

Henderson County Board of Social Services
December 16th, 2025, Regular Meeting Minutes

A. Call to Order

The Henderson County Board of Social Services meeting was called to order by Chair Simpson at 12:01 pm

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| Board Members Present | Josh Simpson, Chair Stephen Gwaltney, Vice Chair Melinda Lowrance, Member Amy Holt, Member Jerrie McFalls, Member via phone |
| Staff Leadership Present | Lorie Horne, Social Services Director Debra Dunn, Deputy Director Melissa Novack, Administrative Officer Kandi Bridges, Interim Economic Services Administrator Candice Fowler, Administrative Assistant |
| Guest | Mary Kay Krokowski, League of Women Voters |

B. Public Input

Mary Kay Krokowski read a statement from the League of Women Voters.

C. Adjustments to the Agenda

None

D. Approval of Minutes

Mrs. Holt moved to approve the November 18th, 2025, meeting minutes, Mr. Gwaltney seconded.

Mrs. Lowrance moved to approve the November 18th, 2025, closed session minutes, Mr. Gwaltney seconded, the November minutes were approved.

E. Reports

Director's Monthly Report (Attachment I)

Chair Simpson asked if any of the foster care initiatives as a result of the Federal Executive Order: Fostering the Future for American Children and Families would affect the agency. Director Horne stated the changes might affect us at some point but has not come down to the agency yet.

December Program Administrator's Report (Attachment IV)

Mrs. Lowrance asked about teens that were at Only Hope. Director Horne stated that we never placed anyone in that facility, but our adult services did assist two young adults from the facility when it closed. Mr. Gwaltney asked what is family foster care? Deputy director Dunn stated that family foster care is regular foster families that do not take care of kids with higher needs. Chair Simpson asked if behavior is an issue for kids in group homes. Deputy director Dunn stated that typically kids that struggle in foster homes do better with the structure of group homes. Mrs. Holt asked what fictive kin is. Deputy Director Dunn stated the person has a relationship with the child, but they are not blood related, it could be a family friend or someone that the family has known for many years.

Fictive kin placements do not have to be licensed, but they are investigated to ensure the safety of the child.

November 2024- November 2025 Statistical Report (Attachment III)
None

F. Financial Report November 2025 (Attachment V)

Mrs. Novack stated we are at 38.7% spent overall.

Mrs. Novack stated that we need to evaluate the March 2026 board meeting, the meeting is currently scheduled for March 17th. The board members agreed to move the March 2026 board meeting to March 24th, 2026. Chair Simpson asked what we have in mind for the new budget. Mrs. Novack stated we have some IT needs, personnel needs, vehicles that were not approved last year. Director Horne stated that we may be looking into requesting some new positions and possible re-classes for current positions. Mrs. Novack stated that we also included an elevator refurbishment. Chair Simpson asked if there is anything that we are overspending on. Mrs. Novack stated that we are overspending on staff development and training.

G. Old Business

DSS Staffing Update

Mrs. Horne stated that we currently have 10 vacancies. We have four people in the process of being hired and two recent resignations. Mrs. Holt asked how long the hiring process has been taking. Director Horne stated that it has been taking between 7-14 days for fingerprints to be completed.

H. Adjournment

Chair Simpson made a motion to adjourn, Mr. Gwaltney seconded the motion. Chair Simpson adjourned the meeting at 12:26 pm.



Josh Simpson, Chair

1/20/26

Date



Lorie Horne, Secretary to the Board Date

Attachments:

- I. Director's Report – December 2025
- II. Statistical Report – November 2025
- III. Program Administrators' Report – December 2025
- IV. Financial Report – November 2025