

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

The New Hanover County Board of Social Services met in open session on Tuesday, January 6, 2009 at 9:00 in Multipurpose Room A of the New Hanover County Department of Social Services.

ATTENDING: John E. Craig, Chairman; Bill Caster, Vice Chairman; Patrick Riley

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

Mr. Craig called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

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

Ms. Caster moved for approval of the agenda. The motion was seconded by Mr. Riley and passed unanimously.

CONSENT AGENDA

Mr. Caster moved to approve the consent agenda. The motion was seconded by Mr. Riley and passed unanimously.

INFORMATION AGENDA

New Hires

Heather Andrews, Mary Tucker and Betty Cepeda-Jones were not available for introduction.

Promotions

Wilma Daniels was promoted from Adult Services Social Worker Zone 1 to Community Services Supervisor Social Worker Zone 2.

Service Awards

Angelina Bernard has completed 5 years of service with New Hanover County. Sheila James and Rebecca Spaven have completed 15 years of service with New Hanover County. Jean Wall completed 25 years of service with New Hanover County.

SSDI

Significant Service Delivery Indicator numbers were reviewed. Wanda Marino and Sam Lane explained the Social Work and Economic Services units are busier than ever before.

Mr. Lane shared the Food and Nutrition unit is taking 200 more applications per month than the previous year. Ms. Marino said there is a 23% increase in Work First applications.

County Budget Expenditures

Chris McNamee explained there are no surprises this month. The agency continues to have problems in the same areas and is hoping for some State re-allocations.

Director's Report

Mr. Nesmith commented on Day Care funds the agency is hoping to receive. Mr. Nesmith will be going to Raleigh on Thursday to advocate for Day Care relief and a new procedure to address the pay back in fraud cases.

STRATEGIC ACTION AGENDA

Adult Services

Ms. Barkley reviewed the goal of Adult Services; to ensure aged and disabled adults live in safe, healthy, stable and most appropriate environments. Ms. Barkley discussed the indicator of annual percent of aged and disabled adults who are repeat victims of confirmed mistreatment. Currently, there has been improvement with this indicator. A second indicator; the percentage of aged and disabled adults living in licensed facilities who have been abused, neglected or exploited, has seen success as well.

The challenge the agency is noting is the increasing population of aged and disabled residents in New Hanover County. There has been a 48.8% increase in county population over 65 years of age between 1990 and 2007. There are many aging baby boomers and fewer people going into Gerontology and related fields.

Another challenge arises from mental health reform. The deinstitutionalization of the mentally ill has left a large unsupported population. There are few community resources and often, people are placed in assisted living facilities which are ill-equipped to deal with mental illness issues.

A third challenge noted is limited guardianship options. There are a growing number of adults who are incompetent and unable to care for themselves including foster care children about to "age out" (become legal adults) with considerable mental health issues. The agency is currently serving as guardian for 42 persons with 9 additional pending cases, compared to 32 cases total two years ago. There has been considerable difficulty securing family members or other disinterested public agents to serve as guardians.

The agency has employed the following strategies to combat these challenges:

- Secured 2 additional adult service position beginning FY 07/08
- Two positions were transferred from Children's Services to Adult Services in July 2008
- DSS has become more in line with state recommendations of 25 cases per social worker, compared to the average of 52 cases per social worker, prior to additional staff

- DSS now has 2 Adult Home Specialists to monitor 20 Family and Adult Care homes, representing 988 beds

The following strategies have been employed to reduce recidivism issues:

- DSS is working to be proactive instead of reactive
- There is enhanced ability to reduce repeat maltreatment due to more manageable caseloads through restructuring staff, giving social workers more time to assess risk and frontload services
- Adult Home Specialists are able to provide more technical assistance and education to facilities

Ms. Barkley ended by sharing information about the Elder Abuse Prevention Network. There were no additional questions.

Next Meeting Objectives

Budget Retreat

Board Self Evaluation

The Board completed self evaluations.

Additional Item

The Board entered closed session at 9:45 a.m. and returned to open session at 10:05 a.m.

It was decided that Stephanie Monteath will type up the performance evaluation for Director Nesmith which the board wrote together and prepare it for February 2009. Director Nesmith's work plan will remain the same.

As there were no 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 10:0 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

LaVaughn Nesmith,
Secretary to the Board

John E. Craig,
Chairman

Date approved: _____

LN: scm

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