

**New Hanover County  
Board of Social Services  
Meeting Minutes  
Multi Purpose Room A  
9:00a.m. – 10:00 a.m.**

The New Hanover County Board of Social Services met in open session on Tuesday, March 11, 2008 at 9:00 in Multi Purpose Room A of the New Hanover County Department of Social Services.

ATTENDING: Ann Pitts, Chairman; Bill Caster, Vice-Chairman; John Craig; F. Wayne Morris

ALSO ATTENDING: LaVaughn Nesmith, Secretary to the Board; Stephanie Monteath, Assistant to the Director

The Chairman called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. Mr. Craig moved for approval of the agenda. The motion was seconded by Mr. Caster and passed unanimously.

Mrs. Pitts led the invocation. Mr. Craig led the pledge of allegiance.

**CONSENT AGENDA**

Mr. Caster moved for approval of the consent agenda. The motion was seconded by Mr. Craig and passed unanimously.

Mr. Caster asked Mr. Nesmith about the Fatherhood meeting. Mr. Nesmith responded the meeting was really well attended.

**INFORMATION AGENDA**

**Personnel**

Stephanie Monteath introduced Linda Suttles, Administrative Support Technician; Jennifer Swinson, Adult Medicaid Caseworker Zone 3; Tiffany Frahm, Family and Children's Medicaid Caseworker Zone 1; Betty Campese, Food and Nutrition Zone 1; Terisa Benton, Temporary Economic Services Caseworker Trainee; Sherry Thompson-Penn, Child Protective Services Social Worker Zone 2 and Bonnie Gaynor, After-Hours Social Worker Zone 3.

**Promotions**

Stacey Jones was promoted from Food Stamp Economic Services Caseworker Zone 1 to Adult Medicaid Economic Services Caseworker Zone 3; Sherri Eckman was promoted from Child Protective Services Social Worker Zone 2 to After-Hours Social Worker Zone 3 and Keisha Fredlaw was promoted from Family and Children's Medicaid Economic Services Caseworker Zone 2 to Family and Children's Medicaid Economic Services Caseworker Zone 3.

### **Service Awards**

LaVaughn Nesmith was recognized for 5 years of service to New Hanover County. Christine Cheek and Julie Steinbeck were recognized for 10 years of service to New Hanover County. Adelaide Brooks, Lora Howard-Thackrah, Harriet Page and Lou Miller were recognized for 15 years of service. Andrea Kelly was recognized for 20 years of service.

### **SSDI**

Mrs. Pitts noted Food Stamp applications are up.

### **County Budget Expenditures**

Carol Thiel reviewed the budget line items for the month of January. Ms. Thiel explained the rows noted in red are areas we are exceeding expected expenditures. NHCDSS has met Maintenance Of Effort (MOE) which is a federal requirement. An explanation of MOE was included in the board book and explained by Ms. Thiel. Mr. Nesmith added that MOE is still based on 1995 expenditures which is no longer applicable causing the agency to look elsewhere for funds.

Ms. Thiel gave the Board an updated Summary of DSS Budget County Portion handout. Ms. Thiel explained that as DSS is no longer receiving IV-E Waiver funds and with the move of Medicaid from County to State, the County portion of the budget is reduced by four million dollars.

### **Other Information**

Mr. Nesmith thanked Mr. Morris for sharing information about forward technology using GPS in Florida. Ms. McNamee shared that technology is still in “pilot” form. However, DSS will be using technology from NHC 911 call center, which gives the social worker a history of 911 calls to the residence.

Mr. Caster asked about the Jordan Institute. Ms. McNamee shared the agency was started by Michael Jordan and his mother and is run through UNC Chapel Hill’s school of Social Work. She explained the data included in the information packet shows that NHCDSS fares really well in comparison with other counties in their low percentage of turnover.

Mr. Caster asked the difference between Carousel Center and Coastal Horizons. Ms. Marino explained that Carousel Center is used to do exams for child sexual assault and forensic interviews, while Coastal Horizons is used as youth shelter.

Mr. Nesmith asked the Board’s opinion of changing requirements for MSW interns. Mr. Caster said to go ahead and ask for it.

Mr. Morris asked how Legal interviews are coming along. Mr. Nesmith said DSS has received an applicant pool of exceptionally qualified candidates all with DSS experience.

## **STRATEGIC ACTION AGENDA**

### **Residential Care Facility Ratings**

Wanda Marino introduced Leslie Smiley, Regina Anderson and Rhonda Lloyd. Leslie Smiley explained the star rating system for Adult Care Homes as developed by the Department of Health and Human Services. The basis of the rating are 1) facility compliance from inspections, 2) any administrative actions taken (for non-compliance) against the adult care home, 3) voluntary participation of adult care homes in any quality improvement initiatives and 4) whether or not facility had achieved North Carolina New Organization Vision Award. Ms. Anderson and Ms. Lloyd explained Adult Care Homes and Family Care homes to Mrs. Pitts. Ms. Smiley reviewed the scale for star ratings. The star rating must be available for public viewing. Mr. Caster asked if it would cost the facilities money to meet these guidelines which would impact people receiving services. Ms. Smiley explained that earning the stars requires nothing different than what is required of the facility currently. The finalized rules for this program will be available April 1, 2008. Facilities should be earning stars by January 1, 2009. Mr. Craig asked how many reports the agency gets per month. Ms. Smiley said the agency averages 8-12 reports per month. Ms. Smiley shared the fiscal impact for the State, \$150,000.00 the first year and \$105,000.00 recurring funds for staff and database maintenance. Currently no County dollars will be required for this program. Ms. Marino furthered that DSS may be getting more calls (trying to appeal on the County level) requiring staff response when a deficiency is noted.

### **Child Day Care Update**

Kathi Heslin discussed the LBR indicator for Child Day Care, children, families and adults will be economically secure. Ms. Heslin explained who is eligible for child care subsidy and reason coding. Ms. Heslin reviewed the second LBR indicator; children and families will live in safe, healthy and stable environments. Ms. Heslin reviewed eligibility criteria and explained that DSS has not be able to reduce the waiting list but has been able to maintain the current children receiving subsidy. Mr. Nesmith noted that DSS is serving fewer children now but paying out more money per child due to the increased star rating, which has caused the child care facilities to incur additional costs. Sam Lane and Mr. Nesmith shared the agency has received additional reallocated funds this year through Smart Start and State Subsidy. As of 3/11/08 NHCDSS is at a 102% spending coefficient and should not come in with any overages.

### **Child Abuse Prevention Month Proclamation**

Mr. Caster read the Child Abuse Prevention Month Proclamation. Mr. Craig moved to approve the proclamation. The motion was seconded by Mr. Caster and passed unanimously.

### **Substance Abuse Forum**

Mr. Marino announced the Substance Abuse Forum will be held at the North East Public Library Tuesday, April 29, 2008 and encouraged Board Members to attend. This forum

will discuss how substance abuse affects families and children with an emphasis on the growing heroine and methamphetamine problem in New Hanover County.

### **Work First Demonstration Grant**

As part of the proposal for the Work First Demonstration Grant, NHCDSS is proposing keeping all the strategies in place which are currently in place. In addition, DSS is proposing a new strategy to identify countable activities in which difficult to serve clients are able to participate. This strategy involves contracting with a local Occupational or Physical Therapist to identify what the client is able to do, instead of focusing on what the client is unable to do. Mr. Caster asked about Coastal Enterprises. Ms. McNamee explained Coastal Enterprises is a sheltered workshop that is able to provide assessments and activities for disabled adults. Ms. McNamee further explained that there are several types of folks who come in for Work First Assistance; women in crisis willing to work, women with children under the age of 12 months (identified as S Code clients), and the F Code group comprised of people stating that, due to health reasons, they are unable to work. DSS is striving to make an impact on the F Code group. By doing the PT/OT assessment and by using the mental health professional before clients go to their doctor, DSS hopes the doctor may be more open minded as to what their patient may be able to do. Mr. Craig moved to approve continuation of the Work First Demonstration Grant. The motion was seconded by Mr. Caster and passed unanimously.

### **Next Meeting Objectives**

Communication and Outreach Efforts  
Program Integrity

### **Board Self Evaluation**

The Board completed self evaluations.

### **Additional Items**

Mr. Caster asked if a person is truly an illegal alien and walks in to the agency asking for assistance, is assistance available. Ms. Marino and Ms. Smiley explained that emergency medical assistance is usually available and child protective services are always available to protect children. Children born to illegal aliens in the United States are eligible for services such as Medicaid.

Mr. Nesmith noted there are IV-D funds (Child Support) available which need to be spent.

As there were no items to discuss in closed session as provided in G.S. 143-318.11 pursuant to G.S. 108A-80 and/or G.C. 154A-98, the meeting was adjourned at 10:38a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

LaVaughn Nesmith,  
Secretary to the Board

Ann Pitts  
Chairman

Date approved: \_\_\_\_\_

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