

**DURHAM COUNTY BOARD OF SOCIAL SERVICES**  
**Minutes**  
**October 24, 2012**

The Durham County Board of Social Services held its regular meeting on Wednesday, October 24, 2012 9:00 a.m., at 220 E. Main Street in conference room 609 Right. The following DSS Board Members were in attendance: Chairman Newman Aguiar, Vice Chair Dr. Tara L. Fikes, board members Jane Volland and Helen J. Berry. Commissioner Michael Page excused absence.

The DCDSS Department was represented by the following: Director Michael Becketts, Cynthia Cason, Linda Hicks, Pinkie Davis-Boyd, Catherine Williamson-Hardy, Betty Hughes, Marie Johnson, Beverly McCoy, Toni Pedroza, Lynn Thomas, Bob Wallace, Rhonda Stevens, Darlene Whitfield, Jovetta Whitfield and Montrella Springfield.

Assistant County Attorney Danielle Briggs and Deputy County Attorney Cathy Moore attended the Board meeting.

Board Chair Newman Aguiar called the meeting to order. Chair Aguiar welcomed new board member Helen J. Berry. Brief introductions were rendered by attendees. Director Becketts forwarded a brief biography to DSS staff introducing Mrs. Berry.

**Agenda**

An amendment was incorporated to the agenda. Concerns and complaints were included under the Director's Report.

**Public Comments**

No public comments.

**Approval of Minutes**

Vice Chair Tara L. Fikes moved to approve the September minutes. Board member Jane Volland seconded. The minutes were approved as written.

## Director's Report - Michael Becketts

Director Becketts provided a written report with highlights and challenges over the past month.

- A Japanese film crew was in the Durham area and contacted DSS to film part of a documentary which will highlight human services in the community. The filmmakers indicated during their research Durham came up several times. The film will be shown in Japan and a copy will be forwarded to the Director.
- General meet and greets continued in the community that included the Sheriff, and other County department heads.
- A meeting was held with Judges Morey and Walker to discuss challenges in Child Support Court. The Department of Social Services, County attorneys and judges are reestablishing a workgroup to bring about process changes and document local court rules for child support. DSS and GAL met to review process issues and other areas that was causing or maintaining conflict between the entities.
- Assistant Directors and Program Managers have been attending workshops facilitated by Director Becketts around the Switch framework for change.
- DSS assisted the County Manager's Office, Durham Housing Authority, Neighborhood Improvement Services, Alliance Behavioral Healthcare, Bless Durham, Legal Aide and the Rescue Mission provided services to Lincoln Apartment tenants. Shauna Shaw provided technical support along with DSS staff from other DSS programs volunteered at the on-site facility. The eviction date for the tenants is October 31, 2012.
- Director Becketts met with leadership of Urban Ministries, NCCU Laws School's Community Clinic and other community based organizations.

### Complaints and Concerns

- A database is in place to manage the complaints and concerns. Complaints from consumers, board and state have to be in writing.
- Information is entered in the database and a number is assigned. The complaints are forwarded to the Director and Assistant Directors to review and provide a written response within 10 days depending on the severity. A letter is forwarded back to the person(s) with the conclusion. A report will be provided to the DSS Board at a later date. Chair Aguiar thanked the Director for creating a process to handle concerns.

## **DSS Board Report - Chair Newman Aguiar**

### **a. Lincoln Apartments**

Chair Newman Aguiar acknowledged DSS leadership role assisting with Lincoln Apartment residents.

### **b. DSS Board Advocacy Last Year**

1. Letter to the BOCC concerning the Legislative Agenda.
  2. Changes with Mental Health.
- The DSS Board will continue to advocate.

### **c. Child Care Funding**

BOCC agreed to move forward with child care funding. Two items on the legislative agenda:

1. Child Care
2. Funding for Pre K - Smart Start
3. Agenda items were well received. Sherry Bradsher, Director of the Division of Social Services and another Director were there for support.

### **d. Social Services Institute**

DSS Board members plan to attend the DSS Board training and meeting at the Social Services Institute in Raleigh.

## **Assistant Directors' Update**

### **a. CSE, Finance and Facility Support-Antonia Pedroza**

A written report has been submitted to the DSS Board.

### **b. Family Economic Independence-Rhonda Stevens**

#### **No Face to Face Update**

Applications are being received at the agency by fax, US Mail, drop offs and emails. There are processes in place to make sure applications are being received. Since October 1, 2012 approximately 467 applications have been received by drop offs and US mail.

A written report has been submitted to the DSS Board.

### **Customer Accountability and Program Development-Catherine Williamson-Hardy**

DSS staff attended a leadership workshop in the month of September that was opened to DSS agencies in surrounding counties. DSS management has been in training with Director Becketts around the book "Switch". Upcoming

training with the UNC School of Government will be announced.

A written report has been submitted to the DSS Board.

**c. Family Safety and Permanence-Jovetta Whitfield**

November is Adoption Awareness Month. A proclamation will be on the BOCC agenda.

A written report has been submitted to the DSS Board.

Chair Aguiar requested a vacancy report by division that will include date, program, recruitment status and vacancy date.

Assistant County Attorney Danielle Briggs informed the board a workshop has been scheduled on confidentially.

Chair Aguiar inquired about additional questions or concerns requiring the DSS Board attention.

Board member Jane Volland moved to adjourn to closed session. The Board will adjourn to Closed Session to consider the qualifications, competence, performance, character, fitness, conditions of appointment, or conditions of initial employment of an individual public officer or employee or prospective public officer or employee, pursuant to G.S. § 143-318.11(a)(6). Vice Chair Tara Fikes seconded and the board moved into closed session with a unanimous vote. The DSS Board returned from closed session and no action was taken. The meeting was adjourned by unanimous vote.

Respectfully submitted

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Chairperson

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Secretary to the Board

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date