

**New Hanover County
Board of Social Services
Meeting Minutes
Multi Purpose Room A
9:00a.m. – 10:00 a.m.**

The New Hanover County Board of Social Services met in open session on Tuesday, August 4, 2009 at 9:00 a.m. in Multi Purpose Room A of the New Hanover County Department of Social Services.

ATTENDING: John Craig, Chairman; Minerva Glidden, Vice-Chairman; Evelyn Bryant and Patrick Riley

ALSO ATTENDING: LaVaughn Nesmith, Secretary to the Board; Stephanie Monteath, Administrative Support Specialist

The Chairman called the meeting to order at 9:10 a.m. Ms. Glidden moved for approval of the agenda. The motion was passed by a unanimous aye from the Board.

Ms. Bryant led the invocation. Mr. Riley led the pledge of allegiance.

CONSENT AGENDA

Ms. Glidden moved for approval of the consent agenda. The motion was passed unanimously.

INFORMATION AGENDA

Personnel

Stephanie Monteath recognized Kevona Dixon as the new Temporary Clerical Assistant and Kristy Williams as the new Family and Children's Medicaid Caseworker.

Sheila James was promoted from Adult Medicaid Caseworker Zone 3 to Adult Medicaid Supervisor.

Service Awards

Glenda Jones, Joette McGlohon and Theresa Willetts were recognized for 15 years of service to New Hanover County. Kim Evans was recognized for 20 years of service to New Hanover County.

SSDI

Ms. Glidden asked about the Progress Energy number. Mr. Nesmith said there was no money to expend.

County Budget Expenditures

Christine McNamee gave a brief summary of the end of the year budget.

Director's Executive Report

Ms. Glidden asked for an explanation as to why NHCDSS is not meeting state standards in staffing for Social Work. Mr. Nesmith said we hope to be able to replace some of the staff lost through retirement and freezing during FY2011 and shared what normal caseload to worker ratio standards. Mr. Nesmith said the County would revisit filling positions next fiscal year. Ms. Glidden noted it will affect morale if the case loads remain so high. Mr. Nesmith reviewed strategies DSS is employing to help with morale such as sending supervisors to the County's retention classes and temporarily reclassifying a lead worker to a supervisor to assist while a current supervisor is out on sick leave. Mr. Craig asked if the County Manager is aware of these standards. Mr. Nesmith assured Mr. Craig he communicates all information and ratios with County Manager Shell. Ms. Glidden noted DSS is disproportionately impacted by this economic downturn as citizens in the county have taken such a hit.

STRATEGIC ACTION AGENDA

Child Care Local Policy and Waiting List

Due to the receipt of ARRA stimulus money to be used for job finding efforts, the local policy for child care subsidy had to be changed. Ms. Heslin reviewed the policy and changes with the board members. Mr. Lane explained if the state does not approve the budget with funding for child care subsidy a waiting list may be re-employed. Mr. Patrick asked if there was an option to not extend subsidy for parents seeking employment for six months. Ms. Heslin replied no, the standards are set by the Federal Government and are attached to the stimulus money. Ms. Glidden moved to approve the policy. The policy was approved unanimously.

Leading By Results

Christine McNamee gave a brief history of Leading By Results (LBR). She explained that monitoring and measuring indicators are more important now than ever to ensure the limited resources DSS has are being spent effectively. She further explained that LBR assists DSS to tell their story and justify the need for resources.

Overall, FY 08/09 was a successful year according to LBR with 75% of all measurable indicators showing progress. Ms. McNamee reviewed some of the highlights including keeping Work First participants in the work force, providing Food and Nutrition Services to eligible families and collecting child support.

She also discussed some of the challenges the Department had in meeting goals including annual percentage of families or disinterested public agents appointed as guardians, moving children out of foster care into permanency timely and employee retention.

Mr. Nesmith and Ms. Heslin talked about efforts to collect money from fraud through Program Integrity and our efforts working with the District Attorney's office. Ms. Heslin said the Adult Medicaid program experiences the most fraud.

Ms. McNamee reviewed the 09/10 recommendations:

DSS staff would like to add indicators measuring prevention services for aged and disabled, expansion of LINKS services and increased Program Integrity Collections.

DSS staff recommends the deletion of indicators on Special Assistance; prevention services for families at-risk the LINKS annual survey and collaboration efforts.

DSS would like to revise benchmarks and targets that DSS has already surpassed, the definition of success with adolescent foster children and the definition of customer service as we have a better way of measuring this. Ms. Glidden requested we revisit the satisfaction survey within a year.

Ms. Bryant moved to accept the changes. The Board passed the changes unanimously.

Food and Nutrition Employment Training Program

Walker Biggs from the Employment Security Commission explained the challenges of having a voluntary training program for Food and Nutrition Services (FNS) recipients. Two First Stop workers from ESC will co-locate to DSS to make this program more accessible. The First Stop program will assist with resume preparation, skills training and career matching. Ms. Glidden noted having ESC staff here in the agency removes many barriers such as having no transportation or gas to get across town.

Next Meeting Objectives

Budget Update

Board Self Evaluation

The Board completed self evaluations.

Additional Items

Mr. Craig called for an open discussion on strategies the department was using to assist in staff retention and decrease burn out. Ms. Marino suggested that Board Members visit and talk to employees. Staff discussed the importance of improved communication; listening to concerns and suggestions for change and allowing co-workers to vent about their frustrations. Mr. Lane noted the importance of recognition and the Board was made aware of the DSS recognition program. Management is investigating ways to improve work processes to address staff shortages by soliciting ideas from staff and implementing technology. Ms. Heslin talked about the importance of celebrating successes and providing food and snacks. Mr. Nesmith noted that

the Assistant Directors and Chiefs are doing additional supervisory work due to a shortage of supervisors. Volunteers are being recruiting to assist as greeters and records scanners. Ms. Glidden asked about internal recognition and perks and suggested additional publicity for award winners. Ms. Bryant asked that supervisors understand that employees may have issues other than job related things for which they may need support. Ms. Bryant asked that the Board get notification of in-house celebrations so they may be able to attend. Ms. Glidden stated that she would be willing to provide interpreting services to the agency. She would like a copy of the Employee of the Month/Cultivating Courtesy nominees' poster to be included in the Board book.

Annual Board Training

Mr. Caster, Ms. Glidden and Mr. Craig will go to the Board Training scheduled in Kinston in September.

As there were no other additional items to discuss as provided in G.S. 154A-98 to consider information that is confidential pursuant to G.S. 108A-80 and or G.S. 154A-98, the board by consensus adjourned at 10:32 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

LaVaughn Nesmith,
Secretary to the Board

John E. Craig,
Chairman

Date approved: _____

LN: scm

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