

**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, January 5, 2010 at 9:00 in Multi Purpose Room A of the New Hanover County Department of Social Services.

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

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

The Chairman called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. Ms. Glidden moved for approval of the agenda. The motion was seconded by Mr. Caster and passed unanimously.

Mr. Caster 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 new staff, Jamie Cavanaugh, Family and Children's Medicaid Caseworker; Mary Cantu, Temporary Economic Services Caseworker; Katharine George, Administrative Support Assistant; and Christopher Dwy, CPS Social Worker.

Promotions

Agency promotions were recognized. Julie Steinbeck was promoted to Children Service's Chief, Lori Harvey was promoted to Family and Children's Medicaid Supervisor and Susie Stanislaw was promoted to Child Protective Services Social Worker.

Service Awards

Kari Sanders celebrates her 5 year service anniversary, Paula Marn celebrates her 15 year service anniversary, and Jeannie Henderson and Miranda Pearce celebrate their 20 year service anniversary.

SSDI

Mr. Caster asked for clarification on several acronyms. There were no other questions or comments.

County Budget Expenditures

Mr. Caster asked if the county had received additional money for Day Care Subsidy. The latest budget amendment was the second installment of ARRA funding and did not increase the anticipated allocation for child care. Child care subsidy expenditures are being carefully monitored and children currently receiving subsidy may need to be terminated from service if spending levels do not decrease adequately due to attrition. Children will have to be cut from the subsidy list in “reverse priority” based on the agency’s current child care waiting list and termination policy.

Chris McNamee explained the pilot wherein Day Care Subsidy would be applied to an EBT (electronic benefit transfer) card that would also serve to track day care attendance. We need to learn how to continue to monitor allocations with this system. New Hanover County has been selected as one of the five pilot counties.

Director’s Executive Report

Mr. Nesmith updated the Board on the lobby renovations. Chris Coudriet explained that some of the cost for renovations could be absorbed by Property Management, such as sprinklers. The new bids should be in to the project manager Max Maxwell by December 6, 2010. The front doors will need to be replaced as there is more traffic using the doors than the contractor anticipated.

Ms. Glidden asked what system is now in place since the flex time system is no longer. Mr. Nesmith talked about a study done by other counties noting the flex time system was not effective. He hopes a new system will be in place by March to which will decrease wait time and implement best practice. With the growth seen by the agency coupled with the loss of staff, flex time was no longer functioning well.

STRATEGIC ACTION AGENDA

Adult Services Update

DSS is meeting their Leading By Results goal for aged and disabled adults living in safe and least restrictive settings. The area of weakness for this unit is trying to get families and disinterested public agents to serve as guardians for the aged and disabled population. As a result, DSS continues to serve as guardian for a large group of people. Challenges that need to be addressed include a 48.8% increase in New Hanover County’s population of people over age 65 between 1990 and 2007 and a decrease in resources due to the economic crisis. Mental Health reform has also proven to be a challenge due to the deinstitutionalization of the mentally ill with few or no community resources and very little economic assistance. Lastly, an increasing number of children in Foster Care who are “aging out” (turning 18) are also served by the Adult Services unit.

Ms. Sprenger talked about monitoring nursing homes and facilities. Currently most of the facilities are earning very high star ratings. An emphasis has been placed on preventing repeat maltreatment which was a problem a few years ago when nursing homes were in the news every week. Ms. Sprenger explained SA In-Home funds. These funds assist people to live in their own home with supports. These funds are a real cost saving strategy and enables folks to live in the “least restrictive environment”. Ms. Sprenger handed out some brochures about guardianship. DSS is promoting shared

guardianship and asking the clerk of court to appoint other disinterested public agencies such as the Health Department, Mental Health and the Department of Aging in an effort to take some of the burden off of DSS. No other parties have been appointed guardian as of yet, but great strides have been made. DSS has offered training for other agencies to help prepare them for successful transition into the role of guardian. Ms. McNamee noted that while all the services are mandated for Adult Services, it is the least funded program in the agency. Ms. Glidden asked if the PACE program was helping with anything. Ms. Sprenger and Ms. Smiley said that while it was going very well and helped to keep people out of facilities and nursing homes, it doesn't lift a huge burden off of DSS and only people receiving full Medicaid can enroll in the program. Ms. Bryant asked about Medicaid At-Risk. Ms. Marino said it is money available for an adult who is Medicaid eligible and is at risk of being neglected or abused. The money is used to set up services such as health supports. Unfortunately, most people needing these services do not meet the income requirements needed to receive Medicaid.

Additional Items

Wanda Marino thanked Ms. Bryant for attending the Foster Care skating party.

Sam Lane took a minute to thank Mr. Nesmith for the opportunity to serve the Economic Service Division in the agency and say farewell to the Board as he will be retiring this month. Mr. Nesmith thanked Sam Lane, Mary John Brantley and Kathi Heslin for all their hard work as well.

Next Meeting Objectives

Communication and Outreach Efforts
Renovation Update
Organizational Flow Chart
Annual Report

Board Self Evaluation

The Board completed self evaluations.

As there were no further 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 10:14 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

LaVaughn Nesmith,
Secretary to the Board

John E. Craig,
Chairman

Date approved: _____

LN: scm