

Henderson County Board of Social Services

July 19th, 2022 Regular Meeting Minutes

A. Call to Order

The Henderson County Board of Social Services meeting was called to order by Director McFalls at 12:01 pm.

Board Members Present	Melinda Lowrance, Member Josh Simpson, Member Judy Smith, Member Rebecca McCall, Member Stephen Gwaltney, Member
Staff Leadership Present	Jerrie McFalls, Secretary to the Board/Director Lorie Horne, Social Work Program Administrator Joseph Maxey Jr., Administrative Officer Debby Freeman, Economic Services Program Administrator Deborah Johnson, Administrative Assistant/Board Clerk
Guest	None

B. Welcome and Oath of Office: Rebecca McCall and Stephen Gwaltney

Director McFalls welcomed Rebecca McCall and Stephen Gwaltney to the Board of Social Services. Rebecca McCall's appointment was approved at the June 15th, 2022 County Commissioners meeting. Mrs. McCall will fill the seat previously held by Dr. Jennifer Hensley. Her term will be from July 1, 2022 and will expire June 30, 2025. Stephen Gwaltney's appointment was approved by the Social Services commission on June 9th, 2022. Mr. Gwaltney will fill the seat previously held by Margaret Stone. His term will be from July 1, 2022 and will expire June 30, 2025. Each member of the Board introduced themselves. Deborah Johnson, Clerk to the Board, swore in Mrs. McCall and Mr. Gwaltney.

C. DSS Board Elections:

Director McFalls reviewed the nominations for the FY22-23 Board Chair and Vice-Chair as presented by motion at the June 21, 2022 Board Meeting. Mr. Simpson was nominated to serve as Board Chair. Mrs. Lowrance was nominated to serve as Vice-Chair. Director McFalls asked each board member to vote for Josh Simpson as the Board Chair, each member voted yes for Mr. Simpson to serve as the Board Chair. Director McFalls then asked each board member to vote for Melinda Lowrance as Vice-Chair. Each member voted yes for Mrs. Lowrance to serve as Vice-Chair. The meeting was then turned over to Josh Simpson, Chair.

D. Public Input

None

E. Adjustments to the Agenda

None

F. Approval of Minutes

Mr. Simpson asked if there were any changes to the minutes from the June 21st, 2022 regular meeting, there were none. Mrs. Smith made a motion to approve the minutes as written, Mrs. Lowrance seconded the motion. All present were in favor and the motion passed.

G. Reports

Director's Monthly Report (Attachment I)

Questions Only:

Director McFalls stated that the second Diversity training will be rescheduled due to an illness. Mrs. Lowrance asked how staff felt about the Diversity Training. Our Employee Assistance Network provided the training for about half the staff. Director McFalls stated that staff felt positive over all. We have a very diverse staff and it was beneficial to everyone.

Mrs. McCall asked if any staff had asked not to attend the Diversity training. Director McFalls stated that no one, other than an employee with a mobility issue, getting in and out of the courthouse area.

Melinda Lowrance asked if we are able to provide that employee an option. Director McFalls stated that she will be given the power point presentation. If she would like to speak directly with EAN, that will be made available to her.

Mrs. Lowrance asked if the Budget Bill passed. Director McFalls stated the Budget Bill did pass.

Mr. Gwaltney asked Director McFalls to explain expanded Medicaid in NC. Director McFalls explained that if the state expands Medicaid, more citizens would be eligible. In NC currently Medicaid is primarily for children. We don't have Medicaid in NC for healthy adults. There are 600,000 low-income people in NC that do not currently qualify for Medicaid. It is anticipated they would qualify if the state expands Medicaid. Medicaid is a federal program. The reimbursement rates are currently high for Medicaid, so NC is exploring expanding Medicaid.

We currently have approximately 25,000 participants and Medicaid expansion would add approximately 6000 additional participants.

July Employees of the Month (Attachment II)

No Discussion

June 2021 – June 2022 Statistical Report (Attachment III)

Questions Only:

Mr. Simpson asked if the number of CPS reports is what we expected, back to normal trends. Director McFalls stated that it is normal. We expect the case numbers to rise again in August when children return to school. Mrs. Horne stated we experienced a significant drop in CPS cases in June which has been beneficial to workers getting caught up on all cases.

July Program Administrator's Report (Attachment IV)

Questions Only:

Mr. Gwaltney asked Lorie Horne how Foster Care recruiting was going? Mrs. Horne stated, currently we are in a good place. We have more foster homes than surrounding counties with the exception of Buncombe County. We have 140 to 150 children in Foster Care right now. We have about 70 foster homes currently. Most homes can accommodate several foster children.

This year, 12 foster children aged out and signed a Voluntary Placement Agreement. There could be more that aged out, but that is the number that signed VPA's. VPA's must meet certain criteria. This is 18-21 Foster Care. Mrs. Lowrance asked if they are continuing education. Mrs. Horne stated that VPA's could have jobs, continue education, or continue to receive support from programs if they are unable to work.

Mrs. McCall asked if everyone knew what Fostering Hope was doing? She stated they are buying property and building homes to provide for foster parents to take up to 5 Foster Children and keep siblings together. They recently purchased a home on Dana Road. The property has 8 acres to build more homes on the property to care for more foster children. The county and Dogwood Trust is contributing to the project.

Mrs. Lowrance asked if childcare continues to be a concern. Mrs. Horne stated that childcare for foster children remains a problem and concern. Mrs. McCall stated she is on the Board of NC Association of County Commissioners. Each year they put together a list of legislative goals that they want to send to the General Assembly. She stated she is wanting to focus on help with childcare. Handing out vouchers for childcare is helpful, but due to the pay for childcare workers, there aren't enough teachers to fill the positions needed. Mrs. McCall asked for any feedback or ideas. The suggestions must be submitted before September on how to improve the childcare situation.

This year DSS only spent 85% of our allocated budget on childcare due to no spots available. There wasn't enough childcare available for parents who want to work. The childcare centers cannot hire enough staff.

Financial Report June 2022 (Attachment V)

No Discussion

H. Old Business DSS staffing update

Director McFalls stated we currently have ten vacancies. Three vacancies in Social Work, seven in Economic Services. We have multiple employees that have moved internally. Our turnover for FY 21-22 was 21%, 19.58% without retirements. We had three retirements this year. We are in a much better position now than we were earlier in the year.

Mrs. Lowrance asked if we had reached out to local colleges to students graduating with degrees in Sociology. Director McFalls stated that we work closely with county HR because they post our positions. The county has hired a new position, a job recruiter to bring in candidates for job openings. We have also participated in multiple Job Fairs. We frequently have interns from Western Carolina, Mars Hill and Appalachian. Interns often fill open positions.

I. New Business

CCPT/CFPT Board Representative

Director McFalls stated that by state law we are required to have two committees, Community Child Protection Team and Community Fatality Prevention Team. Dr. Hensley previously was our representative from the DSS Board. The Child Fatality Prevention Team reviews the fatality of any child under the age of 18 after they have been deceased for a year. The Health Department manages the records. The Health Department Physician, Dr. Curran, presents the fatality to the team. The intent of the team is to look at preventable fatalities. Fatalities can be due to children born with birth defects and diseases, but some fatalities may be the result of child abuse. Those fatalities are always reviewed. If DSS had a report on that child within a year of the child's death, a more intensive child fatality review will occur.

The Community Child Protection team talks about a specific, chosen family situation and what the strengths and needs are. DSS presents a case. The School System, mental health providers, law enforcement, anyone that has known the family in the case, brings information to the Protection Team. They look at what that family needs. The team looks at what resources are available to use to help this family not have children neglected or abused in the future. The team identifies gaps in service in our community.

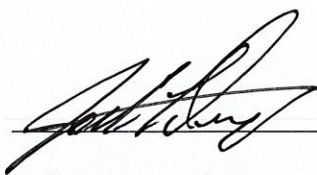
Director McFalls stated we need a representative to replace Dr. Hensley. Mrs. Smith volunteered to be the representative. Mrs. Lowrance agreed to be the back-up.

Energy Programs Outreach Plan FY 22-23

Director McFalls shared that the Board of Social Services must review and approve the outreach plan each fiscal year. This plan reviews how the Low-income Energy Assistance Program will be conducted for the upcoming winter season. There were no questions regarding the plan. Mr. Gwaltney made a motion to approve. Mrs. Lowrance seconded the motion. All board members were polled for their vote, all approved. The motion carried.

J. Adjournment

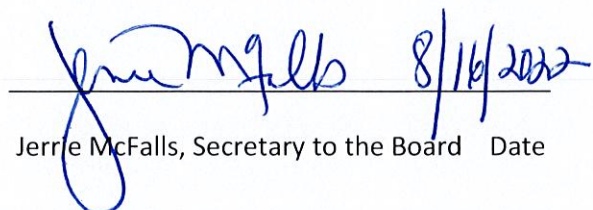
Mr. Simpson asked if there were any additional items for discussion, none were presented. Mr. Simpson adjourned the meeting at 12:55 p.m.



Josh Simpson, Chair

8/16/22

Date



Jerrie McFalls, Secretary to the Board Date

Attachments:

- I. Director's Report – July 2022
- II. July Employees of the Month
- III. June 2021 – June 2022 Statistical Report
- IV. Program Administrator's Report – July 2022
- V. Energy Programs Outreach Plan
- VI. Financial Report July 2022