

COUNTY OF CHATHAM

CHATHAM COUNTY
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

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Jennie Kristiansen, Director

Social Services Board
Richard Edwards
Thomas Droke
Valerie Broadway
Emily Lowrance
Carl Thompson, Sr.

ORGANIZED 1770

707 SQUARE MILES

Chatham County Board of Social Services Meeting Minutes February 17, 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; Ben Townsend, Fiscal Officer and Nancy Burgess, Executive Assistant.

Tom Droke called the meeting to order.

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

Ms. Kristiansen and Ben Townsend provided the board with an overview of the proposed budget for FY 22. Tom Droke motioned to approve the FY 22 budget with a second from Emily Lowrance; with all in favor.

Review of Monthly Data

Ms. Kristiansen reviewed the monthly data report. CPS received 19 accepted reports for the month of January. Four were initiated outside of timeframe, with a timeliness of 79%. In the first case, the initiation involved assistance from another county and was 1.5 hours outside of time frame. In the second case, the mother and sibling were out of town. In the third case, the initiation was completed by an on call social worker and there was a miscommunication about another child who was not home at the time of the visit. In the final case, the parent was homeless, moving frequently and did not have a reliable phone number. Extensive searching, home visits, and calls to the employer were made.

Economic Services Updates

Childcare subsidy preliminary spending for January was 99.7% and the Chatham County spending coefficient was 102%. There were still some school age children who were utilizing subsidy due to school closures which costs the state \$1.5 million monthly. The Division of Child Development and Early Education had communicated that they would be able to fund county overspending due to the pandemic. They also received an additional \$393 million dollars to spend in the next two years. Unfortunately, it can't be spent on subsidy because the state is not in the position to maintain the spending. The General Assembly may decide to put spending parameters in place. The Division is planning on using some funds to provide operational grants to childcare centers, regardless of star rating and also to pay parent fees.

Medicaid transformation efforts continued and open enrollment for managed care was scheduled to begin in March. Medicaid transportation for people who were enrolled in standard plans would also be managed by the plans. The Division of Health Benefits estimated that only about 15% of trips will transition in fiscal year 2022. There will be a media campaign to educate people about Medicaid transformation that will include radio, tv, and social media ads. A marketing firm has been brought in by NC DHHS to assist. Also, the RFA process was underway for the selection of the tailored plan which are slated to go live in July 2022. Tailored plans are for beneficiaries with more specialized needs (e.g., individuals with severe and persistent mental illness or Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities or children in foster care).

NCFAST was working to create an expedited application process for some Medicaid applications. The goal is for certain types of applications to process automatically. There will also be an option for hospitals to enter referrals for newborns born to Medicaid eligible mothers into EPASS (the online application portal). This will reduce the amount of information that must be manually keyed by the DSS caseworker. There is pilot project taking place with five counties.

Food and Nutrition Program, NC DSS was collaborating with schools to roll out of the Pandemic-EBT program for students who participate in free or reduced lunch and learning remotely. Food Lion was added as new vendor for online food purchasing.

Family Services

The Division of Aging and Adult Services (DAAS) was working on a Lifespan Respite projects to enhance and increase the quality of life for those that need respite care. Caregivers often face challenges that can increase risk of depression and health risks. Through the project, reimbursement up to \$500 can be made to unpaid caregivers.

There were several initiatives underway at NC DSS related to child welfare and updates were provided by the division in January. The kinship care and the kinship navigator programs were launched to decrease time to permanence and improve licensure rates for kinship care providers. NCDSS also partnered with UNC to develop educational materials for kinship care providers regarding the KinGAP (Kinship Guardianship Assistance Program). There were modifications to state support to counties through the Regional Child Welfare Consultants (RCWC). The RCWC's were making monthly contacts with county and conducting targeted case reviews. Details were released for the Medicaid Tailored Plan for children in foster care. The public comment deadline is 2/25/21. The Division was partnering with the Child Maltreatment Program to develop additional supports for counties when they are investigating allegations of abuse. There will soon be a team of Regional Abuse and Medical Specialists available 24/7 to provide guidance to the child welfare workforce about high-risk child welfare cases that overlap with the medical system. There will be a special focus on children under age 3, children with medically complex issues, substance affected infants, and children required to be referred for a Child Medical Examination.

Cyber Update

Almost all systems were restored at DSS. There were a few outstanding issues with phones and encrypted email that were still being worked out. DSS was working with the county manager's office to identify anyone whose information may have been taken to ensure that proper notification was made.

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

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



Chair

3/24/21
Date



Secretary

3/30/21
Date

