

**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, September 1, 2009 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; Evelyn Bryant, Bill Caster and Patrick Riley

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 by a unanimously.

Mr. Caster led the invocation. Ms. Bryant led the pledge of allegiance.

CONSENT AGENDA

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

INFORMATION AGENDA

Personnel

Stephanie Monteath recognized Danielle Kurman (who could not attend) as the new Children Services Supervisor, Latisha Corbett as the new Temporary Family and Children's Medicaid Caseworker Zone 1, Susie Stanislaw as the new Temporary Family and Children's Medicaid Caseworker Zone 2 and John Ranalli as the new Compliance Officer.

Service Awards

Tangy Jones celebrates ten years with New Hanover County this month. Ethel Stanley celebrates fifteen years with New Hanover County this month.

SSDI

Christine McNamee gave a summary of the new Significant Service Delivery Indicator format and explained the process of getting an unduplicated cumulative count for the year.

County Budget Expenditures

Ms. Glidden commented on the daycare number and noted a waiting list was put back into effect starting September 1, 2009. Mr. Nesmith explained there is no additional daycare subsidy money available from either the County or the State which necessitates a waiting list.

Director's Executive Report

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) is stimulus money to be used in the Food and Nutrition program to pay for overtime and additional clerical assistance. The Board asked about vacancies. There are 26 vacancies including 15 frozen positions. Of the five people who resigned the previous week, most said that stress due to very high caseloads was the deciding factor. Mr. Nesmith and Wanda Marino talked about the difficulty of keeping the After Hours Social Worker positions filled. Mr. Caster noted every department has taken cuts and there is no easy answer.

STRATEGIC ACTION AGENDA

Budget Update

DSS is at the beginning of the fiscal year so it's unknown what impact the budget cuts will truly have on the agency. DSS has received less than half of their funding allocation letters. Mr. Caster clarified that less than 10% of the budget comes from the County. Ms. McNamee confirmed this and noted less than 10% of the budget comes from the State as well. DSS will need to be careful to spread money out over all four quarters in order to not impact the County. Of the 21 funding sources received, funding authorizations for 3 of them were more than we had budgeted. ARRA funds will pay for additional administrative dollars to pay for Food and Nutrition services (over time and an additional clerical staff). DSS is receiving additional money from LIEAP and CIP and Adult Care Home Case Management which are all Federal dollars. Work First Functional Assessment money was reduced. It is also expected that energy neighbors and share the warmth money will be less as they are based on donations. Even if DSS decides to stop giving energy assistance, caseworkers will still have to see and process the people coming through the door asking for energy assistance. Ms. Glidden suggested just telling people there is no money to give out. Ms. Heslin explained that doing that is called "discouragement" and is not allowed. Mr. Lane and Ms. Marino both explained that staff have deadlines set by individual programs. With less staff and more work, it's difficult to meet those deadlines. However, when the deadlines are not met, the agency may go into corrective action which effects Federal and State reimbursements and draw downs increasing the County share of money. It was reiterated that you've got to have man power to be able to meet those standards/deadlines. Ms. Glidden noted it sounds pretty dire and understands why people are quitting.

Renovation Update

To address security concerns and staffing shortages, DSS needs to combine the three waiting rooms into one and the current big waiting room is not big enough. The architect came two weeks ago and heard the agency wish list. The need to be able to do business

during renovation and possibility of using the multipurpose room as the interim lobby was discussed. The end result the agency wants is better client flow, better document management, more meeting room and additional cubicle space. This is at a minimum at least a 90 day process. Mr. Nesmith noted he moved three clerical receptionists to Title XIX Medicaid Transportation due to need. Even though the renovations should help with checking in clients, manpower is still really needed to see the clients once they are here.

Man Power Utilization

Wanda Marino talked about her loss of supervisors due to retirement. State standards have 1 supervisor per every 5 employees to staff cases and keep kids safe. We are currently at a rate of 1 supervisor to 7 or 8 employees. The other problem is there are not enough qualified applicants to fill the program manager vacancy and there is no additional money for most in house staff to want the position.

Sam Lane has supervisors but he is missing line workers. All of his program areas have seen increases. There are 2000 more cases coming in for Food and Nutrition and no additional staff. The state does not have standards for Economic Services case loads unlike Social Work but all the expectations are the same despite the really large numbers of clients to staff. While the Food and Nutrition staff have gotten some relief through ARRA funds, there are vacancies in the Family and Children's and Adult Medicaid programs. Mr. Lane noted that his units deals with the very basic needs of people; food, shelter and medical. Emotionally it begins to wear on everyone.

Chris McNamee talked about trying to streamline processes. To assist with workload issues, all of her staff is crossed trained to deal with the ebbs and flows of the agency to include, mail, scanning, greeters etc. Recently a position was filled in the business office but as it was an internal promotion there is some concern that the agency won't be allowed to fill it. Mr. Nesmith noted the additional burden of taking on additional IT processes since IT was moved under the County, such as security clearance requests.

Next Meeting Objectives

Impact of the State's Approved Budget

Medicaid Update

Board Self Evaluation

The Board completed self evaluations.

Additional Items

The Board Meeting schedule was updated. Minerva Glidden moved to accept the new schedule. Mr. Caster seconded with the clerical error of Wednesday changed to Tuesday.

As there were no other 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 10:05 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

LaVaughn Nesmith,
Secretary to the Board

John E. Craig,
Chairman

Date approved: _____

LN: scm

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