

November 28, 2023

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: Ms. Heidi Norwick, DSS Board Chair; Ms. Tyronna Hooker, DSS Board Member; Dr. Darrell Warner, DSS Board Member; Mr. Timothy Britt, 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. Jamie Hamlett, DSS Attorney; Ms. Virginia Hunker, Fiscal Officer; Ms. Jamie Hatfield, Economic Services Program Manager; Mr. Robert Ring, HR Director; Ms. Katrina Jackson, Economic Services Program Manager and Ms. Kim Price, Economic Services Supervisor were present.

Heidi Norwick, DSS Chair opened the meeting.

Public Comment:

None

Consent Agenda: Heidi Norwick, DSS Board Chair

October 2023 items on the consent agenda approved. Timothy Britt, Vice-Chair made motion to approve and seconded by Dr. Darrell Warner.

Community Child Prevention Team: Heidi Norwick, DSS Board Chair

Chair Heidi Norwick appointed Dr. Darrell Warner to serve as a member of the county's Community Child Prevention Protection Team (CCPT). Each CCPT is responsible for reviewing selected cases involving children who are receiving child protective services from the county DSS and reviewing all cases in which a child has died as a result of the following:

- As a result of suspected abuse or neglect within twelve months after the child or the child's family received child protective services or
- Within twelve months after a report was made to the social services department regarding the abuse or neglect of the child or another child in the family

December Meeting Date Change:

DSS Director Candice Gobble requested December meeting date change due to normal meeting date falls on County Holiday schedule. DSS Board Members voted to meet on Tuesday, December 12, 2023 at 12pm which DSS Board Orientation will be held.

Action: DSS Board Members voted unanimously to change meeting date. The Board Schedule will be amended and posted on the County website.

Staff Reports:

Fiscal: Director Candice Gobble

	OCTOBER 2023	% OF BUDGET	PRIOR YTD	% OF BUDGET
REVENUES	\$3,873,424.00	35%	\$3,120,768.00	26%
EXPENDITURES	\$6,597,169.00	26%	\$6,518,152.00	37%

Ms. Virginia Hunker discussed October revenues and expenditures. We continue to watch the line items as we know there are some higher than normal. Director Gobble applauded the Fiscal Team on their work with the budget lines. This team has pulled together since 2020 with single audits with no findings.

Fraud: See report –

Unit	October 2023	October 2022	Current YTD	Prior Fiscal Year
Fraud	\$22,004.63	\$2,578.00	\$82,591.26	\$19,223.34

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

Adult and Family Services -

Assistant Director Wellons reported on the “Adopt-A-Person Under Guardianship” event. This program allows us to provide our Persons Under Guardianship with Christmas gifts they may not otherwise receive.

Alamance County Department of Social Services currently serves as Guardian for one hundred and forty-five (145) Persons Under Guardianship. While there are several programs to assist children with presents at this time of the year, there are very few that help with adults. Our Persons Under Guardianship have been deemed incapacitated (as they may have Dementia, a debilitating mental illness, and/or are developmentally disabled, etc.) by a Clerk of Court as they are unable to make appropriate decisions regarding their health and safety. Our agency is then appointed Guardian if there is no family willing or able to serve as Guardian. In many cases, we are the only people our Persons under Guardianship have to consider as their family. The presents they receive from our agency is often the only Christmas present or gift they receive all year.

If board members would like to adopt – please contact Lynette Wellons or Carmen Morrow.

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

Unit	October 2023	October 2022	Current YTD	Prior Fiscal Year
Child Support	\$931,623.26	\$835,720.00	\$3,567,490.29	\$3,480,405.02

Child Welfare –

Assistant Director Wellons gave brief update regarding the assault case. The social workers continue to progress and get better each day. One of the social workers has not transitioned into a different position within the agency. In regards to this incident, DSS has offered self-defense and situational awareness training for social work staff. We received positive feedback from the training. We have completed debriefing with Burlington PD and will continue with meetings to offer educational tips for officers while working with SW in the field.

Assistant Director Wellons reported Child Welfare completed pre-audit for CFSR – we are currently in round 4 of this audit. The State is completing “spot” checks. We did have one finding in the In-Home section, which we have completed and submitted the information needed.

Question: Did police apprehend anyone from the assault case?

Answer: No. There is no progress on the case.

Economic Support: Ms. Danae Pickard

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

Energy Season has started with Low-Income Energy Assistance Program (LIEAP) on December 1 – December 31 for those over age 60 or disabled. All other households may apply from January 1 – March 31 or until funds are exhausted. This is a federally-funded program that provides for a one-time vendor payment to help eligible households pay their heating bills.

Payments will be distributed automatically to heating vendors beginning in December 2023 if a member of the household meets the following three requirements:

- Is age 60 or older or a person with a disability receiving services through the NCDHHS [Division of Aging and Adult Services](#),
- Currently receives [Food and Nutrition Services](#) and
- Received a LIEAP payment during the 2022-2023 season.

Households meeting the requirements for the automatic payment will be notified of their eligibility in November 2023 and do not need to re-apply for LIEAP. Any household with a person 60 or older or with a disability and is receiving services through the Division of Aging and Adult Services who did not receive notice of an automated payment, can apply online at epass.nc.gov or at any County Department of Social Services.

All other households that meet the following criteria may be eligible:

- Have at least one U.S. citizen or non-citizen who meets the eligibility criteria.
- Meet an income test.
- Have reserves at or below \$2,250. (Resources will not be counted for this year's Season from December 1, 2022-March 31, 2023)

- Be responsible for its heating costs.

Ms. Pickard reported the State did not receive as much federal funding as previous years for Energy – reduced to \$55 million for State – so the allotments will be reduced for some.

Ms. Pickard reported Economic Services continues to conduct outreach activities as it relates to Medicaid Expansion.

Ms. Pickard reported there is an increase in FNS cases as it relates to Fraud. The State is providing guidance on how to handle those cases.

Question: If situation changed for a person as it relates to LIEAP, will they still be able to receive the automatic supplement?

Answer: The State mailed out letters to those who received LIEAP last year to confirm addresses, income changes and heating sources last month. If they did not receive the letter, they are still able to apply at DSS office.

Operations – Director Candice J. Gobble

Administrative Support/Personnel: Robert Ring

See Statistical Report – as of October 31, 2023

Vacancies	38
New Hires	3
Interagency Transfers	1
Resignations	9

Total = 32 Vacancies as of November 28, 2023 –

Mr. Ring reported there are 13 IMC II positions currently vacant. This number does not include the number of positions approved at BOCC for Medicaid Expansion.

Mr. Ring reported the 3-month check-ins are going well with Program Managers. Mr. Ring gave some examples of comments from staff.

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

Director Gobble gave brief update regarding the County Compensation Study. The County hired an outside consulting firm to conduct study. DSS, EMS and Sheriff’s Department are in Phase I. The target date is December 1. Director Gobble reported the firm reviewing pay scale of 12 counties surrounding Alamance County to establish benchmarks.

Director Gobble added she will keep the Board abreast of any information once received.

Director Gobble reported the Leadership Team meeting format has changed. She is now assigning supervisors of all services to come up with agenda for meetings. We will use these meetings as it relates to DSS services and use as “5 minute” spots for All Staff meetings.

Medicaid Expansion:

- The “Go Live” date is set for December 1, 2023.
- DSS Director presented at November County Commissioners Meeting
- BOCC approved the request for additional staff for Medicaid expansion
- We have installed Kiosks to help with influx of traffic to assist customers
- Guilford County DSS has allowed Alamance County staff to train new staff
- 1/3 of Alamance County are already enrolled with Medicaid – now those numbers will be expanded and will continue to roll over

Refugees:

Director Gobble reported on the Refugees DSS is currently working with and how it could impact the budget. Lengthy discussion ensued of budget impacts as it relates to interpreting, housing and other services.

Retiree Presentation:

Director Gobble presented Kimberly Price, Economic Services Supervisor who will retire at the end of November with a plaque as she is retiring from Alamance County Social Services with 22 years of service. Director Gobble thanked Ms. Price for her tireless efforts, unwavering support and her dedication to DSS Mission.

New Business:

Medicaid Expansion – Katrina Jackson/Jamie Hatfield

Ms. Katrina Jackson and Ms. Jamie Hatfield – Economic Services Program Managers presented the following:

What you need to know about Medicaid Expansion?

- Starts on December 1, 2023
- Eligibility requirements have higher qualifying income levels than in the past
- There is no monthly fee and copays are never more than \$4
- People already enrolled in Medicaid’s limited Family Planning Program who are eligible will be automatically enrolled in full Medicaid expansion benefits
- Coverage includes primary care, hospital services, maternity and postpartum care, vision and hearing services, prescription drug benefits, behavioral health, preventative and wellness services, dental and oral health services, medical related devices and other therapies

Eligibility:

Most people will get health care coverage through NC Medicaid if they:

- Live in North Carolina
- Are ages 19-64
- Are a citizen or a qualifying non-citizen?
- Have a household income that is within chart below:

Household Size	Total income, before taxes
Single Adults	\$1,676/month or less (\$20,120/year)
Family of 2	\$2,267/month or less (\$27,214/year)
Family of 3	\$2,859/month or less (\$34,307/year)
Family of 4	\$3,450/month or less (\$41,400/year)
Each additional person	Add \$591/month (add\$7,094/year)

Alamance County Information:

- As of October 2023, the Alamance County caseload of Medicaid benefits was 38,608 with 53,587 beneficiaries served within these cases
- Estimates provided in April 2022 indicated an additional 11,000 individuals to be eligible for Medicaid Expansion benefits:
 - A portion of this estimate are individuals currently receiving in a lesser benefits program (4452 individuals as of 11/6/2023)
 - Additional individuals added will increase the Medicaid caseload size by 21%

Alamance County Preparation:

- We received BOCC approval for requested positions to assist with the additional workload:
 - (8) IMC II
 - IMC III (Trainer)
 - IMS (Supervisor)
- New and current staff are undergoing Medicaid training. Additionally, our training department has created resources and tools to assist with learning new Medicaid policy.
- Temporary staff to assist with additional calls, foot traffic and data entry
- Expanded training for our reception staff
- Increased resources for our customers to apply through Epass workstations and the roll-out of new Kiosks to assist with customers being checked in more efficiently

State Preparation:

- Conducted live webinar training for all caseworkers who determine Medicaid eligibility
- DHHS is auto-enrolling those currently receiving Family Planning benefits who will qualify for full Medicaid coverage on December 1
- Waivers have recently been approved to streamline the recertification process
 - December – extending children under 19 cases (12 months)
 - January – extending parent/caretaker cases (12 months)

How Can Our Community Help?

- Encourage applicants to use EPASS to submit applications
- Share the message of understanding and patience
- Our staff will be working diligently to process applications and complete change in circumstances
- There could be delays in processing due to the amount of applications being submitted
- We further work in an eligibility system that has latency issues, has downtime and may have workarounds that cause longer processing times
- Response times to phone calls and emails may be longer than normal due to the amount being received
- We are working to communicate resources and tools with our community partners and welcome suggestions and ideas!

Medicaid Expansion is a crucial step in bridging a longstanding gap and together, we are building a stronger and healthier Alamance County.

Question: Does the customers know about Medicaid Expansion?

Answer: The State has mailed out letters to Medicaid customers who cases will be rolled over due to Expansion.

Question: With the new positions – did they unfund those positions?

Answer: We are currently working with OSHR to get those positions qualified and will work with County Manager on those positions. We have at least \$200k in lapse salary. We will have to go before BOCC with budget amendment once positions have been qualified by OSHR. We are currently down 13 IMC II positions.

Announcements:

None

Adjournment -

The next board meeting is 12:00 noon **Tuesday, December 12, 2023** 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 1:15pm.

Respectfully Submitted:

Carmen L. Morrow

Hendi Murr

Timothy Burt

John H. Kar

Danell Dan

Date Approved: 12-12-2023