

Henderson County Board of Social Services

April 16, 2019 Regular Meeting Minutes

A. Call to Order

The Henderson County Board of Social Services meeting was called to order by Dr. Jennifer Hensley, Chairperson at 12:00 PM.

Board Members Present	Dr. Jennifer Hensley, Chair Penny Summey, Vice-Chair Melinda Lowrance, Member
Staff Leadership Present	Jerrie McFalls, Secretary to the Board/Director Sandy Morgan, Economic Benefits Program Administrator Kevin Marino, Social Work Program Administrator Joe Maxey, Administrative Officer Karen Vale, Clerk to the Board
Guests	Susan F. Davis, Assistant County Attorney

B. Public Input

Dr. Hensley asked for public input, there was none.

C. Adjustments to the Agenda

Dr. Hensley asked for any adjustments to the agenda, none were submitted.

D. Approval of Minutes

Dr. Hensley asked if there were any changes to the open session minutes from the March 19, 2019 meeting; there were none. Vice-Chair Summey made a motion to approve the meeting minutes as presented, Mrs. Lowrance seconded the motion. All present were in favor and the motion passed.

E. Board Education

Dr. Hensley welcomed Susan Davis to the meeting and thanked her for taking time to educate the board on court processes for DSS. Mrs. Davis explained that she would be reviewing the steps taken during a foster care case; after a determination of abuse, neglect or dependency. She reviewed "Juvenile Abuse, Neglect and Dependency Case Hearing and Timelines" (**Attachment I**). Multiple hearings are held with very specific timeframes to ensure the parties involved are given opportunities to have their cases heard before a judge. DSS must prove their case by clear and convincing evidence of the abuse, neglect or dependency. Judges are looking for participation by parents in the reunification plan laid out by the social worker, with a goal of reunification within 12 months of original adjudication. If the parents are not participating in the services/reunification plan as directed, DSS may file for a Termination of Parental Rights. This action may slow down the process as parents must be served by the court and often it is hard to find the parents to complete service. In some case's this has pushed case completion passed the 12-month goal. Mrs. Davis then reviewed "Total Children in Foster Care 2013 - 2018" (**Attachment II**) and "Total Scheduled Hearings 2005 - 2018" (**Attachment III**). These reports reflect numbers for our judicial district which is made up of Henderson, Polk and Transylvania counties. Henderson County has the most children in custody and the most total scheduled hearings of the three counties. Dr. Hensley asked if the sizes of the judicial districts are similar across the state, Mrs. Davis responded that no they are not. Some districts are made up of one county while other districts are made up of multiple counties. The judicial districts are set by the state legislature. For our combined district there are four district court judges. Over the last 10 months our district has undergone personnel changes that have

left prolonged vacancies on the bench. In June 2018, Chief Justice Athena Brooks was confirmed as a Special Superior Court Judge. In October 2018, Judge Peter Knight was appointed as a Superior Court Judge for our district. Also, in October 2018, Governor Cooper appointed C.W. "Mack" McKeller as a district court judge. In April 2019, Governor Cooper appointed Kimberly Gasperson-Justice as a district court judge for our district. This takes our district back to four full-time judges. Finally, Mrs. Davis reviewed "Continued Hearings-Judicial District 29B 2005 - 2018" (**Attachment IV**). Henderson County is trending up for the last four years. Several factors contribute to this increase: more children in foster care = more court actions; newer attorneys are being appointed as counsel for parents and are struggling with getting the parents to court; several of the newer attorney's are in superior court on the same day, so they don't come to district court. These actions force the judge to continue the case. Chief Judge Britton has added a 4th DSS court date per month through October 2019 to clear up some of these cases. Dr. Hensley encouraged Mrs. Davis to keep the DSS Board informed of any actions the board may take to advocate for better court responses/actions. Mrs. Davis shared with the board members that through a mandate in the State/County MOU's, a collaboration meeting between all the parties in this judicial process will take place on June 4th in Brevard. Judges, attorneys, DSS staff, parents, GAL's, etc. have been invited to attend. Director McFalls and Mr. Marino will be there representing DSS. Mrs. Davis would be happy to come back to the board and report on progress made after the meeting. Mrs. Lowrance asked for a breakdown by percentage of children currently in DSS custody. Mr. Marino responded that 50% of the children are between birth and 5 years of age; 20% are between 6 and 12; and 30% are 12 to 18 years of age.

F. Reports

Director's Monthly Report (Attachment V)

Director McFalls highlighted Bullet #3 on the Temporary Financial Assistance/Special Assistance Facilities that will be an unfunded mandate if the legislation in the NC House and Senate passes. This will cost Henderson County approximately \$160,000 for FY 19-20 that was not included in the proposed budget. Vice-Chair Summey questioned why did the legislator's look at this option instead of increasing SA payments only? Director McFalls believes that type of increase would affect Special Assistance eligibility. Director McFalls went on to review Bullet #4 of her report on Senate Bill 374, Repeal of Risky Retirement Payments. This bill was clearly written by the Treasurer's office and would do away with 2 options currently available to staff considering retirement through LGERS. If passed, this bill would go into effect for anyone retiring on or after 7/1/2020. Director McFalls concluded her report by stating that the bill tracker from NCACDSS was not yet available, she will forward it to board members when it is released.

April Employees of the Month (Attachment VII)

No Discussion

March 2018-March 2019 Statistical Report (Attachment VIII)

No Discussion

3rd Quarter Personnel Report (Attachment IX)

No Discussion

April Program Administrator's Report (Attachment X)

No discussion

Year-to-Date Budget Spreadsheet (Attachment XI)

No discussion

G. Old Business

Board Vacancy Update

Dr. Hensley updated the board members regarding the upcoming vacancy in the seat currently held by Vice-Chair Summey. An application was received at DSS and forwarded to the Social Services Commission. The Commission will review all applications and vote at their quarterly meeting in June.

Social Services Institute

A workshop grid (**Attachment XII**) was handed out to all board members highlighting the board member training on Tuesday, July 30th 11:30 – 5:00 and the NCACBSS Annual Meeting on Wednesday, July 31st 8:30 – 5:00. Hotel rooms have been reserved, board members need to let Karen know if they will be attending so she can ensure proper registration. Dr. Hensley asked if HC DSS had submitted any projects for recognition at the awards luncheon held during SSI, possibly Family Centered Treatment and/or the simulation lab project with Western Carolina University? Director McFalls responded that no applications for recognition had been submitted to the Institute at this time and that Director's have been told that the process for submission is changing.

H. New Business

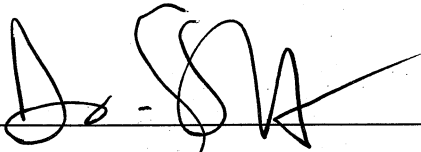
Email Addresses for Board Members*

Director McFalls reviewed the recent development at the HC Public Health Department where by Board of Public Health members were assigned a Henderson County government email address to conduct official board business to protect their individual personal email accounts. Director Steve Smith consulted with County Attorney Russ Burrell on this option to protect any official business conducted through emails. Director Smith then shared this information with Director McFalls, and she felt the board should be involved in any decision to secure email addresses for current board members. After a short discussion, Vice Chair Summey made a motion for HC Board of Social Service members to adopt the use of an official HC secure email address for the purposes of conducting official board business. Mrs. Lowrance seconded the motion, all board members present were in favor and the motion carried. Director McFalls will contact IT Director Becky Snyder to start the process and will update the board as needed.

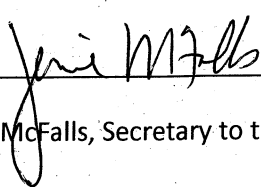
I. Adjournment

Director McFalls added that a letter from NCACDSS/NCACBSS to Donna White, Appropriations Chair for Health and Human Services was distributed to board members (**Attachment XIII**). This letter is attached to a Social Services Consortium Legislative Priorities information sheet on adequate funding for local

DSS's for adult protective services and guardianship. NCACDSS/NCACBSS are encouraging legislative support for funding these programs. There being no further discussion, Mrs. Lowrance made a motion to adjourn the meeting, Vice-Chair Summey seconded the motion, all present were in favor and the motion passed. The meeting was adjourned at 12:54 pm.



Dr. Jennifer Hensley, Chair Date

 5/21/19

Jerrie McFalls, Secretary to the Board Date

Attachments:

- I. Juvenile Abuse, Neglect and Dependency Case Hearings and Timelines
- II. Total Children in Foster Care 2013 - 2018
- III. Total Scheduled Hearings 2005 – 2018
- IV. Continued Hearings Judicial District 29B 2005 - 2018
- V. Director's Report – April 2019
- VI. Who Are the Remaining Uninsured in North Carolina?
- VII. Employees of the Month – April 2019
- VIII. Statistical Report – March 2018 to March 2019
- IX. 3rd Quarter Personnel Report – January – March 2019
- X. Program Administrator's Report – April 2019
- XI. FY 18-19 9-Month YTD Spreadsheet
- XII. 2019 Social Services Institute Workshop Grid
- XIII. NCACDSS/NCACBSS Letter dated 4/16/19 – Fiscal Support Needed for Aging and Adult Services in NC