

The Northampton County Board of Social Services met via Zoom on June 15, 2021. The meeting was called to order at 9:00 am. Present were Edith Johnson, Chairwoman, Spencer Murray, Board Member, Janice Langley, Board Member, and Mozella Francis, Director.

On a motion by Board Member Janice Langley, the Minutes of the May 18, 2021 meeting were approved with no noted changes. There was no public comment or correspondence.

The Board was provided a copy of the FY 2021 budget noting that we have approached the end of the fiscal year. Ms. Francis advised that the April and May expenditures were significantly higher than previous months due to the fact that we were at the end of the budget year and therefore had more expenditures. One of the most significant expenditures was installing the security key codes to all of the doors in order to safeguard records and to maintain the confidentiality of our clients. This expense was close to \$100K. In May the Agency purchased an abundance of office supplies being proactive as we continue to fill the vacancies. Board Member, Mr. Murray made a motion that the financials be approved. Board Member, Ms. Langley seconded the motion.

Ms. Francis provided an overview of APS and AS updates as well, clarified the difference between the departments. Adult Protective Services and AS actually fall under the Department of Rehab Services not the main department of social services and therefore makes it challenging when dealing with these entities. Ms. Francis continued that staff

Continues to receive a lot of requests for UAI's (Uniform Assessment Instruments) that determine whether individuals are eligible for long term care. We have some time had as many as twenty UAI's in a month. The Department of Rehab Services have been allowing UAI's to be conducted telephonically. COVID rules have now been lifted and workers are expected to resume face to face. DARS has allowed a (3) month transition. We may need to evaluate man power and what that will look like when that happens.

Ms. Francis updated the Board on the Child Care Program indicating that we are expecting an increase as more members of the community find out that the income requirements are now 185% of the State medium income. This current income threshold makes many middle-income families eligible for childcare. This will mean that more people will be applying for child care but unfortunately we have limited vendors and are doing the best we can to keep up with the anticipated influx and limited vendors. Effective July 1, 2021 our vendors' regulations now fall under the Department of Education. Childcare is preparing for regulatory changes in the future. Right now, all existing child care regulations have been grandfathered in.

With the VIEW (Virginia Initiative for Employment and Work) program our numbers are increasing. Once the COVID regulations lifts the Agency will have to look more closely at providing work force development opportunities to the ABAWD population. ABAWDS having to meet work requirements to maintain benefits was put on hold with the Pandemic. When the federal mandate lifts the

waiver it will mean in order for the ABAWDS to receive benefits (if they are not working 20 hours or greater) they will need to be in a work program but not just that, the state will require every Agency to operate in what is called the SNAPET work program. Ms. Francis reiterated that we need those that currently receive SNAP to have an option to say they would like to get assistance with work. We are doing everything possible to keep up with the mandates.

Ms. Francis updated the Board on CPS. Currently we are expecting a 30-35% increase in our caseloads with a new set of criteria. We've had community stakeholder meetings to introduce, train, and educate our court systems on this new program which begins July 1, 2021.

Ms. Francis provided an update with Foster Care/Child Welfare. Currently, we have 8 children and we hope the numbers will decrease in the next 6-8 months especially with children aging out from the program. Ms. Francis reminded that face to face has resumed months ago for child welfare except in cases which there is fear of exposure to COVID. Fostering Futures – even though these are adults, agencies must comply with state guidelines and conduct face to face monthly meetings. This can be challenging because many youth do not reside locally.

Ms. Francis briefed the board on our Medicaid, SNAP, and Cooling Programs stating that numbers are steadily increasing because of the job situations making more people eligible for Medicaid. Currently, the Agency receives between 5-6 applications a week

on top of the existing applications. The SNAP application numbers have plateaued due to the

Pandemic EBT as currently one does not have to be in the SNAP program to receive the Pandemic EBT. To receive the Pandemic EBT one only needs a child to be enrolled in the school system. June 16, 2021 is the beginning of the Fuel systems program. We expect fewer people filing for cooling over heating due to the eligibility criteria.

Mr. Murray provided an update regarding VOIP going countywide. Mr. Murray has been in communication with the Board of Supervisors and understands that the county is planning on county a County wide VOIP plan, however, there are no concrete plans. The County has more meetings with Vendors and the planning continues but nothing definitive at this time.

Ms. Francis advised the Board that NCDSS schedules to re-open to the public by appointment only beginning July 6, 2021. The Agency will evaluate and make any changes to the plan as we move forward. **Chairwoman Johnson inquired about notifying the public? Ms. Francis responded that we have a PSA on the local radio station being advertised as well, the PSA will be available on the County DSS website.**

Ms. Francis notified the Board that there would be an audit occurring on June 24, 2021 to look into our CPS processes. The information obtained will be part of the upcoming JLARC (Joint Legislative Audit & Review Committee) study. Ms. Francis also indicated

that she would be in person for the interview. Ms. Francis also suggested discussing more in closed session.

On a motion by Chairwoman Edith Johnson, the Board went into Closed Session in accordance with Section 2.1-344 of the Code of Virginia, as amended, for the purpose of discussion or consideration of employment, assignment, appointment, promotion, performance, demotion, salaries, disciplining appointees or employees of any public body.

The next Board of Director's meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, July 20, 2021 at 9:00 a.m.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:45 a.m.

Edith Johnson, Chairman
June 15, 2021

Attested by _____
Mozella F. Francis
Director