

Henderson County Board of Social Services

April 21st, 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 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

Chair Simpson stated that we need to add a closed session to end of meeting.

D. Approval of Minutes

Minutes from March 24th, 2026, meeting was approved by a motion from Jerrie McFalls, seconded by Melinda Lowrance, with all members present in favor.

E. Reports

Director's Monthly Report (Attachment I)

Chair Simpson asked if the agency has seen any funding issues. Director Horne stated that nothing has changed, the state still doesn't have a budget. We have had some coding changes, but that has since resolved, it was not a big issue.

Melinda Lowrance asked what the specific exemptions are for Medicaid. Kandi Bridges stated they are changing the rules and the policy to a shorter list of eligibility; we can get specifics next month. They are still working on the policy.

April Program Administrator's Report (Attachment IV)

Jerrie McFalls asked if the local radio stations are advertising Foster Care recruitment. Debbie Dunn stated they are using mainstream radio stations in WNC.

Amy Holt asked if the ED placement means that someone is staying in the emergency room. Debbie Dunn stated yes, sometimes people stay in the ER until placement is found.

Amy Holt asked about the CSST positions. Debra Dunn stated CSST stands for Community Social Services Technician. These positions provide services to people so that APS involvement is not necessary. The CSSTs assist people at home to avoid going into a facility.

March 2025 March 2026 Statistical Report (Attachment III)
None

F. Financial Report March 2026 (Attachment V)

Melissa Novack stated overall we are underspent at 69.9%

Amy Holt asked about staff training and development. Melissa Novack stated that we want to continue the path that we have started with leadership training. Director Horne stated that we have started training with Allies for Outcomes around leadership and capacity building. Debbie Dunn stated that we are starting with the top, so it flows down from program managers to supervisors, and on to frontline staff. We have identified specific needs, and we do deep dives, when necessary, group training and individual work are being done as well. We are investing in this training to create better outcomes and succession planning for all departments. Director Horne stated that we are using this opportunity to enhance leadership skills and develop leaders within the department. We have had positive feedback from staff.

Chair Simpson asked if there are any revenue issues that the federal government is not going to cover. Melissa Novack stated there are not any issues on our radar. Director Horne stated that we have had discussions with the county and made them aware of the lack of reimbursement.

Chair Simpson asked when the budget will be voted on. Director Horne stated that May 4th the county manager budget will be presented. The commissioner's first meeting in June could be the final budget approval.

G. Old Business

DSS Staffing Update

Director Horne stated that we have 15 vacancies. We've had a retirement, a termination, and a resignation recently. Two positions have never been filled. We currently have four candidates starting in May.

H. 2025 Local Child Fatality Prevention Local Team Report

Jerrie McFalls asked if they were changing the scope of what they review. Director Horne stated yes, they are making changes. The state is no longer doing intensive reviews; they are leaving it up to the child fatality team. The intensive reviews will not be presented over multiple days; they will be in one session.

I. 2026 Upcoming board vacancies


Director Horne stated that we have two upcoming vacancies in June 2026. One vacancy is a Henderson County Board of Commissioner appointee, and the second vacancy is a Social Service commission appointee. Both vacancies have been posted online and in the newspaper.

J. Closed Session

Chair Simpson made a motion to go into closed session at 1:03 pm.

K. Adjournment


Chair Simpson made a motion to adjourn; Melinda Lowrance seconded the motion. Chair Simpson adjourned the meeting at 1:19pm.



Josh Simpson, Chair

5/19/26

Date

 5-19-26

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. 2025 Local Child Fatality Prevention Local Team Report