW have to go through Pre-Service Training?

- *Yes, all new Child Welfare SW would have to go through the 7-week Pre-Service Training.*

Director's Report – Candice J. Gobble, Director–

Director Gobble reported on the ongoing Single Fiscal Audit. This audit will impact all DSS services. We have received one finding for Program Integrity (FRAUD) regarding record keeping – in our response we will highlight that record keeping was completely different 10 years ago. We have changed our processes and have checklist and second party reviews to ensure all cases are handled properly.

Director Gobble reported the current DSS Strategic Plan is ending very soon. We are in the processing of developing Strategic Plan for FY 25 – 27 (3- year plan). We have developed Strategic Planning Committee with the first meeting starting in July. Director Gobble posed question to DSS Board – do you want to be a part of the planning committee?

Action: Director Gobble will forward the past Strategic Plan to board members.

Director Gobble reported on the past Sign-On bonus for DSS. The information is as follows:

- 28 eligible staff (August 21 – December 21) – the bonus was only active for 5 months, The bonus ended once the \$5k increase was approved for all DSS staff.
- 15 staff received the first pay out at 6 months
- 9 staff received the second pay out at 1 year mark
- 6 staff are current employees of DSS
 - 3 - Social Workers (1 currently supervisor)
 - 3 - Economic Services

Director Gobble announced DSS/Health Department Juneteenth Event went very well. This year we had a food drive and all donations went to “Morrowtown” Community Garden. We raised enough for 27 families to receive food. There was food, games and line dancing. Director Gobble presented the pictures from the event.

New Business:

Memorandum of Understanding: Director Gobble

Director Gobble reported the following:

Background:

Per NC General Statute 108A-74, effective March 1, 2020, Session Law 2017-41 required all counties to enter into an annual agreement with the NC Department of Health & Human Services (DHHS) for all social services programs excluding medical assistance (NC Medicaid).

The law requires the agreement to contain performance requirements and administrative responsibilities related to the social services programs, including a process for non-compliance with the performance requirements.

Additionally, the law requires NC DHHS to maintain a transparency dashboard that provides tracking of the MOU metrics.

Memorandum of Understanding (NC DHHS and Local County DSS)

- New MOU is effective beginning 7/1/2024
- In place for 2024-2025 and 2025-2026
- Requires signature of County Manager and DSS Director

Outlines required performance measures:

- Energy
- Work First
- Food & Nutrition Services
- Child Welfare – Foster Care
- Adult Protective Services
- Special Assistance
- Child Support

Failure to comply with performance requirements could result in the Department withholding stated and/or federal funding and/or a corrective action plan.

- 3 consecutive months or 5 months within a 12-month period

Director Gobble added there are some counties who decide not to sign the MOU – at least 6 counties so far. Failure to sign will not stop the withholding of funding or any corrective action plans.

Additional Performance Requirements:

Child Welfare:

- 95% of all screened-in reports within required time frames
- No more than 91% of all children who were victimized in a 12-month period, received a subsequent finding of maltreatment.
- No less than 40.5% of children entering foster care in a 12-month period are discharged to permanency within 12 months
- Children discharged from foster care to reunification, kinship care or guardianship, no more than 8.3% re-enter foster care within 12 months of their discharge.
- All children entering into foster care during a 12-month period, the rate of placement moves per 1,000 days will not exceed 4.1%

Food & Nutrition Performance Measures:

- DSS will process 95% of regular FNS applications within 25 days from the date of application
- DSS will process 95% of expedited FNS applications within four calendar days from the date of application
- DSS will ensure that 95% of FNS recertifications are processed on time each month

Director Gobble reported there have been defects in NC FAST for Expedited benefits showing as overdue– we are in hold harmless status until the corrected at NC FAST.

Question: What happens to citizens who have expedited application and not processed on time?

- *We do have gift cards to help families until they receive EBT card and/or expedited benefits. We also have an internal food pantry.*

Work First Performance Measures:

- DSS will process 95% of Work First applications within 45 days of receipt
- DSS will process 95% of Work First recertifications no later than the last day of current recertification period

We have recently received an influx of Work First applications due to “cash assistance” is term used when applying for Work First. The program does offer job assistance, transportation, etc. and has great benefits.

Energy Performance Measures:

- DSS will process 95% of Crisis Intervention Program applications within one business day for applicants with no heat or cooling source.
- DSS will process 95% of Crisis Intervention Program (CIP) applications within one business day for applicants who have a heat or cooling source.

The CIP programs start in July. Currently we are out of funds. We will typically go through this funding quickly. LIEAP is not a part of the MOU due to its one-time funding to one payment vendor.

Special Assistance:

- DSS will process 85% of SAA applications within 45 days of receipt
- DSS will process 85% of SAD applications within 60 days of receipt

Adult Service:

- DSS will complete 85% of APS evaluations involving allegations of abuse or neglect within 30 days of the report.
- DSS will complete 85% of APS evaluations involving allegations of exploitation within 45 days of the report.

Child Support:

- DSS will have 50% of paternities established for children born out of wedlock at the end of the State Fiscal Year (June 30) – *Alamance Co. DSS established our own expectations of 92.88% as benchmark.*
- DSS will have 50% of child support cases under order establishing support obligations at the end of the State Fiscal Year (June 30) – *Alamance Co. DSS established our own expectations of 77.85% as benchmark.*
- DSS will have 40% of current child support paid at the end of the State Fiscal Year (June 30). *Alamance Co. DSS established our own expectations of 70% as benchmark.*
- DSS will have 40% of cases received a payment towards arrears at the end of the State Fiscal Year (June 30). *Alamance Co. DSS established our own expectations of 70% as benchmark.*

Child Welfare Foster Care:

- DSS will ensure 95% of all foster children will have a contact in their placement each month.

These contacts function off of Federal FY – we continue to work on this goal. The visits have been completed but there is extensive paperwork that occurs with each visit. So, we follow the rule – make contact and then focus on the paperwork later. We have children who reside Out of State and kids who run away continue to count as a part of this goal. The run-away count against DSS.

Question: What equates as a visit?

- *The visit has to be at the residence of where the foster child resides – full visit – meet with child in the location, etc.*

Announcements:

Chair Tim Britt wanted to share “kudo’s” he received regarding two DSS staff regarding Medicaid case. The two staff were Carson Winkel and Shirley Paul, Economic Services staff who provided exceptional customer service with Alamance County citizen.

Adjournment -

The next board meeting is 12:00 noon **Tuesday, July 23, 2024** at DSS – Professional Board Room located on the 1st Floor at 319 N. Graham Hopedale Rd., Burlington NC.

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned at 1:13pm.

Respectfully Submitted:

Carmen L. Morrow
Timothy Britt

Carson Winkel
Shirley Paul

Date Approved: 7-23-2024
