

**New Hanover County
Board of Social Services
Meeting Minutes
Multi Purpose Room A
May 4, 2010
9:00a.m. – 10:00 a.m.**

The New Hanover County Board of Social Services met in open session on Tuesday, May 4, 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

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

The Chairman called the meeting to order at 9:04 a.m. Ms. Glidden moved for approval of the agenda. The motion was seconded by Mr. Caster and passed unanimously.

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

CONSENT AGENDA

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

INFORMATION AGENDA

Personnel

Jocelyn Wilson and Jean Wall were re-hired as temporary Economic Service Case Workers Zone 2.

Promotions

Alice Moore was promoted to Social Work Supervisor.

Service Awards

Cheryl Crossman celebrates 5 years of service with New Hanover County.

SSDI

March 2010 was a record for Child Protective Service; over 30 children were taken into custody by DSS.

County Budget Expenditures

Ms. McNamee noted 75% of the year has passed and 65% of the budget has been spent so DSS is looking pretty good. Revenues have increased slightly with ARRA and Department of Defense dollars to help administer Food and Nutrition services.

Director's Executive Report

There were no comments on the Director's report. Mr. Caster will be attending the Foster Care picnic.

STRATEGIC ACTION AGENDA

Multiple Response System (MRS) Update

Wanda Marino introduced the Multiple Response System (MRS). Kari Sanders explained that MRS is an approach to deal with families that have been reported for neglect or abuse. MRS helps social workers to look at the whole picture when conducting family assessments. Ms. Sanders explained that more serious cases of neglect, sexual or physical abuse would be referred to a "forensic track" meaning law enforcement would be involved. If a family is in an assessment for domestic violence and it comes to light that a child has been physically abused during the interview, the case would be switched from MRS to forensic. Law enforcement will also become involved if a social worker must investigate a potentially dangerous situation. Ms. Sanders noted that the recidivism rate is high but made up by a small percentage of families involved with DSS. MRS works to provide services to families in the home in an effort to prevent the need for placing the child in foster care.

Ms. Sanders shared that two major factors contributing to abuse and neglect of children are drug abuse and mental health issues. Ms. Marino noted she is receiving more positive drugs screens from families for use of heroin and PCP. Ms. Sanders and Ms. Marino both noted that the removal of the Prevention Program has negatively impacted the recidivism rate. Ms. Sanders talked about possibly putting a time frame on the indicator measuring children with confirmed CPS reports who previously had an unconfirmed report. Ms. Sanders also noted that often children will recant or aren't ready to talk about abuse the first time it is. Ms. Sanders next talked about the indicator discussing the percentage of children who had a confirmed CPS report who were placed in custody of the department. The number of children taken into custody by NHCDSS in March 2010 set a record high. Children are placed with family whenever possible. Ms. Sanders reiterated the findings of children in families using heroin or PCP as well as mothers who aren't using drugs but living with drug dealers, placing children at high risk. Mr. Caster asked if there was any connection between income and abuse/neglect reports. Ms. Sanders and Ms. Marino both stated that abuse occurs across the board economically and is not found more often in lower income homes. Ms. Sanders noted there have been some successes including the decreases in the following: assessments, substantiations, repeat assessments and repeat substantiations. As well, social workers are spending more time with families. Mr. Nesmith reiterated that the loss of the Prevention unit has really impacted the agency. Mr. Riley asked if there were other funding sources for Prevention Services. Ms. Sanders noted that families receiving Medicaid can often apply for additional mental health services, but other than that, there are no resources available for Prevention. Ms. Marino closed by noting that DSS lost a lot of good collaboration and services due to mental health reform.

Foster Care Awareness Proclamation

Patrick Riley read the Foster Care Awareness Proclamation. Mr. Riley moved to support the proclamation. The motion was seconded by Ms. Glidden and passed unanimously.

Board Presentation Discussion

John Ranalli passed out a draft power point for the Board to present to the County Commissioners. Mr. Ranalli explained the Microsoft word document would be Mr. Craig's talking points with the accompanying graph's on the power point. Mr. Ranalli reviewed the talking points and explained each slide. Mr. Caster asked that all the acronyms be spelled out such as FNS, Food and Nutrition Services, as most of the Commissioners will not know the acronyms. It was clarified that the slides represent a 12 month period. Ms. Glidden asked that the waiting list for Child Care Services be added as a graph pictorially, to show the enormous need in the community. There was discussion about the economic impact on the community.

Next Meeting Objectives

Adopted Budget Update
Finalize Board Power Point Presentation

Board Self Evaluation

The Board completed self evaluations.

Additional Items

The Board entered into closed session 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 returned to an open session and adjourned at 10:00 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

LaVaughn Nesmith,
Secretary to the Board

John E. Craig,
Chairman

Date approved: _____

LN: scm
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