

DURHAM COUNTY BOARD OF SOCIAL SERVICES
Minutes
August 28, 2013

The Durham County Board of Social Services held its regular meeting on Wednesday, August 28, 2013 9:00 a.m., at 220 East Main Street in conference room 609 Right. The following DSS Board Members were in attendance: Chairman Dr. Tara L. Fikes, Vice Chair Newman Aguiar, Helen J. Berry, Jane Volland and Commissioner Wendy Jacobs.

The DCDSS Department was represented by the following: Director Michael A. Becketts, Cynthia Cason, Pinkie Davis-Boyd, Linda Hicks, Betty Hughes, Victor Isler, Toni Pedroza, Robyn Riley, Rhonda Stevens, Bob Wallace, Catherine Williamson-Hardy, Darlene Whitfield, Jovetta Whitfield, and Montrella Springfield.

Deputy County Attorney Carol Hammett attended the Board meeting.

DSS Board Chair Dr. Tara L. Fikes called the meeting to order.

Proposed Agenda

The proposed agenda was revised. Work First Appeals Committee, EDCI and Family Economic Independence Report will follow the Director's Report. The DSS Board Operating Procedures will be placed on the Work Session Agenda.

Approval of Minutes

Chair Dr. Tara L. Fikes informed board members the minutes from July 24, 2013 regular meeting and August 15, 2013 work session required approval.

Vice Chair Aguiar offered a motion for approval of the minutes from July 24, 2013 regular meeting. Board member Jane Volland seconded. The minutes for the July 24, 2013 regular meeting were approved. The minutes from the August 15, 2013 work session were approved with a motion from Vice Chair Aguiar and seconded by Board member Helen J. Berry.

Public Comments

No public comments.

DSS Board Report - Chair Dr. Tara L. Fikes

DSS Board did not have a Report for August.

Director's Report - Michael Becketts

Director Becketts provided a written report with highlights and challenges over the past month along with the DSS Action Items and DSS Vacancies Reports.

NC FAST continues to be a challenge with a backlog. All backlog cases should be completed by September 7, 2013. The next phase of NC FAST is scheduled for September 9, 2013.

October 2, 2013 is the start date for the move to the Human Services Complex. Programs are scheduled to move on designated days, a press release is scheduled along with posters in the facilities.

Currently, DSS has twenty-eight vacancies. Positions are being reclassified as listed on the monthly report. The County is in the process of a compensation study which will review the salaries of all county positions. Additional information will be available at a later date.

The DSS Social Workers placed at Durham Public Schools are positive about the changes and will receive enhanced support from management. DSS has twelve social workers positioned in schools throughout Durham County. DSS staff will present information to the Principals of Durham Public Schools on September 12, 2013.

Child Support Enforcement will be changing to a more service oriented mode. The Director will provide additional information when received.

Durham was one the counties selected by the U. S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) to visit concerning issues with NC FAST. Two staff contacted the Federal Government about client's benefits. Overall, representatives were pleased with Durham.

Crisis Intervention Program (CIP), provides financial assistance to families experiencing a heating and cooling crisis. The State has enforced stricter rules that define a crisis as harmful to a household member's health. Durham DSS is required to deny benefits to clients who do not meet the criteria. Families have to provide medical documents from physicians. This issue will be included in the Director's September newspaper article. The DSS Board will further discuss advocating for emergency funding for Durham citizens.

Assistant Directors' Update

a. Family Economic Independence-Rhonda Stevens

A written report has been submitted to the DSS Board.

In past years DSS Board members have engaged on the Work First Appeals Committee.

Work First Appeals Committee DSS Board Members:

60 months

Primary contact - Vice Chair Newman Aguiar

Secondary contact - Board Member Helen J. Berry

2 Years

Primary contact - Board Member Jane Volland

Secondary contact - Commissioner Wendy Jacobs

Ms. Stevens will be responsible for providing the DSS Board with information.

EDCI

The DSS Board recommended adding priority number five to the wait list. A motion was made by Commissioner Wendy Jacobs and seconded by Vice Chair Newman Aguiar to include children of working families age 0 - 4 living in the East Durham Children's Initiative Zone as number five on the priority list. The motion was approved by the Board.

CSE, Finance and Facility Support-Antonia Pedroza

A written report has been submitted to the DSS Board.

DSS expended 6% of the budget and drew down .02% of the projected revenue as of July 31, 2013. Personnel costs were at 5% of the projected budget expense that resulted in \$730,902 in lapsed salaries.

A final report from the State outlining outcomes for July have not been received. Child Support staff held seven spots on the top collections.

b. Customer Accountability and Program Development-Catherine Williamson-Hardy

A written report has been submitted to the DSS Board.

Telephone calls have increased in the call center which resulted in dropped calls. Additional information is being provided to clients. The DSS Board commends staff for managing the impact and the support clients are receiving during the transition.

c. Family Safety and Permanence-Jovetta Whitfield

A written report has been submitted to the DSS Board.

Four of seven vacancies have been filled in Child Protective Services.

There was a 93% attendance rate in schools and 97.3% of students with truancy graduated.

DSS exceeded Federal goals established that relates to monthly foster care home visits for the first quarter.

Unfinished Business

Board Action Items were updated.

Staff vacancies list was distributed and reviewed.

DSS Board Policies and Procedures will be discussed at the September work session.

New Business

The proposed Legislative Drug Testing for DSS Clients. The Governor vetoed.

DSS Move/Parking for Board Members - DSS has been granted 393 parking spaces. Parking arrangements will be forwarded to the Board.

Chair Tara L. Fikes inquired about additional concerns or questions requiring the DSS Board attention. Vice Chair Newman Aguiar offered a motion to move 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).) and to consult with the County Attorney's Office regarding the matter of Gerri Robinson vs. County of Durham et. al pursuant to NCGS 143-318.11(a)(3)

The motion was seconded by Board Member Helen J. Berry. With a unanimous vote the meeting moved to closed session at 11:07 am.

The meeting was re-opened with no action taken. The meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted

Chairperson

Date

Secretary to the Board

Date