

# COUNTY OF CHATHAM

CHATHAM COUNTY  
Jennie Kristiansen, Director  
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

PO Box  
Social Services Board:  
Pittsboro, NC 27312  
Phone: (919) 542-2759  
Fax: (919) 542-6355  
Valerie Broadway



489

Richard Edwards  
Thomas Droke

Carl Thompson, Sr.

Pastor Cecil Wilson

ORGANIZED 1770

707 SQUARE MILES

## Chatham County Board of Social Services Session Meeting Minutes November 17, 2021

Members in attendance: Richard Edwards, Chair; Thomas Droke, Vice Chair, Valerie Broadway, Member; Carl Thompson, Member; Cecil Wilson, Member; Jennie Kristiansen, Director; LeAnn McKoy, Planner/Evaluator, and Nancy Burgess, Executive Assistant.

Richard Edwards called the meeting to order.

Carl Thompson motioned to approve the October minutes, with a second motion from Tom Droke; with all in favor.

### Review of Monthly Data

CPS had 31 accepted reports in October. Six cases were initiated outside of timeframe, with a timeliness of 81%. Three reports were initiated within a few hours of the time frame (.5-2.5 hours). In two reports, the family could not be located, and diligent efforts were made. In another report, everyone was seen except for a child who was placed in a residential facility out of county. The request was sent to the other county and was completed two days late. Since the CPS team was continuing to do everything within their control to meet a 95% standard, they requested a review by the NC DSS Child Welfare Consultant, sending data and requesting feedback. This review found that Chatham County, on average, initiates 82% timely which is above the state average (for NCFast counties) of 79%. The consultant will also be conducting reviews of cases to make determinations that the diligent effort standard to locate was met.

### Economic Services Updates

The Low-Income Household Water Assistance Program (LIHWAP) will take effect in NC on December 1<sup>st</sup> for certain groups of households. The program provides federal assistance to low-income households, who pay a higher proportion of their income for water and wastewater. To date, the town of Siler City has submitted an agreement to participate in the program, but it is hopeful that most other water providers in the county will follow. Phone calls have been made to all water providers to encourage participation and answer questions.

Some LIHWAP water customers will be automatically eligible if receiving Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (Work First), Food and Nutrition Services (FNS), or if they received Low Income Energy Assistance in fiscal year 2020-2021. The first two groups eligible will be households that have had water services disconnected or households in jeopardy of water services being disconnected unless action is

taken to prevent the disconnect. There is no limit to the amount of assistance that can be provided to these groups. If there are funds available, starting on January 3<sup>rd</sup>, households with water bills that need assistance to maintain service will also be eligible. There will be a maximum assistance of \$600.

Open enrollment for the Federal Health Insurance Marketplace will be from November 1 through January 15, 2021. There is additional financial assistance available this year through the American Rescue Plan to reduce premiums.

The childcare subsidy program continued to remove children from the waitlist. There were 66 children remaining on the waitlist and 31 new children received vouchers for childcare (fiscal year to date).

The FNS waiver for supplementing benefits to the maximum allotment will continued for December (this is a waiver that is applied for monthly by NC DHHS).

### **Family Services**

NC DHSS has issued guidance on COVID vaccinations for children 5-11 and efforts are underway for vaccinating children in foster care. Parental consent must be obtained and if not, then each situation is staffed to determine if a court order will be sought so that a child may be vaccinated. Supervisors have added this to their monthly supervision checklist, and it's also being reviewed as needed with the child welfare attorney.

The clinician from Youth Villages, who will be providing behavioral health assessments for children in the DSS office, has started today and will be in Chatham County one day a week. She will also participate in case staffing to provide support.

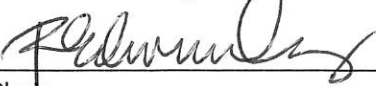
Cim Brailer, Family Services Program Administrator, was selected as a 2021 Local Government Federal Credit Union Fellow in the UNC School of Government Leading for Results Program. The program focuses on personal and organization leadership, and she was selected out of a pool of 120 applicants. She completed the program in October.

### **Agency Updates**

The County Heads Up Process finished the week of November 8th. This is one of the first steps in the budget process designed to identify potential issues impacting budget requests for the 2021-2022 fiscal year. Every county department is divided into Collaborative Impact Team (CIT) and the teams developed joint "Heads Up Documents" this year. Each document addresses Service Capacity and Availability, Access to Technology, Equity, New Issues, and COVID impacts. There are two DSS specific issues in the Human Services CIT document. One is the further development of a Continuous Quality Improvement program for Economic Services. More frequent policy changes and audits have resulted in supervisors working to ensure proper training and application of policy but not enough time to monitor more than the minimum number of cases. Counties who have implemented CQI models report improvements in training, accuracy, and turnover. When errors are not identified, both the county and recipient can be negatively impacted through the paying back of funds (for some programs even when DSS makes the error, the client is responsible for the overpayment). The second issue is pertaining to the size and scope of the Adult Services unit. Currently this is one of the largest in the agency and the Adult Services Supervisor is on call 365 days a year to support. As the aging population in the county grows, this may require some reconfiguration.

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

The next meeting will be held virtually on December 15, 2021 via GoToMeeting at 3:00pm.

  
Chair

6-9-22  
Date

  
Secretary

6/21/22  
Date

