

RUTHERFORD COUNTY  
SOCIAL SERVICES BOARD  
June 19, 2019  
MINUTES

The Rutherford County Social Services Board met on June 19, 2019, at 8:30 am in the Department of Social Services Conference Room. Board members attending were Mrs. Jacqueline Hampton, Mr. David Herndon, Mr. Bryan King, and Mrs. Barbara Thompson. Mr. Joseph Maimone attended via conference call. Staff members attending were Mrs. Kandi Bridges, Mr. John Carroll, Mrs. Pam Price, Mr. Warren Sparrow, and Mrs. Luann Butler.

Mrs. Hampton called the meeting to order.

Mr. Herndon made a motion to approve the agenda. Mr. Maimone seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous.

Mr. King made a motion to approve the minutes. Mrs. Thompson seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS**

None

**PERSONNEL REPORT**

Mr. Carroll presented the Personnel Report. He stated that since the last meeting, there has been two new hires in Economic Services – Ms. Jessica Jones and Ms. Megan Bridges - they were introduced to the Board by Mrs. Bridges and two transfers within the agency, Ms. Brittany Hudson and Ms. Toni Merck. There were no resignations or terminations, and there are no vacancies at this time. He reported that last month, there were some technical issues with the spreadsheet and comp time did not calculate correctly in two areas (CPS and F&C Medicaid). This resulted in a slightly lower reported increase in the total comp time. The increase should have been 5.52%, not 3.99%. This has been corrected. Based on the corrected report, there is a decrease in total comp time of 5.30% from last month. There were decreases in all Income Maintenance areas for a total of 12%. There were also decreases in CPS and Foster Care for a total of 9% for all Children's Services

**BUDGET DISCUSSION**

Mrs. Price stated for the eleven months ending May 31, the contribution from the general fund for administrative expenses is 84.4%, which is 7.2% under budget. The contribution from the general fund for the program expenses is at 102.6%, which is 10.9% over budget.

Mrs. Price gave the details for the expense lines that are over budget.

Mr. Carroll stated that quotes are being requested for drug testing from other labs and also reassessment of the current testing.

Mr. Carroll stated that it is expected that there will not be a final State budget passed by June 30. If the budget does not pass, the County will operate on the current budget appropriations and increases will not go into effect until a budget is passed.

#### **SERVICE REPORT**

Mr. Carroll presented the Service Report noting that there has not been much change in Adult Protective Services numbers in the past several months, but over the last few years we have seen this grow. He stated there could be some additional APS funds in the State budget. The House has \$800,000 in their budget and the Senate \$400,000, and there are also additional funds in the Governor's budget. Currently, the County pays the largest portion of APS and Guardianship at 81%, Federal funds pay 18%, and the State less than 1%.

Mr. Carroll shared that he will be emailing a document, Adult Services Roadmap, to DSS Board Members and the County Commissioners. This document was created by Mr. Carroll and the other co-chairs of the Adult Services Committee for the Director's Association. This document highlights the unmet needs of aging adults in our State and recommendations for additional and improved services and additional funding. The document will be shared with members of the General Assembly to aid in advocating for needed services and funding.

Mr. Carroll noted a slight increase in the number of total CPS Reports and screened in reports, as well as, an increase in the number of children in DSS custody. There are about 55 more children over last year and 14 more than last month. Fifty-three, or 28%, of these are in non-paid placements. It was noted that over the past two months, two sibling groups of 6 were taken into custody.

#### **ENERGY PROGRAMS OUTREACH PLAN**

Mrs. Bridges made note of the Energy Programs Outreach Plan that is submitted to the Board for approval each year at this time. She stated that this plan educates the public on the Energy Programs and that there have been additional agencies added to the plan this year. Last year, with all the applicants that had come in to apply, we still had funding available, so we reached out to the community during the end of the season to try to get more eligible applicants to apply, but it seemed no matter how we tried to give it away, we still had funding available. Mr. King made a motion to approve the Energy Programs Outreach Plan and Mr. Herndon seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous.

## **DISCUSSION OF CHANGE IN TIME OF DSS BOARD MEETINGS**

After discussion of the most convenient time and place to hold the DSS Board's monthly meetings, it was decided to move the meetings to 4pm on the same date, the third Wednesday of each month, at the Rutherford County Administrative Office, effective with the July 17, 2019 meeting. The motion was made by Mrs. Barbara Thompson and seconded by Mr. Joseph Maimone. The vote was unanimous.

## **PROGRAM UPDATES:**

### **Social Work**

Mr. Sparrow updated the Board on the Jail Medication Assisted Treatment. He stated this is grant money that RHI has awarded to United Way (UW). These services are no longer being provided by the previous agency that UW contracted with. DSS has been asked to administer the services through our contractors who were former Family Preservation employees who bring numerous qualifications with them. They will be serving inmates providing assessment services, participating in group treatments, working with doctors and nurses, and getting initial treatment for the inmates while they are incarcerated, then continuing treatment upon release. Some of these clients are already involved with DSS, approximately 50-70% of them. UW has submitted another grant to extend or add to the current grant for a proposed amount of \$200,000 for three years. This would include funding for drug screening, adding additional services from other recruited resources, participating in treatment, group therapy, and some form of an employment piece. This too would be at no cost to our Agency and benefits the Agency and the County. Mr. Carroll stated that this program could possibly help with our drug testing line item.

### **Economic Services**

Mrs. Bridges stated that the Agency received a new, more current receptionist software system that will help track clients when they come into the Agency. She also mentioned that there is a change in voter registration due to a lawsuit which requires us to make sure the client is offered the voter registration form at application, re-enrollment, or if a change occurs. If this is not done in person, a letter has to be mailed giving the client the opportunity to register, and it has to be documented in NC FAST that the form and/or letter was given. If the form is given during the interview process, the worker must assist in filling out the form if help is needed. This is an unfunded mandate and will increase our postage line item along with the worker's time to process this task. Mrs. Bridges discussed Hawkins vs Cohen lawsuit stating that a disabled client's Medicaid did not get extended. If a client is not eligible under Family & Children's Medicaid, then we have to let them apply for disability and this should be protected time while the disability process is being verified.

## **Director's Report**

Mr. Carroll provided an update on Medicaid Transformation, referencing the written report included in the agenda packet. In addition to what was included, he added that the Agency recently completed a survey for the Division of Health Benefits indicating that the Agency is interested in having an enrollment broker on site at least eight hours per week during open enrollment. This will be a good opportunity to engage consumers in the office that might otherwise not enroll. Also, the State will be providing the Agency with the enrollment packets and other information that will be mailed to consumers. This will be shared with all Agency staff so that everyone is aware of the changes and have some limited knowledge to guide consumers and refer them to the appropriate resource to answer their questions.

Mr. Carroll referred the Board to the document in the agenda packet regarding proposed bills that are being followed. Regarding Senate Bill 212 (NC FAST P4), he stated that the major concern in the bill continues to be the statement that the State will not deploy the system statewide prior to October, 2019. The lobbyists for the Director's Association is working with Senate sponsors of the bill on ensuring that the system will be available 24/7, that there is reliable data, and continued postponement until the pilot counties feel that it is ready and the State has looked at other systems.

Regarding Senate Bill 3 (Close the Medicaid Coverage Gap), he stated that this expansion would have a positive impact on child welfare, especially Foster Care, because parents would be able to continue Medicaid coverage after their children are removed, allowing them to engage in treatment services. This is not in the House or Senate budget, but something that the Governor wants. This may be one reason the Governor may veto the final budget, which will lead to further debate.

Senate Bill 538 (Temporary Financial Assistance/SA Facilities) - In addition to information on the bill list, Mr. Carroll stated that there are differences in the Senate and House budgets, with one at \$46 and the other at \$184. Currently, temporary assistance is \$34. This is additional money per resident per month, in lieu of a rate increase. If the temporary assistance continues as opposed to a rate increase, more and more people will be ineligible for SA because the income limits are so low to qualify. The number of people on SA in NC has gone from 26,000 five years ago to 20,000. Any increase will increase the County's budget, which has already been developed and approved. Beyond the 50%, it could also affect the County in another way. When DSS has an APS or guardianship case that needs placement in this level of care and their income is slightly above the cap, the County would have to supplement their income. More citizens unable to get their needs met could lead to increased APS reports and guardianship cases.

There is also a bill that would raise the personal care allowance for assisted living residents. This increase could help some people qualify because this amount is not counted in the income, and it could push income down and help them to qualify. Again, while the increase is needed because it is difficult for residents to meet their needs, it would affect our current approved budget.

There were no staff kudos.

#### **CLOSED SESSION**

None

#### **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

None

#### **ADJOURN**

Mrs. Thompson made a motion to adjourn and Mr. Herndon seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous to adjourn.

Respectfully Submitted,

Chairman

Secretary

pc: Board Members