

**New Hanover County
Board of Social Services
Meeting Minutes
Multi-Purpose Room A
August 20, 2013
10:00a.m. – 11:00 a.m.**

The New Hanover County Board of Social Services met in open session on Tuesday, August 20, 2013 at 10:00 in Multi Purpose Room A of the New Hanover County Department of Social Services.

ATTENDING: Evelyn Bryant, Chairperson; Diana Woolley, Vice Chairperson, Patrick Riley, Jonathan Barfield Jr. and Frankie Roberts

ALSO ATTENDING: LaVaughn Nesmith, Secretary to the Board; Stephanie Monteath, Assistant to the Director

The Chairperson called the meeting to order at 10:02 a.m. Ms. Bryant asked for a motion to approve the agenda. Ms. Woolley moved for approval of the agenda. The motion was seconded by Mr. Roberts and passed unanimously.

Mr. Roberts led the invocation. Mr. Riley led the pledge of allegiance.

A gift was given to Patrick Riley to thank him for serving as Chairman to the Board.

CONSENT AGENDA

Ms. Bryant asked for a motion to approve the consent agenda. Commissioner Barfield moved to approve the consent agenda. The motion was seconded by Mr. Roberts and passed unanimously.

INFORMATION AGENDA

The Board recognized new staff and service award recipients.

Ms. Woolley asked why so many children in foster care left custody of DSS. Ms. Marino noted the majority of those children were placed with relatives, reunited with their families or aged out of services.

Ms. McNamee shared Day Care Subsidy has had to start up a waiting list again. Karen Graham explained that court mandated day care subsidy is being paid through miscellaneous foster care funds if the child is not in custody.

Ms. Woolley noted Good Friends funds seem a little over spent and suggested DSS advocate for more money from Good Friends at their annual luncheon as General Assistance funds are not available.

Ms. Woolley asked for clarification in the personnel line item in budget expenditures. Ms. Graham responded that one pay period in July is credited to last fiscal year's budget.

Chairperson Bryant asked when the Duke Energy Progress Merger funds will be available. Mr. Nesmith noted the Commissioners approved receiving the funds but the date it will arrive is not known. The funds will come in a lump sum to be spent over three years. Ms. Woolley asked if when the funds arrive, they could be put in an interest bearing account and if the interest be used for programs to offset GA. Avril Pinder said yes, the interest could be put back into that account for the initial purpose of the funds.

Director Nesmith, Wanda Marino, Christine McNamee, Patricia Robinson and Vice Chairperson Woolley will be traveling to Raleigh to look into the possibility of applying for a community service block grant on September 11, 2013.

No action was taken by the Board.

STRATEGIC ACTION AGENDA

Family Support Program Update

Angelina Bernard introduced the Family Support Program and its coordinator Larry Mayes. Mr. Mayes outlined barriers and challenges families face with child support such as substance abuse, visitation, lack of employment and family violence issues. Mr. Mayes discussed community partners, the importance of communication and strategies he is using to remove the previous mentioned barriers. Ms. McNamee noted as the program got started late, the agency will be asking by September to continue the program for another year. The program has had a really strong start and has two months of data supporting that. Ms. Bryant asked how long people are usually involved in the program. Mr. Mayes responded the time it takes will depend on how long it takes for people to overcome individual hurdles and take the lead in the process.

Affordable Care Act Update

Christine McNamee outlined the Affordable Care Act a.k.a. "Obama Care", an act to ensure that more people have access to health insurance while creating a marketplace to choose a health care provider and serve as an interface to Medicaid. North Carolina legislature chose not to expand Medicaid or provide a state brokerage system.

The New P7 Ecosystem is a streamlined application for Medicaid and determines what a person may be eligible for the Affordable Care Act. The system will give access to more Federal verifications (tax information) electronically. Beginning October 1, 2013 – the streamlined application will always be completed first when an applicant is seeking Medical Assistance. Applicants not eligible for Medicaid or Health Choice may still be eligible for Federal Federated Marketplace assistance. Patrick Riley asked if this will add an administrative and cost burden on New Hanover County DSS that will not be offset by the Federal government. Ms. McNamee answered that there will be increased administrative responsibilities due to

the anticipated additional persons applying for benefits and the State's new "No Wrong Door" policy. The State believes NHCDSS will see a 10%-20% increase in people eligible for benefits but a much higher percentage than that are expected to apply. There is also concern that the No Wrong Door policy may result in Leland residents coming into Wilmington to apply for services rather than driving the additional distance into Bolivia.

Social Services Institute Attendance

Evelyn Bryant, Diana Woolley and Frankie Roberts will attend the Institute in Hickory in October. Patrick Riley will confirm his attendance after he checks his calendar. Commissioner Barfield has a prior engagement and will not attend.

Next Meeting Objectives

Emergency Assistance Walk-In Requests Update


Board Comments

Ms. Woolley asked for a quick update of Emergency Assistance walk-in requests. Gwen Stahl noted that from July 1 through August 16th, 2013, 1,402 people have asked for emergency assistance. The break-down is as follows: weekly average is 200 people; daily average is 41 which break down to 7 people per day per social worker. There has been no slowing down of people requesting emergency assisting despite GA being eliminated. Most people are coming in for electricity, rent, water, transportation, housing and food. Ms. Bryant asked if there will be a cap with the Duke Energy Progress Merger money as she noticed in her last energy statement if service is turned off, a new deposit will have to be paid. Ms. Marino explained that the cap will be \$300.00 per household and households must meet 200% of the Federal poverty guidelines. Ms. Woolley discussed the last Child Fatality Prevention Team meeting she attended as the Board's representative, wherein 8 child fatalities over a six month period and issues with the Medical Examiner were discussed.


Additional Items

As there was no additional information as provided in G.S. 143-318.11 to consider information that is confidential pursuant to G.S. 108A-80 and/or G.S. 154A-98, the Board by consensus adjourned at 12:05PM.

Respectfully submitted,



La Vaughn Nesmith,
Secretary to the Board



Evelyn Bryant,
Chairperson

**New Hanover County
Board of Social Services
Meeting Minutes
Multi-Purpose Room A
August 27, 2013
10:00a.m. – 11:00 a.m.**

The New Hanover County Board of Social Services met in open session on Tuesday, August 27, 2013 at 10:00 in Multi Purpose Room A of the New Hanover County Department of Social Services.

ATTENDING: Evelyn Bryant, Chairperson; Diana Woolley, Vice Chairperson, Patrick Riley, Jonathan Barfield Jr. and Frankie Roberts

ALSO ATTENDING: LaVaughn Nesmith, Secretary to the Board; Stephanie Monteath, Assistant to the Director

The Chairperson called the meeting to order at 10:08a.m.

Health and Human Services Study Group Recommendations

County Manager Chris Coudriet opened with remarks about his recommendation to create a consolidated Health and Human Service organization. Although the Study Group recommended separate Boards of Health and Social Services while combining selected services and resource through Memorandums of Understanding, there were statutes that prevent the County from implementing this recommendation. Instead, the County Manager is recommending that the County Commissioners approve a consolidated Health and Human Services Board formally created in 36 months with both Health and DSS reporting to the County. The first step of the process would be to move Finance and Human Resource functions under County Finance and Human Resources Departments. In a 3 to 12 month timetable, a consolidation of support services functions and cross-appointments to both the Board of Health and Social Services Board will occur. Within 12 -36 months, the group will be looking at how to deliver the services and conducting a risk assessment to identify issues or concerns with consolidation. During that time a governing agency (Board) will be developed. Mr. Coudriet is recommending a cross pollinated Board (current Health Board 11 members, current DSS Board 5 members and 1 consumer of services) to oversee policy; and a Manager to oversee operational issues for the combined entity (DSS, Health Department and Senior Resource Center). The projection for consolidation is about three years. Nothing is official until the Board of Commissioners accepts the policy of consolidation at the October 8, 2013 meeting. The final study report will be made available to the Board for review.

Ms. Bryant asked Mr. Coudriet to share some of the positive and negative experiences into which other Counties that are consolidating have encountered. Beth Schraeder responded that folks that rushed into it have run into problems in trying to hurriedly execute consolidation. The folks that have taken their time (such as Buncombe County) have had a really positive experience. Mr. Coudriet noted the group felt both agencies have really dedicated, talented folks. There is a perception

that the agencies don't have an understanding of what non-profit safety nets are providing for the community. The opinion is that we have the ~~talent, the~~ right people, in place to accomplish a holistic service model. Ms. Schraeder explained that part of the process is figuring out how ~~de~~ to fit the right outcome objectives; increasing the level of self sufficiency and seeing more stable families.

Patrick Riley pondered whether a really large Board could be effective. Mr. Coudriet shared that the Board of Trustees of both New Hanover Regional Hospital and Cape Fear Community College are of similar size and have been effective and noted the services will still be provided, but how they are delivered may be different. While the agencies may not be housed together, the services they provide may be (Family and Children's services, Senior Adult services etc.). Mr. Riley asked if the Directors of the agencies will remain in place. Mr. Coudriet said there will still have to be someone qualified in those areas but there will also be a manager to oversee those people. In three years, Mr. Coudriet will recommend that all staff move under the County Personnel Policy, which is similar to the State Personnel Act in terms of process, without a final appeal going to an Administrative Law Judge, but instead to the County Manager.

Ms. Woolley noted this process will be a lot of administrative work and asked if at the end of three years, the consolidation doesn't go through, if there is a plan B. Mr. Coudriet explained there is not but feels this is the healthiest path for the citizens and the finances of the County adding the decision still hinges on acceptance by the County Commissioners. New Hanover County will be watching, following and modeling what Buncombe County is doing.

Patrick Riley shared his concerns that millions of Federal dollars could potentially be lost in drawdowns. Chris Coudriet responded the focus will be on service delivery not specific agencies.

There was clarification that one person will oversee the consolidated agency and that Directors Nesmith and Rice will report to that person. Ms. Bryant added she heard horror stories of Directors being appointed that really didn't have any understanding of Social Services and Health functions. She reminded everyone that it is important to have an open mind of what the County is trying to accomplish. Mr. Coudriet said he doesn't see an outcome where the County loses any employees, but responsibilities and job descriptions may be different.

Commissioner Barfield noted his vision many years ago is that DSS and Health had a lot of employees in whom the County didn't have any say so over as they fell under State Personnel Act. He complimented Mr. Coudriet on his process and not just jumping right in; but commented at the end of the day, it's all about serving the community and doing more with less. Ms. Woolley and Commissioner Barfield hope that New Hanover County will be a model. Mr. Coudriet ended with if we can't make it better, we don't want to be a part of it and thanked the Board for their time.

Additional Items

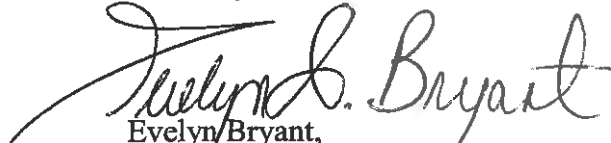
As there was no additional information as provided in G.S. 143-318.11 to consider information that is confidential pursuant to G.S. 108A-80 and/or G.S. 154A-98, the Board by consensus adjourned at 11:13AM.

Page 3 of 3

Respectfully submitted,



La Vaughn Nesmith,
Secretary to the Board



Evelyn Bryant,
Chairperson