



COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

Mike Dasher, Chair
Diana Hales, Vice Chair
Jim Crawford
Franklin Gomez Flores
Karen Howard

COUNTY MANAGER: Dan LaMontagne

Chatham County Board of Social Services Meeting Minutes January 20, 2021

The January meeting was conducted by GoToMeeting due to COVID-19. Members in attendance: Richard Edwards, Chair; Tom Droke, Vice Chair; Valerie Broadway, Member; Emily Lowrance, Member; Carl Thompson, Member; Jennie Kristiansen, Director and Nancy Burgess, Executive Assistant.

Richard Edwards called the meeting to order.

Carl Thompson motioned to approve the December meeting minutes with a second motion from Valerie Broadway; with all in favor.

The Board reviewed data from October, November and December. There was agreement that the Help Desk ticket line item could be removed from the monthly tracking sheet.

Ms. Kristiansen reviewed CPS initiation timeliness for the October, November and December (this review was delayed due to the cyber incident). October initiation timeliness was 80% with five cases outside of time frame. All five cases were late because children were out of state, the initiation involved requesting help from another county, and in one incident contact information for the family was unavailable. November timeliness was 79% with four cases outside of time frame. Initiations were late due to a child being out of state, a report not received within time frame (report was emailed when system was down due to the cyber incident), a miscommunication between on-call and the assigned social worker, and one report was received without contact information. Timeliness for December was 86% with three cases initiated outside of time frames. One was 25 minutes outside of time frame. In the other two, there were family scheduling difficulties and the initiation was late to accommodate work schedules.

There was significant progress in December for recovery of the county cyber disruption. All employees received their computers back and access to the shared drives and scanning to email had been restored. Voicemail was functional for some employees but there was still no access to encrypted email or document management systems. The lack of these two functions prevented any mail from being scanned and supervisors from completing required record reviews. In some instances, this resulted in mail being sent to the incorrect caseworker (if a client had more than one caseworker), and moving forward will be a large undertaking once the systems are restored. Typical scanning and indexing mail into document storage takes an average of 3-4 hours each day.

Economic Services Updates:

Additional benefits continued to be available for clients who were eligible for Food and Nutrition benefits. The COVID-19 Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act provided an increase in the FNS benefits maximum allotments to 115 % of the prior fiscal year. The increased benefits will be available from January 1 through June 30, 2021. The Act removed the work requirement for some students in higher education. Also, the Pandemic-EBT program will be issuing additional benefits for children in families who

are eligible for free and reduced lunch. If NC's latest plan for food assistance is approved by USDA, this will mean that \$1.3 billion has been spent to combat food insecurity in NC during the COVID crisis.

Applications for the Low-Income Energy Assistance Programs were now available online. The transition went smoothly, and it is anticipated that the time frame for application approvals would be extended in order to accommodate the increase in applications that were submitted after hours and on the weekends. Time frame was 2 days with a new due date of 10 days (this must be included in the state Energy Plan). Medicaid Transformation (i.e., NC's transition to a managed care model for Medicaid) was underway, however, the NC General Assembly needed to approve the funding for go live by July 1, 2021. Open enrollment is scheduled to begin on March 15, 2021.

Family Services Updates:

Chatham DSS met all requirements for the 2020 Singe County Audit. The MIS (Management Information System) department was able to give limited access to the document management system so that all over 200 documents required for the additional adoption cases could be pulled out of the two systems over a two-day period to meet the audit requirements.

The Christmas programs were also very successful this year. Over 380 children and 75 adults were sponsored. There were 119 community donors for the children's program and 54 donors for the adult program. Over \$14,000 was received in financial donations.

General Updates:

The Chatham County budget process was underway and additional information will be provided next month. The Board discussed submission of the mid-year evaluation form for Jennie Kristiansen. Ms. Kristiansen will send this form to Mr. Edwards.


With no further items to discuss, there was a motion to adjourn from Tom Droke with a second motion from Emily Lowrance; with all in favor.

The next board meeting will be held Wednesday, February 17th at 3:00pm via GoToMeeting.



Chair

3/24/21
Date



Secretary

3/30/21
Date