

**DURHAM COUNTY BOARD OF SOCIAL SERVICES**  
**Minutes**  
**November 27, 2013**

The Durham County Board of Social Services held its regular meeting on Wednesday, November 27, 2013 9:00 a.m., at 414 East Main Street in the board room. The following DSS Board Members were in attendance: Chairman Dr. Tara L. Fikes, Vice Chair Newman Aguiar, Helen J. Berry and Jane Volland. Commissioner Wendy Jacobs was absent.

The DCDSS Department was represented by the following: Director Michael A. Becketts, Pinkie Davis-Boyd, Victor Isler, Bob Wallace, Nancy Santos and Diane Fening.

DSS Board Chair Tara Fikes called the meeting to order.

**Proposed Agenda**

Helen Berry stated that the unfinished business section on the agenda needs to be moved to the December meeting. Director Becketts said that he did not have a report on staff vacancies, but would send it out electronically later.

**Approval of Minutes**

We have the October minutes as well as the retreat minutes. Jane Volland moved that the minutes be approved. The minutes from the October board meeting were passed as issued. The retreat minutes approval will be postponed as some members want more time to look at them.

**Public Comments**

No public comments.

**DSS Board Report - Chair Dr. Tara L. Fikes**

Chair Fikes attended the Institute in Hickory for a day. She reported that board members across the state are talking about NC FAST and the problems. She is a regional representative on the Board of Social Services Board. Cluster meetings are supposed to be held and Chair Fikes would like to do that and have the meeting here in the first quarter of the year for board members in adjoining counties. She will know more after her meeting in January.

## **Director's Report - Michael Becketts**

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

He met with Michele Lynn and Fred Johnson from the Duke Center for Child and Family Policy. They are offering him a faculty appointment. He will have to do a couple of lectures per year and make a couple of appearances. It is unpaid. There is no conflict of interest. He will also be faculty at NCCU in the social work department and teach a class on social policy which is paid but after hours.

This is budget season and there will be lots of work happening over the next couple of months. There is going to be a summer school for third graders next year. We might be able to extend some of our 10 month school social worker to 12 months under the auspicious of this new initiative.

Child Support has a significant need for a second full time attorney. Have tried to solve problem without hiring someone but can't, so bringing in a temporary attorney who has worked with the county before for 6 months; then Lowell Siler will put into his budget for another attorney to support Child Support.

Helen Berry suggested that time is spent at the next work session on the staffing needs of DSS.

There are not enough people being compensated to be on call after hours for CPS. A position within the department has been moved to help cover after hours during peak times and we are recruiting now. Also giving a stipend to staff to carry the on-call pager and be present and on call in the event that something comes up.

One of our biggest challenges is coming up in Medicaid. Recertifications in Medicaid that would be due in January, February and March are being moved to later in year. For instance, clients whose recertification date is January are being extended to April. In April workers will have January and April's work to do and so on through the months. This is all related to the Affordable Care Act; changes that are affecting Medicaid at the federal level. Currently there are about 2,200 Family and Children Medicaid recertifications a month. People will lose access to benefits because workers just won't be able to process double that amount. We also have the problem of NC FAST-in past 10 days it's been down for 3.5 days. In mid-

February we are going to hard launch into NC FAST, and the legacy system will be unavailable. The application for Medicaid is getting longer and more complex, so will take longer to get through.

Monday, the Director will go to the Board of County Commissioners. He has already talked to people at Duke about there being a possibility that their emergency rooms might be filling up because of this situation and Duke is preparing with a voucher system. Other community partners are pitching in as well.

We need to reorganize some of our work and repurpose positions and processing assistants. We need 25 additional people to help with this situation. A lot of the work will be processing paper not client interaction. DHHS is putting out a document that details what counties need to do. All counties will be to hire the same pool of people. We need 100 people to process recerts for April through July. We have 60. Moving people around inside the agency plus hiring outside. Also there are many applications for the Affordable Care Act that can ask for a full Medicaid review. There are many applications that are currently "floating" at the federal level, which we cannot process because the mechanism that transfers information from the state level to the federal level has yet to be done. We do know about MAGI applications that are just waiting for the state to put that piece into NC FAST. People that we hire will have to be trained on policy. This will take 6-8 weeks.

Mr. Becketts would like for board members to bring this to attention to Board of Social Services Boards. The Director is considering a town hall meeting to talk about this but will do it in January.

Chairman Fikes asked if the BOCC could have a work session with the DSS board on this matter. Mr. Becketts will check into that today.

## **Assistant Directors' Update**

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

A written report has been submitted to the DSS Board.

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

A written report has been submitted to the DSS Board.

They are continuing work on the Data management system that is replacing AS400. December 9 is the deployment date for new computer system for Child Protective Services which will enable more work to be done from the field.

They are still making a diligent effort to find foster homes.

All in-home services positions are filled. They have met their numbers for Share Your Thanksgiving and Share Your Christmas. Reignited One Church One Child initiative. Vice Chair Newman suggested that we get participating churches media coverage to encourage other churches to participate.

Participating in the Parkwood community Christmas parade December 7. Staff are going to march in the parade promoting being a foster parent.

LIEAP starts Monday at the judicial annex.

**c. Customer Accountability and Program Development-Catherine Williamson-Hardy**

A written report has been submitted to the DSS Board.

Director Becketts spoke about the call centers in Catherine's absence. We are setting up multiple call centers to help alleviate the calls to the main 8000 number. 8424 is the hot line to report abuse and neglect of children and vulnerable adults after hours. When the licenses come, the Family Economic Independence division will have its own call center to answer questions for Food and Nutrition Services, Medicaid and Child Care.

**Unfinished Business**

Helen Berry asked about an acronym glossary. We will put that on action item list.

Action items are the same as last month. A few items that came out of the retreat will be added.

The directors' meeting is on the same day as the work session, so the work session was changed to Thursday, December 12 at 2 pm. The alternate time will be Wednesday, December 11 at 2 pm.

The meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted

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Chairperson

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Date

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Secretary to the Board

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Date