

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
Carl Thompson, Sr.
Pastor Cecil Wilson

ORGANIZED 1770

707 SQUARE MILES

Chatham County Board of Social Services Session Meeting Minutes April 20, 2022

Members in attendance: Richard Edwards, Chair; Thomas Droke, Vice Chair; Valerie Broadway, Member; Cecil Wilson, Member; Cim Brailer, Family Services Program Administrator; Donna Gigowski, Economic Services Program Administrator; LeAnn McKoy, Evaluator/Planner; Anglela Stalker, Family Services Program Manager; and Nancy Burgess, Executive Assistant.

Richard Edwards called the meeting to order.

There was a motion to approve the Open Session Meeting Minutes from Cecil Wilson with a second motion from Tom Droke; with all in favor. There was a motion to approve the Closed Session Meeting Minutes from Tom Droke with a second motion from Valarie Broadway; with all in favor.

Public Input:

Natalie Horton and Brittany Glover attended the Public Input session to voice their concerns about the August 4, 2021 removal of four children that were in the custody Ms. Horton. Richard Edward, Board Chair, thanked the women for their public input and assured the family that the agency was fully cooperating with the review of their case by NCDHHS.

Data Snapshot Review:

CPS had 34 accepted reports in March. Three reports were initiated outside of timeframe, with a timeliness of 91%. One report involved an out of county request for assistance due to one child being outside of our county. The children who reside in Chatham County were seen within timeframe. One assessment was administratively closed as neither the children or family indicated in the report were able to be identified or located. Attempts were made to obtain more information from the reporter, but the phone had been disconnected. In the last report two of the children were seen within timeframe but we were not able to meet with the third child until after school which was less than 4 hours outside of timeframe. Unfortunately, one of the newer staff resigned, so there continues be two vacancies in the unit.

Economic Services Updates:

Economic services plans were still underway for “unwinding” from the Public Health Emergency. Waivers were continuing for Special Assistance, Food and Nutrition, and Medicaid. It is anticipated that Public Health Emergency will end around July 2022.

Medicaid: The twelve-month Medicaid eligibility period for women post-partum began on April 1st. So far, this transition was going well. Three hospitals are piloting an “automatic newborn” feature in the

Medicaid program. When NCFASST receives a referral for a child born in a Medicaid eligible household, it creates an application and assigns it to the mother's county of residence. The system then performs a series of checks to determine if the application can be processed as is. If it cannot, a task is assigned to the caseworker. The Division of Health Benefits reports that the pilot is going well and plans for this to go statewide in late April.

The Medicaid program is beginning round two of the Recipient Eligibility Determination Audit (REDA) audit. This is a 10-month audit that reviews accuracy, timeliness, and internal controls. The Medicaid program conducts these audits in three-year cycles and Chatham County is in group one. Case reviews for Chatham will start in May.

There was a personal needs allowance increase for recipients in the Special Assistance Program. Special Assistance (SA) provides additional financial support for people who are Medicaid eligible and living either at home or in facilities licensed to accept SA. The allowance increased from \$46 to \$70 monthly. This was included in the budget bill for this year and took effect January 2022. Also, all facilities licensed to accept SA were receiving a supplemental payment of \$125 monthly for state fiscal year 2021-2022 and any remaining funds will be provided in the next year.

Work First Family Assistance: The final report was received for a recent Work First Family Assistance program monitoring for Chatham County to review compliance processing standards. Ten cases over a 12-month period were included. There were three errors, none of which impacted the eligibility determination. Two errors were an unchecked box on the application and the third error was an incorrect month entered on an evaluation form for the family.

Child Support: The Child Support Program is implementing new payment options for non-custodial parents including direct debit payments, Apple Pay, Google Pay, Venmo, and PayPal. Payments can also be made at Walmart stores with a \$2.00 service charge. These options will be available starting May 3rd and there will be communications sent out including a media release and an email sent to non-custodial parents.

Energy Programs: NC DHHS decided to issue an additional supplemental payment for Low Income Energy Assistance Program (LIEAP) to individuals who are elderly or disabled and received an initial payment in early December 2021. DHHS identified that assistance with high winter heating costs would be more beneficial than holding funds to operate a summer cooling program.

Childcare Subsidy: Statewide spending for childcare subsidy was lower than usual at 86% and 76% in Chatham County. Locally, children were being served as applications came in (i.e., there was no waitlist). Twelve children were added to the program in March. Six families had pending applications waiting for verifications and six application appointments were scheduled for the week of April 25th. Statewide and locally workforce shortages were reported and were impacting childcare providers as families were on waitlists for childcare centers.

Food and Nutrition Services (FNS): Counties would be receiving additional funding for FNS to support administration of the program. County allocations would be determined by FNS caseload. USDA, the federal program that oversees the FNS program, encouraged states to use the funds to invest in technology improvements, modernizing customer service delivery, and/or improve reporting systems.

Family Services:

Angela Stalker presented some information regarding legal updates for Child Welfare Services.

The Family First Prevention Plan for NC was resubmitted to the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) and waiting approval. The first two prevention programs slated to be provided in NC are the Homebuilders and Parents as Teachers models. Homebuilders is designed to serve families with children aged 0-18 while Parents as Teachers is targeted toward 0-5. Both models impact child behaviors and parenting.

In honoring Child Abuse Prevention Month, the Board of Commissioners issued a proclamation that was shared in a press release along with "Wear Blue Day" photos on social media. The News and Record also published a story that highlighted community members who are supporting prevention efforts.

Plans are underway for Elder Abuse Awareness month. DSS is planning a drive through event and the Board of Commissioners will also recognize this issue through a proclamation.

DSS Board Member Recruitment:

Richard Edwards and Carl Thompson have terms expiring at the end of June. The board will review any applications submitted at the next meeting.

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

Chair

Date

Secretary

Date