

The Northampton County Board of Social Services met in the Board Room of the Social Services Building on July 20, 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 Mr. Spencer Murray, the Minutes of the June 15, 2021 meeting were approved with no noted changes. Ms. Janice Langley seconded the motion. There was no public comment or correspondence.

The Board was provided a copy of the end of the FY budget (local balance) and the FY2022 budget. We used all the monies provided by the locality at the end of the FY except \$13,171.88 which will be given back to the County. This will close our FY 2021 for the locality. FY2022 budget includes Rescue Funding for Adult Protective Services and Federal Funding for the implementation of Families First. Otherwise there with no notable outliers. Board Member, Mr. Murray made a motion that the financials be approved. Board Member, Ms. Langley seconded the motion.

Ms. Francis announced that the Agency will be reopening to the public on July 9, 2021 (by appointment only) Being opened for two weeks we have had a smooth transition with minimal requests for a face-to-face meeting. Staff is scheduled each day in the event a face-to-face is required. We have personnel in areas such as Long Term Care available should the client need help in specialty areas by appointment. There have been no complaints from the community

with the transitioning of opening up the Agency. Ms. Langley commended Ms. Francis and the staff for the performance with the community during the Pandemic with thanks for returning phone calls and correspondence promptly.

Ms. Francis provided an update on the Child Care program. With the changes with the legislature and its impact on the program the income base is now 185% of the State's medium income which significantly opens the door for more middle-income families to become eligible for the benefit. We expect to see applications increase due to this change however, the Agency is tracking the numbers and have a strategic plan in place to mitigate any challenges with the increase of applications. Child Care copays are waived until the end of the year. The Agency is actively educating the community as to the new childcare changes and recruiting vendors.

Ms. Francis provided an overview of APS, AS, and Foster Care. The State is going back to a new sense of normalcy and now effective, July 1, 2021, we are going back to in-person UAI's (Uniform Assessment Instruments). The State has granted a 60 day grace period. We now have 8 children in care and are actively recruiting Foster Care parents.

Ms. Francis briefed the board on SNAP and TANF we are seeing an increase in TANF cases. This could be a result of COVID. Even if one has exhausted their 60-month clock they are eligible to apply for

TANF. During COVID, the Federal government relaxed the rule during a public health emergency. With the SNAP program, we have not seen a significant increase but we expect that to change as individuals no longer receive the federal unemployment supplement.

Ms. Francis updated the Board on the Virginia Overtime Wage Act. This means the Agency will no longer offer compensatory time for any overtime used, as of July 1, 2021. All staff who are non-exempt must be paid for any overtime. Therefore, any non-exempt staff who, because of circumstances beyond their control find themselves entering overtime by the close of the week must communicate with their supervisor to flex their schedule, if possible. When we start to get the backlogged renewals we will need to look at how the Agency is going to work this option. This new law creates a possible budgetary impact since, when planning the budget, this change was not a factor.

Ms. Francis updated the board on the state of Virginia unemployment benefits indicating that as of September 6, 2021, the additional \$300 being offered to the unemployed will end. Ms. Francis also indicated the electrical moratorium will probably end soon as well. Delinquent accounts will be in jeopardy of disconnect if the client is unable to pay unless additional funding is granted. Mr. Murray inquired about the delinquent accounts and would Families First funding be able to assist. Ms. Francis explained that the federal funding through Families First could not assist with delinquent accounts. Ms. Francis indicated that the bills are very high and that Social

Services encourage all clients to work with the Cooperative to establish a payment plan. Mr. Murray

mentioned that this will be a huge impact on schoolchildren when it comes to showering, doing homework, etc. when the electricity gets turned off. Mr. Murray will look into any monies that may be available via the County.

Ms. Francis announced that the Agency is almost fully staffed. With the newer employees, they are all heavily training which puts a little more of a workload on the Sr. Lead workers while they also help to train the new workers.

Ms. Francis briefed the Board on the Families First initiative. This is the Federal legislation that afforded the Department of Social Services Federal dollars for prevention. Once a person becomes eligible for prevention we can provide evidence-based services to them. The State has approved Multi-systemic Therapy, Family Functional Therapy, and Parent-Child Interaction Therapy as well as, family and child substance abuse programs. This allows for the parent and the child to stay together.

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.

Mr. Murray motioned that the DSS Board direct the DSS Director to compose a “Recovery Proposal” outlining community needs that DSS can meet with additional funding. I further move that this proposal be reviewed by the DSS Board and after approval, be presented to the Northampton County Board of Supervisors as a request for federal recovery funds up to \$200,000 which will be distributed and tracked within the Northampton citizen community. Ms. Langley seconded the motion. All were in favor.

The next Board of Director’s meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, August 17, 2021, at 9:00 a.m.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:15 a.m.

Attested by _____	
_____ Edith Johnson, Chairman July 20, 2021	_____ Mozella F. Francis Director