

# Henderson County Board of Social Services

## December 2023 Regular Meeting Minutes

### A. Call to Order

The Henderson County Board of Social Services meeting was called to order by Chair Simpson at 12:05 pm.

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

### 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 November 21<sup>st</sup>, 2023 regular meeting, there were none. Mrs. Lowrance moved to approve the minutes as written, Mrs. Smith seconded the motion and the motion passed.

Chair Simpson asked if there were any changes to the closed minutes from the November 21<sup>st</sup>, 2023 meeting, there were none. Mr. Gwaltney moved to approve the minutes as written, Mrs. Lowrance seconded the motion and the motion passed.

### E. Board Education

#### **CSST's Adult Services**

Traci Corn, Adult Services Program Manager presented to the board information regarding the in-home aide program and waiting list.

#### **In Home Aide Update**

- There are 94 adults open to IHA as of the last day of November.
- On the last day of June there were 64 cases open.
- The wait list is down to just 9 adults as of the last day of November.
- On the last day of June, the wait list number was 54.



- Our CSSTs now have full caseloads.
- We are working with 5 different companies to serve the remainder of our IHA clients. Each has varying capacity, but we can usually get one of them to take a client when needed.

Each client open to IHA services has a social worker who makes at least quarterly home visits.

CSST's have full caseloads of 15 people. Each client open to in-home aide has a social worker and an in-home worker. As clients cycle off the in-home program, and we can fill those slots with the adults from the wait list.

### **APS/Guardianship**

Mrs. Corn also spoke regarding guardianship and adult services.

Henderson county has a large aging population. This could be driving our numbers up. We are also seeing a larger number of younger people with mental illness, drug abuse, and homelessness. If there is not a family member willing to be named as Guardian, then DSS is often named as the guardian. We try to place those clients in facilities. Services are not readily available. It is very time consuming. This is being echoed across the state. APS & Guardianship are mandated services. Wait lists are not allowed and mandated timeframes must be observed.

- We are finding the Clerk of Court is more inclined to appoint HCDSS recently.
  - Often we have not had prior involvement with the client and/or were not the petitioner.
- Additionally, we are seeing a significant change in the demographic for both APS & Guardianship clients. We are still getting APS/Guardianship cases on older adults with issues like dementia or Alzheimer's, but we are also getting a lot more clients who are younger and often experiencing mental health or substance use crisis. Many also have criminal records and/or experiencing homelessness. Often, they do not have any income, and in those cases, if a guardian is needed then HCDSS is usually the only option to serve unless there is a family member willing.
- Often family are not able to serve as guardian because the issues are too much for them to handle or they have no way to pay for placement.
- This is making finding placement and arranging other services extremely challenging and time-consuming.
- These trends are echoed across the state with other counties reporting the same issues.
  - 19/20: 17,189 APS reports screened in statewide
  - 20/21: 18,844 APS reports screened in statewide
  - 20/22: 20,510 APS reports screened in statewide
- One good thing that's happened as of July, 2021, the state now lets us claim 100% MAC reimbursement on ANY APS case that has Medicaid. The SW's activity does not have to be medical-related. They just code 202-MAC or 204-MAC for all their work on that case.



- Henderson County Reimbursement for SW Time coded to MAC:
  - 21/22: \$59,451.38 in APS MAC reimbursement
  - 22/23: \$91,995.52 in APS MAC reimbursement
  - 23/24 YTD (July-Oct): \$31,248.49

F. Reports

**Director's Monthly Report (Attachment I)  
Questions Only**

Director McFalls stated that there are new initiatives in child welfare. We have converted from NC Fast to CWIS for Child Protective Services Intake and Investigations. Unlicensed kinship care providers are eligible to receive half of the standard board payment that licensed family foster homes and providers receive.

**December Employees of the Month (Attachment II)  
Questions only**

Director McFalls called attention to our Child and Family Resource Unit. They are the December Employees of the Month. Director McFalls stated that she feels we need to highlight the work the unit performs each holiday. This unit is committed to working weekends to ensure toys are gathered and distributed to our foster children. They work year-round on licensing of foster parents.

**December 2022 – December Statistical Report (Attachment III)  
Questions only**

None

**December Program Administrator's Report (Attachment IV)  
Questions only**

The Economic Services Program Administrator, Debby Freeman, stated that a correction needed to be made to the LIEAP numbers. The amount of payments we are sending out in December are \$178,300, bringing the total balance in the LIEAP fund to \$382,450.

The LIEAP and CIP funds help support county residents with electricity, gas, propane, oil and wood. If someone received funding last year, the state automatically sends a supplement directly to the providers, Duke Energy, Ferrel Gas, Wright Oil, and GNB, etc.

**Financial Report November 2023 (Attachment V)  
Questions only**

None



G. Old Business

**DSS Staffing Update.**

Director McFalls stated that we currently have eighteen vacancies. Three vacancies are in social work and twelve are in economic services, one child support agent, one Human Services Planner Evaluator, and one Administrative Assistant 2. We are working closely with HR to get positions posted. We had five new employees start December 18th.

We are prioritizing positions that we requested in our four-year budget plan. We have some flexibility that will allow us to re-write a job description to fill a necessary position to meet our needs.

H. New Business

**Resolution Adopting Special Rules of Procedure for Electronic Meetings and Electronic Participation by Members**

Director McFalls stated that last month we discussed the need to have a document allowing members to attend virtually. The county had a policy that covered boards during the pandemic, but once the pandemic ended, that policy was terminated.

The Resolution document was written by the county attorney and has been approved by the commissioners. The document outlines procedures that would allow a board member to attend a meeting virtually in the event of illness or being out of town. This document outlines a quorum, open meetings, and procedures for voting. This document would allow for role call for virtual votes. Chair Simpson made a motion to vote for approval. All present were in favor and the resolution passed.

**FY 24/25 Budget Timeline**

Wednesday, January 17<sup>th</sup>, the county will have the budget planning meeting. We will receive in mid-February, our estimates of our state and federal revenues. On Tuesday, March 19<sup>th</sup>, we will present the proposed FY 24/25 Budget to the board for discussion, amendments, and approval.

The final budget meeting before County Commissioners vote on the budget is planned for May 15<sup>th</sup>.

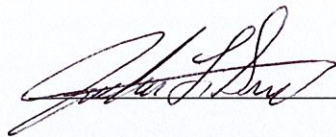
**Medicaid Expansion Update (MXP)**

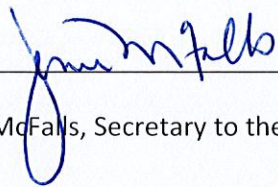
Medicaid applications have increased. We know increased applications will be ongoing, but we hope to have a better idea of the increase by the end of December. We are currently training more workers for Medicaid Expansion. The number of telephone calls and messages per day are averaging about 450 per day. We are currently working on a system to make returned calls more efficient.

I. Adjournment

Chair Simpson asked if there were any additional items for discussion. There were none presented. Chair Simpson made a motion to adjourn the meeting, Judy Smith seconded the motion. All present were polled and the motion passed. Chair Simpson adjourned the meeting at 1:13 pm.



  
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Josh Simpson, Chair                      1/16/24                      Date

  
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Jerrie McFalls, Secretary to the Board      Date

Attachments:

- I. Director's Report –December 2023
- II. December Employees of the Month
- III. Statistical Report – November 2023
- IV. Program Administrators' Report –December 2023
- V. Financial Report – November 2023
- VI. Resolution Adopting Special Rules of Procedure For Electronic Meetings and Remote Meeting Participation by Members