

Henderson County Board of Social Services
March 24th, 2026, Regular Meeting Minutes

A. Call to Order

The Henderson County Board of Social Services meeting was called to order by Chair Simpson at 12:03 pm.

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

B. Public Input

None

C. Adjustments to the Agenda

None

D. Approval of Minutes

Minutes from February 17th, 2026, meeting were approved by a motion from Stephen Gwaltney, seconded by Amy Holt, with all members in favor.

E. Reports

Director's Monthly Report (Attachment I)

Jerrie McFalls asked if the mental health bed registry has been useful to the agency. Lorie Horne stated that it is not helpful at this time, but Healthy Blue says they are working on it. Amy Holt asked if the agency removed children from homes for gender identity issues. Lorie Horne stated that we have not.

March Program Administrator's Report (Attachment IV)

Amy Holt asked what the uptick in APS numbers is attributed to. Debbie Dunn stated that we are continuing to see complex issues with a younger population around mental health and dual diagnoses. Lorie Horne stated that the population is getting older as well, and that may be a part of the issue as well. COVID caused many issues with all the isolation during that time.

Stephen Gwaltney asked what the difference in involvement in open cases and ongoing cases is. Debbie Dunn stated that 102 cases were accepted for investigations. Amy Holt asked if the time frame was shortened on the cases. Debbie Dunn stated yes, they have 14 days to provide protection if needed.

Josh Simpson asked if people are coming from other counties to Henderson. Debbie Dunn stated we have not been told that, but we can see if we could determine that. Lorie Horne stated that many people retire here with no family close by.

Melinda Lowrance asked if we would see an uptick in foster care due to the economy with parents no longer being able to provide for their children. Debbie Dunn stated that it could create another stress for families that are already stretched.

Subsidized Childcare Program 2026

Jerrie McFalls moved to approve the subsidized Childcare program policy for Henderson County, Melinda Lowrance seconded. All members were in favor.

**February 2025- February 2026 Statistical Report (Attachment III)
None**

F. Financial Report February 2026 (Attachment V)

Melissa Novack discussed February 2026 finances.

Jerrie McFalls asked if we budget for the 457. Melissa Novack stated that we do not, the county budgets for that.

FY 26/27 Budget Approval

Melissa Novack reviewed the budget highlights with the board, new positions, vehicle requests, scanning project, postage increase, and payroll related items.

Josh Simpson moved to approve the FY 26/27 Social Services budget, Jerrie McFalls seconded. All members were in favor.

G. Old Business

DSS Staffing Update

Lorie Horne stated that we have 11 vacancies total with two candidates in pre-employment stage, and one candidate waiting on a wage request. Two positions have never been used and will be re-classed next year for a training team.

H. Adjournment

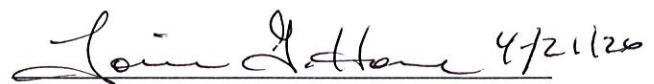
Chair Simpson made a motion to adjourn; Mr. Gwaltney seconded the motion. Chair Simpson adjourned the meeting at **1:04 pm.**



Josh Simpson, Chair

4/21/26

Date



Lorie Horne, Secretary to the Board Date

Attachments:

- I. Director's Report – March 2026
- II. Statistical Report – March 2026
- III. Program Administrators' Report – March 2026
- IV. Financial Report – March 2026
- V. Subsidized Childcare Program Policy
- VI. FY 26/27 Budget