

**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, November 4, 2008 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; Minerva Glidden; Evelyn Bryant; Patrick Riley

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

Mr. Craig called the meeting to order at 9:08 a.m.

Mr. Patrick led the invocation. Ms. Glidden led the pledge of allegiance.

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

CONSENT AGENDA

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

INFORMATION AGENDA

New Hires

Stephanie Monteath introduced Elizabeth Currie, Tabatha Pugh and Michael Conant as Social Workers. Kathy Hudson and Robert Tinsley were introduced as Family and Children's Medicaid Caseworkers. Lesha Johnson was introduced as a Fiscal Support Technician and Betty Cepeda-Jones was introduced as a Family and Children's Medicaid Caseworker Trainee.

Promotions

Esther Watson-Hall was promoted from a Day Care Caseworker Zone 1 to a Program Integrity Caseworker Zone 3. Richard Ohmer was promoted from a CPS Social Worker to a Social Services Supervisor in CPS.

Service Awards

Melita Newkirk and Floyetta Rogers were recognized for 10 years of service to New Hanover County. Marlene Dancy was recognized for 20 years of service to New Hanover County.

SSDI

There were no comments on the Significant Service Delivery Indicators.

County Budget Expenditures

There were no questions or comments on the County Budget Expenditures.

Director's Report

Mr. Caster asked about the anticipated Foster Care funding shortage. Mr. Nesmith talked about some strategies the agency is discussing with Chris Coudriet and Chris McNamee such as use of TANF funds and Adoption Assistance. In January 2009 the numbers should be more accurate. Mr. Nesmith noted Child Support collections may offset the additional costs anticipated with the increase in foster care board rates. Mr. Caster asked for information on Cape Fear HealthNet. Ms. Glidden explained it is a program run by the hospital for uninsured or underinsured folks. Ms. Glidden asked if voter registration and fishing licenses are actually run out of DSS as unfunded mandates. Mr. Nesmith explained that indeed they are. The State continues to ask DSS to take on additional tasks with no administrative monetary reimbursement.

STRATEGIC ACTION AGENDA

Child Care Subsidy Update

Kathy Heslin explained in FY07/08, DSS received additional funds from More at Four and Smart Start to assist with Child Care Subsidy. No additional funds are expected for FY08/09. Ms. Heslin reviewed factors impacting cost: parental choice, non-licensed facilities, family care homes, licensed child care, star rating, the age of children being served and parental fee based on income. Mr. Nesmith explained the Board prioritized need based on things like Work First (families that work get first priority) and children At-Risk (such as Child Protective Services cases). Ms. Heslin noted that 2,326 children were served in September 2007 with 251 children on the waiting list. This year 1,829 children are receiving subsidy with 424 children on the waiting list. The ramifications of the funding shortfall are as follows: growing waiting list, monthly reports of all subsidy families, reduction in spending due to attrition, and, if reduction in spending is not enough, the termination of children currently being served by the program. Ms. Watson-Hall explained the process of recouping funds from families that received assistance even when their circumstances changed and they were no longer eligible. Families that are eligible but not able to receive assistance may lose jobs they currently have due to inability to pay for child care. Ms. Heslin reviewed the strategies in place to assist with the shortfalls: closely monitor agency spending, program integrity efforts and discussions with Child Care State Representative. Mr. Lane explained the agency is in a slightly better situation than a few months ago because school started back up. Four and five year old children are enrolled in More at Four and Smart Start. Mr. Lane shared that weekly conversations about Day Care Subsidy are occurring to ensure the agency is on target and not over-spending funds. Mr. Caster asked if money from Smart Start works as a pass-through. Mr. Lane clarified the flow of money from the State through Smart Start and then into programs at the local level. Mr. Nesmith explained that no Smart Start money is allocated to us to pay for administrative costs although it should but the State is not enforcing the policy. Ms. Glidden complimented the staff for being humanitarian as well as fiscally responsible. Mr. Caster noted when Smart Start was created it was supposed to be a 50-50 State and private donation funding pot. Mr. Lane explained that Smart Start does fund raisers and last year did give an additional \$25,000.00 to the agency for Day Care. This year, Smart Start was granted permission to carry forward funds to the next fiscal year.

Adoption Awareness Proclamation

Ms. Bryant read the Adoption Awareness Month Proclamation. Ms. Glidden moved to support the proclamation. The motion was seconded by Mr. Caster and passed unanimously.

Next Meeting Objectives

Budget Process

Confirm Board Retreat Date

Board Self Evaluation

The Board completed self evaluations.

Additional Items

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 9:51a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

LaVaughn Nesmith,
Secretary to the Board

John E. Craig,
Chairman

Date approved: _____

LN: scm

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