

Henderson County Board of Social Services

November 19th, 2019 Regular Meeting Minutes

A. Call to Order

The Henderson County Board of Social Services meeting was called to order by Board Chair Dr. Jennifer Hensley at 12:01 pm.

Board Members Present	Dr. Jennifer Hensley, Chair Melinda Lowrance, Vice-Chair Margaret Stone, Member Judy Smith, Member
Staff Leadership Present	Jerrie McFalls, Secretary to the Board/Director Kevin Marino, Social Work Program Administrator Jillian Humphries, Income Maintenance Program Administrator Joe Maxey, Administrative Officer Karen Vale, Clerk to the Board
Guests	Tinesha Burr & Sharon O'Hara – Food and Nutrition Unit

B. Public Input

None

C. Adjustments to the Agenda

Dr. Hensley asked for a closed session to be added to the end of the meeting today pursuant to NCGS § 143.318.11(a)(1); (6) and (7). Clerk Karen Vale asked that approval of the 2020 Board of Social Services Meeting Schedule be added to New Business. All board members present agreed to the adjustments.

D. Approval of Minutes

Dr. Hensley asked if there were any changes to the minutes from the October 15th, 2019 regular meeting; there were none. Vice-Chair Lowrance made a motion to approve the minutes, Mrs. Stone seconded the motion. All present were in favor and the motion passed. Clerk Karen Vale distributed copies of the closed session minutes from the October 15th, 2019 meeting to the board members present. Dr. Hensley asked if there were any changes to the closed session minutes; there were none. Vice Chair Lowrance made a motion to approve the closed session minutes as written, Mrs. Smith seconded. All present were in favor and the motion passed. Clerk Karen Vale collected the copies of the closed session minutes.

E. Board Education

Dr. Hensley welcomed Tinesha Burr and Sharon O'Hara to the meeting. Mrs. Burr started by sharing that she is on the Intake side of FNS and Mrs. O'Hara is on the Maintenance side of FNS. As an Intake worker, Mrs. Burr works on all new applications that come into DSS. Interviews are required, either face-to-face or by telephone. A determination must be made whether the application is screened in as a regular application or an emergency application. Different approval guidelines and processing timeframes are applicable. To qualify for emergency benefits, a client's total income must be exceeded by total expenses. The processing time is much faster, four days versus up to 30 days for a regular application. An application that was deemed emergency can be flipped to a regular application if the client cannot prove residency in Henderson County or is unavailable for the interview. Dr. Hensley asked about number of applications received per day, Mrs. Burr responded that a day to day number is hard to pinpoint but non-walk in applications are usually around 25-35 per week. Walk In cases average

150-250 per month. Dr. Hensley followed up with a question about state standards for staff caseloads. Ms. Humphries responded that there are currently no state standards for caseloads per worker, the topic has been addressed several times over the years, but no standards have ever been set. At this point Mrs. O'Hara takes over the board education section. She has been with HC DSS for 19 years, 16 of them in FNS. She explains that once an application has been processed and approved; it will be set up on a cycle of recertification; sometimes that is yearly but will also need to be completed if the client's financial situation changes. DHHS will mail a letter to the client 30 days prior to the end date of their benefits, alerting them to the process for recertification. There are three (3) categories under the recertification process.

Timely: Documentation is received within the first 15 days of the recertification period; the case will be processed by the last business day of the month and there is no break in benefits for the client.

Untimely: Documentation is received between day 16 – last business day of the month; the caseworker has 30 days to process the documentation which may in turn delay the benefits for the client for one month.

Late: No documentation received; the case is suspended for one month and a new application may be needed. Benefits cannot be stopped until 30 days after due date.

Dr. Hensley asked about average length of time a client is approved for food stamps; Mrs. O'Hara responded that most clients are approved on a 6-month timeframe due to earned income changes. Clients that are elderly and/or disabled are usually approved on a 1-year timeframe. Clients that are on SSI go through recertification every 3 years. Vice-Chair Lowrance asked if there are backlogs in case processing? Mrs. O'Hara responded that due to staffing shortages several months ago, there was a backlog of cases, but they are finally getting on top of it. Caseworkers are carrying an average of 70-80 cases per month. Mrs. Stone asked how long a client can stay in Emergency status? Mrs. Burr responded that if the application is processed between the 1st – 15th of the month, the client is only in emergency status for that month. If the application is processed after the 15th of the month, the client is in emergency status for the remainder of that month and all the next month. Vice-Chair Lowrance asked if clients were referred to other area services if needed? Mrs. Burr responded that clients are referred to IAM, Salvation Army, WCCA, etc. as needed. Dr. Hensley asked both employees what two big things could be done to make their jobs easier? Mrs. Burr responded that more time to get through the documentation to limit errors in determinations. Mrs. O'Hara responded that more clear deadlines would be the most beneficial. Federal mandates and timing of the mailing of notices hinder efficient processing of applications. It takes an employee several years to develop a system to ensure they are meeting all their internal timeframes as well as the Federal mandates for the program. Each employee develops their own system for timely mailouts and contact with clients. NC FAST will generate a list for caseworkers regarding case status, many workers maintain a daily log. The daily log works well if an employee is out of the office, it provides a clear picture for the supervisor of what needs to be done to keep the cases timely. There were no more questions, Dr. Hensley thanked Mrs. Burr and Mrs. O'Hara for supplying the board education segment and for the work they do with the citizens of the county.

F. Reports

Director's Monthly Report (Attachment I)

No Discussion

November Employees of the Month (Attachment II)

No Discussion

October 2018-October 2019 Statistical Report (Attachment III)

No Discussion

November Program Administrator's Report (Attachment IV)

No Discussion

G. Old Business

Medicaid Transformation

Members of the North Carolina legislature went home last week with no new budget in place. NCACDSS sent an email on 11/18 stating that as of 11/20 Medicaid Transformation will be put on hold. HC DSS currently has 2 brokers working with clients on site. Medical providers were originally told to sign up by 11/15/19, to date only a small percentage have completed the process. Payments have not been made to any of the insurance companies for the front-end work they have been doing to encourage sign-ups. Current Medicaid clients, who were told to sign up under the first phase, will continue to have the same coverage. The legislature will reconvene in January 2020.

Future Space Renovation

Cooper Construction is working on a design plan for the future space renovation with an anticipated start date of March 2020.

Director McFalls added that she has a meeting scheduled with new HC IT Director Mark Seelenbacher on Wednesday, November 20th to discuss a list of concerns from staff about IT operations at DSS and future planning for IT coverage at DSS. Dr. Hensley asked if he was aware of the on-going struggles with IT over the years? Dr. Hensley asked that the Director update the board about the progress with IT at the next board meeting.

H. New Business

DSS Director Evaluation Timeline

Dr. Hensley reviewed the process to complete the Director Annual Performance Evaluation, Clerk Karen Vale distributed paper copies of the board member tool. Dr. Hensley asked that the tool be emailed to each board member for them to complete and return to Karen. She will compile the responses into one form and ensure completion of the FY 2020 Department Head Performance Management Appraisal for Dr. Hensley to share with Assistant County Manager Amy Brantley.

2020 Board of Social Services Meeting Calendar*

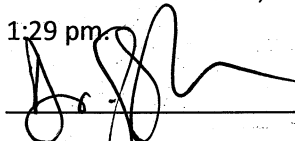
Clerk Karen Vale asked that the board members review the proposed meeting calendar for 2020, and if in agreement, pass a motion approving the proposed calendar. Vice-Chair Lowrance made a motion to approve the proposed calendar, Mrs. Smith seconded the motion. All board members present agreed, the motion passed. Karen will ensure that the approved calendar is posted to the DSS website and a copy forwarded to Kathryn Finotti, Public Information Officer.

The Board went into closed session at 12:51 PM on a motion from Mrs. Stone and seconded by Vice-Chair Lowrance. The closed session is pursuant to NCGS §143-318.11(a)(1), (4) & (6) to prevent disclosure of information that is privileged or confidential pursuant to the laws of this State or of the United States, or not considered a public record within the meaning of Chapter 132 of the General Statutes. The matter is not a public record pursuant to the provisions of NCGS §108A-80.

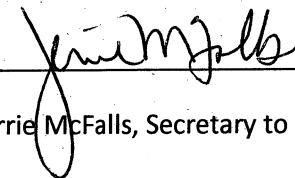
The Board reconvened the open session of the meeting at 1:24 PM on a motion from Mrs. Stone, and seconded by Mrs. Smith.

I. Adjournment

There being no further discussion, Mrs. Stone made a motion to adjourn the meeting, Mrs. Smith seconded the motion, all present were in favor and the motion passed. The meeting was adjourned at 1:29 pm.



 Dr. Jennifer Hensley, Chair Date

 12/17/19

 Jerrie McFalls, Secretary to the Board Date

Attachments:

- I. Director's Report – November 2019
- II. November Employees of the Month
- III. October 2018 – October 2019 Statistical Report
- IV. Program Administrator's Report – October 2019
- V. FY 19-20 4-Month YTD Budget Summary
- VI. Proposed 2020 Board of Social Services Meeting Calendar