

COUNTY OF CHATHAM

CHATHAM COUNTY
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

PO Box 489
Pittsboro, NC 27312
Phone: (919) 542-2759
Fax: (919) 542-6355
Emily Lowrance



Jennie Kristiansen, Director

Social Services Board
Richard Edwards
Valerie Broadway

Carl Thompson, Sr.

ORGANIZED 1770

707 SQUARE MILES

Chatham County Board of Social Services Meeting Minutes August 19, 2020

The August meeting was conducted by GoToMeeting due to COVID-19. Members in attendance: Richard Edwards, 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.

The July Meeting Minutes were approved with a motion by Emily Lowrance, a second motion from Valerie Broadway; with all in favor.

The board reviewed the Childcare Waitlist Policy. There was a motion to approve from Richard Edwards, a second motion from Valerie Broadway; with all in favor.

The board reviewed the Monthly Data Sheet. July applications for both Medicaid and Food and Nutrition Services were slightly up, compared to June. For FNS, applications were still lower than average (131 compared to an average of 170). Child Protective Services reports were down slightly from June but still within typical fluctuations. CPS timeliness was 91% with 22 accepted reports and 2 that were outside time frame. One was outside of timeframe because there were no names or phone numbers attached to the report. While the social worker went out within 24 hours and consulted with local law enforcement to try and obtain more information, she was not able to locate the family until several days later. In the second report, the report came in late on Friday and was initiated first thing Monday morning but the family could not be seen until Tuesday.

NC DHHS provided the final data for the Memorandum of Understanding for fiscal year 2019-2020. Chatham County DSS met all performance requirements except for two in the Child Support program. The standard for "Child Support cases under order" was 84.96% and Chatham County reached 82.89%. The percentage was determined by the number of applications made and the number of cases where paternity was established and could be placed under order. The other Child Support Measure was "Annual percentage of cases that received a payment toward arrears." The goal was 69.35% and the actual was 68.39%. This percentage could increase, however, there are child support payments that are still under review. All payments over \$1000 must be reviewed. The timing of tax refunds and stimulus payments caused a substantial increase in the number of payments.

Economic Services:

There were no immediate plans to change service provision at DSS and Phase II was extended by the Governor until September. The department was working with staff from facilities to plan for reopening. Plexiglass shields were purchased and two meeting rooms will be converted into interview rooms to allow for more space for social distancing.

The Food and Nutrition Program will be participating in a voluntary program called Healthy Helping, which is a partnership with NC DHHS and Reinvestment Partners. \$40 in monthly food benefits to be provided for fresh fruits and vegetables and unsalted/no sugar added canned and frozen foods at Food Lion through the end of the year. FNS caseworkers will be contacting all beneficiaries to ask if they would like to participate. Eligibility requires a brief assessment.

The pandemic-related childcare subsidy program supplements including the elimination of parent fees and additional funding to providers remained in place through August. The CARES act funding that was available and provided these additional financial supports will be exhausted in August, however, the program will revert back to pre-COVID 19 policies unless additional funds are provided.

Medicaid Transformation, the transition of the Medicaid program from a fee for service to a managed care system, resumed with "go live" for the entire state planned for July 2021. Open enrollment begins in March. There will still be five plans. Chatham County is in region 4.

COVID testing was also added to the Family Planning Medicaid program. This means that people who are not typically eligible for Medicaid can get coverage for COVID testing.

NC DSS was working on some changes to the energy programs. COVID relief funding is to be used to provide early energy benefits through the Low Income Energy Assistance Program which will free up additional funds to serve households in Chatham County during the regular energy application period.

Family Services:

The COVID protocols for adult and children's services remained largely unchanged since the last meeting. **There were no additional COVID diagnoses among the Adult Guardianship population. Are we allowed to share this information with the public?**

Eleven families were scheduled to graduate from the foster parent classes with one additional family scheduled to graduate the week of August 31st. Another session may be starting, depending on interest and availability of trainers.

The NCFASST Child Welfare evaluation project was wrapping up with recommendations going to the General Assembly soon. The project enlisted the assistance of Gartner Consulting to evaluate the future use of NCFASST for child welfare in NC.

General Updates:

The management team was working with Emergency Management and the Health Department on preparations for congregate care shelters should they be needed hurricane season. With COVID-19, efforts will be made to avoid opening shelters due to the increased risk of transmission. Should there be a large storm with a significant impact, this may be unavoidable.

The YMCA was planning to open Scholastic Centers for Chatham County students while schools are closed. Their staff will be trained to provide remote learning support to students. Locations will be in non-school buildings with small groups of students (10-20 students). The DSS conference room will likely serve as one of those locations.

With no further issues to discuss, there was a motion to adjourn from Carl Thompson, with a second motion from Valerie Broadway, with all in favor.

The next meeting will be conducted via GoToMeeting on September 16th at 3:00pm.

Chair

Date

Secretary

Date