

**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, September 2, 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

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

Mr. Craig called the meeting to order at 9:05 a.m.

Mr. Caster 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

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

INFORMATION AGENDA

New Hires

All new hires were attending the County orientation and will be introduced during October's Board meeting.

Service Awards

George Marshall was recognized for 5 years of service to New Hanover County. Ella Deaver and Sheila Martin were recognized for 10 years of service to New Hanover County. Bette Jean Payton and Faye Smith were recognized for 25 years of service to New Hanover County.

Biennial Review

Wanda Marino reviewed the results of the biennial review for Family and Children's Services. According to the State, New Hanover County met standard in four of the seven review areas. Kari Sanders explained the seven areas of review dealing with safety and permanence, highlighting any citations received as a result of the review. The Program Improvement Plan for the citations will be discussed at October's Board meeting.

SSDI

There were no questions or comments.

County Budget Expenditures

Ms. McNamee explained that the expenditures reflect only the first month of the fiscal year.

Additional Information

Mr. Nesmith explained the self assessment DSS completed as a result of the Business Manager not having 2 years experience in the position. Ms. McNamee explained any exceptions on the self assessment.

STRATEGIC ACTION AGENDA

Work First Plan Update

Mr. Nesmith thanked Ms. Bryant for participating in the Work First forum.

The County Commissioners approved the New Hanover County DSS Board's recommendations that New Hanover County remain a Standard County.

Ms. Barkley reviewed areas of concern, such as participation rate and areas of success, such as Work First Work Experience. She related progress in the Work First program to LBR indicators addressing Work First employment and recidivism.

Michelle Caruth, a Work First recipient volunteering in a Work First Work Experience position at DSS talked about her personal experience with the program.

Ms. Barkley and Mr. Nesmith reviewed strategies DSS is looking into to meet participation rate such as Pay for Performance.

Mr. Caster asked for an explanation of Child Only cases. Ms. Barkley explained Child Only cases refer to children receiving Work First/TANF funds who live with a relative not a parent. The adult members of the household do not receive Work First funding and are not required to participate in Work First employment activities.

Ms. Glidden asked if undocumented people received Work First. Ms. Barkley said no.

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

Budget Update

Ms. McNamee explained FY08-09 will be a very tight budget year. Administration and Foster Care line items will be monitored closely to ensure funding will be available for the entire year. The State has increased the monthly board rate paid to foster homes and facilities effective January 2009. County DSS's will also be required to pay up front for Foster Care expenses and be reimbursed by the State. This will create a cash flow issue. The Board will be given more information on the increased cost of these changes next month and will be asked whether the additional County supplement currently given to foster parents will be continued. Ms. Glidden asked if there is a group that could answer whether foster parents would still foster children if they were not paid this supplement. Ms. Glidden explained that as an advocate for the community, she does not want to make

a decision about cutting funds to a program without knowing the ramifications to families and the community. She also requested data on the numbers of foster homes and percentage of children in these homes. Ms. McNamee and Ms. Marino discussed the Foster Parent Association and explained that foster parents spend more on foster children than they receive. Foster parents will be surveyed regarding their dependence on the supplement and this information as well as the data on the number of children residing in DSS foster homes will be relayed to Board members at the October meeting.

The third area of budget concern is Child Day Care Subsidy. No children have been moved off the waiting list in over a year. DSS is looking into improving Program Integrity to ensure Day Care funds are being spent properly. Mr. Nesmith explained there are certain programs where DSS is mandated to provide child care such as Child Protective Services and Work First. The waiting list number continues to increase as more families are deemed eligible for assistance but no families have moved off the waiting list. The child care subsidy expenditures will be carefully monitored to determine if it will be necessary to activate the Service Reduction Plan later in this fiscal year.

Next Meeting Objectives

Child Welfare Services Performance Improvement Plan

Foster Care Board Rate Projections

Board Self Evaluation

The Board completed self evaluations.

Additional Item

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 10:06 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

LaVaughn Nesmith,
Secretary to the Board

John E. Craig,
Chairman

Date approved: _____

LN: scm

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