

# County of Chatham

CHATHAM COUNTY  
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

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Jennie Kristiansen, Director

Valerie Broadway, Chair

Thomas Droke, Member  
Sara Welch, Member



Social Services Board:

Paul Wilson, Vice Chair

Memory, Dossenbach

ORGANIZED 1770

707 SQUARE MILES

## Chatham County Board of Social Services Session Meeting Minutes December 21, 2022

Members in attendance: Valerie Broadway, Chair; Thomas Droke, Member; Sara Welch, Member; Memory Dossenbach, Member; Jennie Kristiansen, Director and LeAnn McKoy, Evaluator/Planner.

Sara Welch motioned to call the meeting to order.

There was a motion to approve the November Meeting Minutes from Memory Dossenbach with a second motion from Thomas Droke, with all in favor.

### **Review of Monthly Data:**

There was a question at the November meeting about fluctuations in FNS applications and recertifications. An update was provided that NC DSS changed the guidance provided to counties regarding recertifications (which has impacted applications). Early in the fiscal year, NC DSS advised that counties were required to recertify every recipient. In September, the guidance changed to indicate that anyone with a certification period of longer than six-months did not need to be recertified and eligibility could be automatically extended. Most cases were *not* extended as recipients with longer than a six-month certification period must have stable income which tends to be seniors or people who are disabled. The application numbers were likely lower in October because people who lost eligibility due to late reviews would not have had to reapply (because the recertification period was extended). There may be future fluctuations because waivers are determined on a month-by-month basis.

There were 17 accepted CPS reports in November. Three reports were initiated outside of timeframe, with a timeliness of 82%. All three reports involved extenuating circumstances, including a call to a hotline with minimal identifying information, a family where some of the children lived out of county, and a caretaker who refused to tell the social worker where she was located.

### **Economic Services Updates:**

The Low-Income Energy Assistance Program (LIEAP) began on December 1, providing one time heating assistance to people who are 60 years of age or older or who are disabled and receiving services through the Division of Aging and Adult Services. Automatic payments are issued to people who meet these criteria, are receiving Food and Nutrition Services and received an automatic LIEAP payment last year.

The program will be available to all families who meet income eligibility starting in January. 357 residents received an automatic payment in December and an additional 102 LIEAP applications were taken (56 approved). Combined spending is approximately \$140,000. For the Crisis Intervention Program, 408 applications have been taken this fiscal year. There is \$42,000 in CIP assistance remaining. The Low-Income Household Water Assistance Program has \$11,500 remaining with 162 applications taken this fiscal year.

The public health emergency remains in place. NC should be given a 60-day notice prior to the end date; however state Medicaid directors have requested that this notice be extended to better prepare. There were no new developments regarding Medicaid expansion for NC. Locally, the Medicaid leadership team has begun meeting to plan, evaluate current processes, and to address staffing issues.

**Family Services:**

Disability Rights NC and the NAACP filed a lawsuit on behalf of four children in foster care against NC DHHS alleging that over 500 children are locked in psychiatric residential treatment centers each year, isolated from family, and not receiving treatment while in the facilities. In a response to the lawsuit, DHHS outlined work underway to support children including the development of the Division of Child and Family Well-Being at DHHS, the Child and Families Specialty Plan, and a coordinated action plan to address the urgent needs of children with complex behavioral health needs.

Both the Christmas Wishes (children) and Christmas Dreams (adults) were a success. Over 500 children/adults were sponsored (420 children and 69 adults) and over 250 donated (182 donated gifts and 72 made financial contributions to purchase gifts).

The child welfare workforce campaign is underway in NC. This involved the development of promotional materials, advertisements, and a QR code that connects to a statewide job application site. CCDSS has been posting positions on the website. Some counties have participated in mid-year job fairs and found the materials helpful for overall recruitment for DSS positions.

**Agency Updates:**

During the second week of December, the DSS Workforce Committee sponsored a holiday spirit week and raised \$350 to support the Pediatric Brain Tumor foundation in honor of a former employees.

Ms. Kristiansen provided an update on the Housing and Homeless working group. There was an in person planning session with Partners for Change to begin work on the strategic plan for street outreach during early December. Ms. Kristiansen did not have any updates on the hiring of a street outreach coordinator through Triangle J. Work is underway to finish a job description for the emergency housing position at DSS in the next few weeks.

The January meeting agenda will include a Non-Emergency Medicaid Transportation presentation.

Ms. Broadway requested that a future DSS Board agenda include an overview of services provided to licensed foster parents once a child is placed with them. Ms. Kristiansen will include this on the February agenda.

There was a motion from Tom Droke to enter a closed session to discuss information that is confidential under state law and not considered public record under NC Public Records Law. Motion was seconded by Sara Welch, with all in favor.

Tom Droke motioned to enter a closed session to discuss a personnel issue with a second motion from Sara Welch, with all in favor.

The next meeting will be held January 18, 2023 in the ground conference room of CCDSS.

Valerie Broadway  
Chair

1/18/23  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Secretary

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

