

Henderson County Board of Social Services

June 2023 Regular Meeting Minutes

A. Call to Order

The Henderson County Board of Social Services meeting was called to order by Chair Josh Simpson at 12:02 pm.

Board Members Present	Josh Simpson, Member Melinda Lowrance, Member Judi Smith, 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	Kristen Freeman, PLA Supervisor

B. Public Input

None

C. Adjustments to the Agenda

None

D. Approval of Minutes

Chair Simpson asked if there were any changes to the minutes from the May 16th regular meeting, there were none. Mrs. Lowrance moved to approve the minutes as written, Judy Smith seconded the motion. All members were polled, and the motion passed.

E. Board Education

Medicaid for the Disabled

Kristen Freeman, Private Living Adults Supervisor, presented to the board criteria for qualifying for Medicaid for the Disabled.

Who is it for?

*Individuals who are under 65

*Individuals who are deemed disabled either by Social Security or by Disability Determination Services

What is disability?

The definition of disability as defined by Social Security is "A physical or mental impairment or combination of impairments that is expected to result in death, or which has lasted or is expected to last for a continuous period of not less than 12 months."

Basic Eligibility Requirements

*Client must meet Citizenship guidelines.

*Client must be a Resident of North Carolina.

*Client must meet income and resource guidelines.

*All the above criteria must be met in addition to being deemed disabled.

*If approved the client also must comply with post eligibility requirements. Applying for disability through SSA is one of these as Medicaid is not a money payment.

Application Process

*The application must be processed within 90 days. The disability determination could take more than 90 days so once all eligibility requirements are met, we place the case on a timer which stops the processing time. This allows the days on the timer to be excluded from the 90-day processing time.

*If a client is not already deemed disabled, we complete a disability assessment and have them fill out authorization forms.

*Once everything is completed and entered into NCFast it is sent to DDS (North Carolina Disability Determination Services). DDS then reviews the assessment and medical records to determine if the client is disabled. If determined to be disabled and client meets all other eligibility requirements the application is approved.

Payments can be evaluated for retro payments. If the client is eligible the previous three months prior to approval, retro payments may be made.

Medicaid for the Disabled is a traditional program that looks at what resources the client has. To be eligible clients must meet income guidelines. This program pays for medical expenses and is not a direct payment program that would pay the client directly.

Currently we have 146 pending cases.

Reports

Director's Monthly Report (Attachment I)

Questions Only

Mrs. Lowrance asked if we were joining other agencies about firearm safety in relation to the Governor's initiative to promote safe gun storage. Director McFalls stated that we anticipate receiving policy information from the state soon. During CPS investigations, we currently offer safety locks and provide information on the safe storage of firearms.

Mr. Simpson asked Director McFalls if DSS would be forced to share information due to house bill H674. The Child Advocacy Centers are not a government entity. In the statutes, it states who DSS can share information with. The CAC is not covered under the statutes. CAC is trying to prevent their information being widely available. In Henderson County, we have a court order that allows DSS to share information with the CAC. If the bill becomes law, some things may change based on the specific language of the law.

The North Carolina state budget still has not passed. Our Medicaid positions were approved in our county budget, but we will not fill all of the new positions unless the state passes the budget, and we know that Medicaid Expansion has been approved. We have received some advance funds to support hiring of Medicaid expansion positions.

Mrs. Lowrance asked if foster children from Jackson County have been placed in Henderson County. Jackson County has not placed children in Henderson County. We do place children in other counties and other counties place children in our county. However, Jackson County has not placed any foster children with our county.

June Employees of the Month (Attachment II)

Questions only

None

May 2022 – May 2023 Statistical Report (Attachment III)

Questions only

None

June Program Administrator's Report (Attachment IV)

Child welfare reports are up and are expected this time of the year. As the school year ends, we usually see upticks in reports. We anticipate the increase each year. Our numbers for previous weeks have been high and are continuing to remain high.

During the pandemic, our APS cases increased, and those numbers have remained at a higher level.

Financial Report May 2023 (Attachment V)

Questions only

We have been tracking underspending on salaries and we are on track to underspend on salaries by \$850,000. Mr. Simpson asked if we get rewarded for stewarding the budget and managing it correctly. Director McFalls stated that those funds are used in the next fiscal year budget by the county. It sometimes prevents the county from having to go into the reserves.

Director McFalls stated that employees received a \$2 an hour increase or 5%, whichever was greater to address the cost-of-living increases.

F. Old Business

DSS Staffing Update

Director McFalls stated that we currently have twelve vacancies. Eight of the vacancies are in Social Work. Four vacancies are in Economic Services. We are struggling to fill the Social Worker Positions. Many applicants have been qualified as Social Worker trainees. It takes trainees four years to become a fully trained SW IA & T. Social Work supervisors must spend extra time training and supervising trainees.

We are posting job openings on additional websites. We have reached out to previous employees to fill auxiliary positions until we get our open positions filled. We are also contracting with Vanguard, a temporary agency, for Social Workers to help our social workers catch up on cases and reduce caseloads. We are looking at a one-year contract that we can cancel at any time. This is the first time we have contracted with a temporary service for social workers.

G. New Business
DSS Board Positions

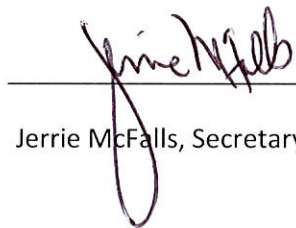
Director McFalls stated that Mr. Simpson is a county commissioner appointee for the DSS Board, and his term is set to expire June 30, 2023. Mr. Simpson stated he submitted his application last week for reappointment. Mrs. Lowrance is appointed by the Social Services Commission and her appointment expires June 30, 2023. The Social Services Commission will post the position in July. Mrs. Lowrance is eligible for one more term. Director McFalls gave Mrs. Lowrance the application to complete. Mrs. Lowrance's term will continue until the Social Services Commission makes an appointment.

H. Adjournment

Chair Simpson asked if there were any additional items for discussion. There were none presented. Mrs. Lowrance made a motion to adjourn the meeting, Mrs. Smith seconded the motion. All present were polled and the motion passed. Mr. Simpson adjourned the meeting at 12:48 p.m.



Josh Simpson, Chair 7/18/23 Date



Jerrie McFalls, Secretary to the Board Date

Attachments:

- I. Director's Report – May 2023
- II. June Employees of the Month
- III. May– May 2023 Statistical Report
- IV. Program Administrators' Report – June 2023
- V. Financial Report – June 2023