

DURHAM COUNTY BOARD OF SOCIAL SERVICES

Minutes

January 28, 2009

The Durham County Board of Social Services held its regular meeting on Wednesday, January 28, 2009, 8:00 a.m., at the Duke Street facility in Conference Room 2221. The following members were in attendance: Chair Gladys Dunston, Mrs. Gloria S. Green, Commissioner Joe W. Bowser and Vice Chair Newman Aguiar. The Departments were represented by the following: Mr. Sammy R. Haithcock, Mr. Charles Harris, Ms. Sharon Hirsch, Ms. Toni Pedroza, Ms. Rhonda Stevens, Ms. Cynthia Cason and Ms. Montrella R. Springfield.

Mr. Stan Holt received an excused absence.

Mr. Matthew E. Milliken, reporter from *The Herald-Sun* attended the DSS Board Meeting.

The meeting was officially called to order by Chair Gladys Dunston. Chair Gladys Dunston asked for additions or corrections to the agenda. Chair Dunston proceeded to welcome new DSS Board Member, Commissioner Joe W. Bowser.

Commissioner Joe W. Bowser was previously on the DSS Board. Commissioner Bowser expressed his eagerness to work with the DSS Board and DSS leadership.

The minutes were reviewed by the DSS Board and a motion to accept the minutes was made and properly seconded. The DSS Board voted to approve the minutes.

Public Comments

No public comments.

Medicaid RBA Report - Cynthia Cason

Medicaid performance measures are:

1. Customers are Healthy
 - a. Currently 31,143 Adult & Children Medicaid recipients.
 - b. Currently 2,141 Health Choice Recipients
 - c. Re-enrollment rate increased 5%.

2. Providing Excellent Customer Service
 - a. Clients are waiting approximately 25 minutes, the goal is 20 minutes. Clients are coming in during lunch which makes them have a longer wait time.
 - b. Customer Service Survey Ratings - Courtesy and Respect. The survey received have been 100% customer satisfaction
 - c. Meeting State Timeframes for processing Medicaid and Health Choice applications. Re-enrollment is at 97%.
3. Success behind Medicaid
 - a. Turnover is minimal due to shell positions, transferred positions internally to increase staff, restructured Medicaid.
 - b. Outpost staff at Duke, Durham Regional, Community Health Center.
 - c. Mail-in applications.
 - d. Triadex automated re-enrollment certification mailings
 - e. Automated re-enrollment reminder calls.
4. Ms Cason mentioned a few ways the DSS Board can help:
 - a. Continue to advocate for resources to meet the growing caseload demands.
 - b. Support technology for more efficiency

Vice Chair Aguiar asked what type of resources are needed. Medicaid requested three additional staff due to increasing caseloads. What is the percentage of citizens in Durham eligible for Medicaid? Beth Steenberg informed the Board the NC Medical Assistance have reviewed this but have not been able to come up with a number.

Ms. Cason will report on the number of applications taken at each hospital. Vice Chair Aguiar asked about the caseload numbers. Currently Family Medicaid workers have approximately 900 cases, Latino 1100 per worker, but 700 is a more manageable case load.

Chair Report

Chair Gladys Dunston did not submit a written report. The State Board met but Chair Dunston was unable to attend the meeting. Information will be passed on when received.

Director's Update - Mr. Sammy R. Haithcock

Mr. Haithcock proceeded reporting on the following:

1. Personnel Freeze/Budget Cuts
 - a. DSS Budget cut was \$2.8M and focuses on recisions for unspent salaries, contract reductions terminations and operational expenses reductions, as well as, freezing of vacant positions. With the use of shell positions and

temporary staff, the agency is almost fully staffed in turnover areas.

2. Visits by Public Consulting Group

a. A Public Consulting Group from Boston Massachusetts visited as part of a State effort to identify ways to leverage additional Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) funds to North Carolina counties. North Carolina's share is estimated at \$60.4M. The money is a one-time dispensation which must be spent by September 30, 2009.

3. Federal Stimulus Funding

a. There are proposals being discussed around the federal stimulus funding. One provision is the federal money to assist food assistance administration. Sharon Hirsch will send a letter to the DSS Board about the stimulus package.

4. Report from Joint Study Committee on Local Social Services Issues.

a. The report is in the board packet. This information is a good beginning point for the budget discussion in the spring, locally and at the state level.

Accountability - Toni Pedroza

Toni Pedroza distributed budget updates to the DSS Board. DSS Budget is being monitored bi-weekly. A large amount of lapsed salaries are being used. There is an increase in the printing line because of Food & Nutrition and Medicaid applications. Ms. Pedroza will provide dates to Chair Gladys Dunston to schedule a budget session.

Family Safety and Permanency - Mr. Chuck Harris (Written Report

Chuck Harris announced that Bob Wallace had been promoted to Adult Services Program Manager.

Child Welfare has only one vacancy. This is the closest Child Welfare has come to a full staff in six years.

Network of Services is now in place. A network of contractual services to prevent homelessness among former foster youth. The partners are Genesis Home, Carolina Outreach, Inc., Lutheran Family Services and Youth Village, Inc.

Vice Chair Aguiar commended everyone on the decrease in turnover in the programs. Commissioner Joe W. Bowser was delighted to hear about the Network of Services.

Communications - Sharon Hirsch

Sharon Hirsch provided a copy of the 2008 Annual Report on Results Based Accountability. It will be released on January 29, 2009. The report will be published on the DSS website and links will be sent to partner agencies/key contacts via email.

EITC/VITA Outreach

A press conference for the statewide EITC Campaign is scheduled at Durham Public Schools' VITA site at Hillandale Staff Development Center on Friday, January 30 at 11:00 am. Speakers from the local and state level will be attending.

Family Economic Independence - Rhonda Stevens

Rhonda Stevens reported an increase in adults seeking work first.

DACCA does not have a waiting list; however, by February there will be a waiting list. Ms. Stevens will report on spending next month.

Food and Nutrition Services has maintained 100% accuracy for the second year.

Child Support collected 1.4 million in December; they are currently at 50% of the goal of 17.4 million for the fiscal year.

Chairperson Gladys Dunston asked if there was further business to discuss.

Mr. Haithcock asked Chair Dunston permission to read a letter to the DSS Board. Mr. Haithcock presented his letter of retirement effective June 30, 2009. A letter will be on record.

Chuck Harris resigned his position effective February 28, 2009.

Chairperson Gladys Dunston expressed her gratitude to Mr. Harris and Mr. Haithcock for their commitment and dedication to the agency.

Chairperson Gladys Dunston inquired if other business needed to be discussed, if no other business, a motion to adjourn.

A motion was made by Vice Chair Newman Aguiar to adjourn the regular meeting and seconded by Board Member Gloria S. Green. All members approved. The meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted

Chairperson

Date

Secretary to the Board

Date