

Henderson County Board of Social Services

March 2023 Regular Meeting Minutes

A. Call to Order

The Henderson County Board of Social Services meeting was called to order by Chair Josh Simpson at 12:03 pm.

Board Members Present	Josh Simpson, Member Melinda Lowrance, Member Rebecca McCall, Member Stephen Gwaltney, Member Judy Smith, Member
Staff Leadership Present	Jerrie McFalls, Secretary to the Board/Director Lorie Horne, Social Work Program Administrator Joseph Maxey Jr., Administrative Officer Debby Freeman, Economic Services Program Administrator Deborah Johnson, Administrative Assistant/Board Clerk
Guest	None

B. Public Input

None

C. Adjustments to the Agenda

None

D. Approval of Minutes

Chair Simpson asked if there were any changes to the minutes from the February 21st, 2023, regular meeting, there were none. Mr. Gwaltney moved to approve the minutes as written, Mrs. Smith seconded the motion. The motion passed.

E. Board Education

Medicaid Expansion

Medicaid Expansion is moving quickly through the North Carolina legislature. Last week it passed the Senate. Medicaid expansion has gone to the House this week. Medicaid Expansion has been placed on the House calendar for tomorrow, March 22, 2023. The Senate made amendments, and the bill has gone back to the House. One of the amendments, the \$50 million dollars that was supposed to go to counties to prepare for Medicaid Expansion, was taken out of the bill. The \$50 million was supposed to be used for filling the necessary positions and expenses for expansion. It is believed that there will be money included in the new bill, but that information has not been released.

The expansion is expected to pass by the end of March. The question is, when will it be made effective? Will we be required to roll out December 1st? The training period is six to twelve months.

To prepare for expansion, we have reclassified our front desk staff. On March 16th, 2023, they were approved by the Office of State Human Resources (OSHR). We have the implementation date as April 10, 2023. There will be a slight increase in salaries as they will move into the Income

Maintenance classifications. Those new salaries will be in this year's budget. We will easily be able to cover this increase in this year's budget.

We will be able to pull down more reimbursement for the reception staff. This will better prepare us for Medicaid expansion. The reception area will be able to help clients more efficiently and serve clients in a more timely manner. This will enable the reception staff to assist Income Maintenance caseworkers. They will be able to scan documents directly into NC Fast for clients, reducing duplication.

Mrs. McCall asked Director McFalls about the reprocessing of Medicaid clients. In Medicaid, you begin work three months in advance to send notices to the client. Updated information, if not received from the client, requires second and third notices to be sent out. Effective April 1st, we will have to actively recertify Medicaid. All our income maintenance workers have gone through training. Some rules have changed since before Covid, so Medicaid workers have been in training to learn to recertify Medicaid recipients. We currently have around 25,000 clients. It will take around a year to review all 25,000 Medicaid clients as they are reviewed at the end of their certification period.

Mrs. Smith asked if we would require more staff to complete these reviews? Director McFalls stated we have asked for additional positions in our budget. We currently are not fully staffed. We have a line item for over time so we may have to look at overtime to get all the applications recertified.

Mr. Gwaltney asked when jobs, if approved by County Commissioners, would be posted. Director McFalls stated we would have those ready to be signed off on at the time they are approved. We have an established IMC caseworker job description that is ready to post once the new positions are processed by OSHR. We will be ready to hire once the positions go through OSHR. All 100 counties will be processing new positions, so we will have our positions ready to send.

Mrs. Smith asked Director McFalls, based on Medicaid expansion information, when do we need to be ready? Director McFalls stated we needed to be ready by December 1, 2023. It is important that we are hiring at least six months ahead of time to have time to have workers fully trained. As soon as the County Commissioners pass the budget, we will be ready to start the process of making the positions ready to post and fill.

Mrs. McCall asked what will happen if we don't get the positions approved? Director McFalls stated it will be difficult, but we will have to work to keep caught up but not burn out our current employees. We will have to work daily to try to meet the needs of our citizens. There are new regulations that make it very difficult.

Reports

Director's Monthly Report (Attachment I) Questions Only

Mrs. Smith asked Director McFalls what reducing foster care licensing barriers effects. Director McFalls explained that when children are placed in kinship such as family members or a community member such as a teacher, they are trying to reduce some of the rigid guidelines of licensed foster parents, so that kinship placement can occur. This would give more support to families so more children could be placed in kinships.

January Employees of the Month (Attachment II)

Questions only

None

December 2021 – December 2022 Statistical Report (Attachment III)

Questions only

None

January Program Administrator's Report (Attachment IV)

Mrs. Lowrance asked Program Administrator Lorie Horne, what contributed to the significant increase in CPS reports the previous month. Mrs. Horne stated that we had a two week period where approximately 85 reports were taken. We don't know what contributed to the increase.

Mrs. Lowrance asked if the funds roll over under energy programs? Director McFalls stated we would get a new allocation at the beginning of the new fiscal year. The state reallocates those funds to other counties at the end of the year. Our allocation for LIEAP will increase for next year.

Financial Report December 2022 (Attachment V)

Questions only

Year to date, we are on track to come in on or under budget. This year will be one of our largest underspent budgets on salaries and benefits due to the number of open positions.

F. Old Business

DSS staffing update

Director stated DSS currently has seventeen vacancies. Nine of the vacancies are in Social Work. Eight vacancies are in Economic Services. We have three in the hiring process. We still have internal moves occurring.

Our county benefits are a plus when trying to hire new workers. We are currently working with BRCC regarding apprenticeship programs. The apprenticeship program would be the same one First Citizens is currently using.

We are also in the process of discussing paid internships in the future.

G. New Business

Contract Programs -Child Care Subsidies

We provide child subsidy day care services at DSS. We currently have two Child Care Workers. They take applications for day care, place children in centers, and find centers with slots. They authorize the subsidy payment if the parents are income eligible. We get 3.4 million dollars a year

in daycare subsidy. We are aware that Southwestern Child Development Commission, Inc., has a contracting service to provide daycare administrative services. There are currently twelve other counties using these services. There may be others interested in contracting to provide this service.

We have an allocation from the state that pays for part of the salary of these two staff members. That allocation is \$143,103. We overspend that \$143,103 each year because support staff expenses are applied to the allocation. In FY 21-22, the total amount we paid out was \$252,516.00. It costs our county around \$130,000 above the allocation per year which is all county money. We are proposing that we explore contracting daycare administrative services.

We will require the contracting agency to have a staff person on site to meet the needs of our current and new clients as needed.

The two people that are currently child day care staff are currently IMC 2's. We could fill open positions with those employees if they chose. We run the risk of them going to the contract agency. Both employees have been employed with Henderson County for some time.

We would like to contract at the beginning of the fiscal year.

The board discussed the advantage of contracting Daycare. The savings from contracting would help pay for the new positions we have asked for in the budget. Daycare centers would not be delayed in receiving subsidies.

Mr. Gwaltney made a motion to approve. Mrs. McCall seconded the motion. Chair Simpson polled all members present and the motion passed.

Budget FY 23-24

The Henderson County Department of Social Services provides services and programs to the residents of Henderson County supported by Local, Federal, and State monies under the supervision of the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services. These programs include Adult and Child Protective Services, Guardianship Services, Special Assistance for Adults, Foster Care and Adoptions, Medicaid, Health Choice, Work First, Child Support Enforcement, Food and Nutrition Services, Energy Programs, and Subsidized Child Care.

We anticipate a challenging FY23-24 as we prepare for the implementation of Medicaid expansion. Also, Medicaid continuous unwinding will begin April 1, 2023. Every active Medicaid case will be reevaluated over the next twelve months.

As a state, we are in the midst of Medicaid Transformation to a managed care system, Child Welfare Transformation, Family Well-Being Transformation, Development of the Specialized Foster Care Plan and ongoing enhancements to many of our programs. The impact of these initiatives is unknown but anticipated to create new challenges for Social Service Staff. Ongoing recruitment and retention continue to be difficult.

It is important that we maintain County funding so that we can continue to protect children and adults and provide services that enhance the lives of those in need. Fulfillment of our additional

staff request will allow us to maximize staff time and resources. This additional staff will allow us to meet the needs of the elderly and children in foster care. We are committed to an ongoing assessment of staffing needs and filling only necessary vacancies.

Mr. Maxey presented the proposed FY 23-24 budget. Mr. Maxey stated that in the proposed budget, we added an additional CSST position to the budget. In the budget, we have proposed adding four vehicles to our fleet and replacing one vehicle. This is in recognition of the fact that we are increasingly using the county fleet vehicles. With the increase in mileage reimbursement for the use of private vehicles, it makes financial sense to add to our fleet.

Due to the anticipated increase in traffic for the agency with Medicaid Expansion, we have increased the requested overtime from \$75,000 in the current year to \$90,000 for the new fiscal year budget.

Mr. Maxey presented the goals and objectives. We calculate the amount of money that our State estimates each year and determine that we are maximizing our pull down of Federal and State funding. We maximized our pull down of funding at 100%.

We have set a goal for the upcoming year for a turnover rate of less than 18%. This is an aggressive goal but feel we will meet that challenge.

The budget represents three sections. The Administrative budget, which includes salaries, benefits, and the cost of operating, the Request for Services Spending, and the third section is based on State estimates of what we anticipate being reimbursed the upcoming year. The sum of the two spending accounts, minus the revenue we anticipate receiving from the Federal and State reimbursements, becomes the county money we anticipate spending the next year.

The increases to the budget this year includes the additional requested staff, the requested four vehicles, and a replacement vehicle.

Mrs. Smith made a motion to approve the FY 23-24 budget. Mr. Gwaltney seconded the motion. Chair Simpson polled all members and the motion passed.

Closed Session

The members of the board went into a closed session pursuant to NCGS §143-318.11(a)(6). Mrs. Smith made a motion to go into closed session at 1:16 p.m. Mrs. Lowrance seconded the motion; all board members present agree.

The board came out of closed session at 1:32 p.m. on a motion from Mrs. Lowrance. Mrs. Smith seconded the motion and the board returned to open session.

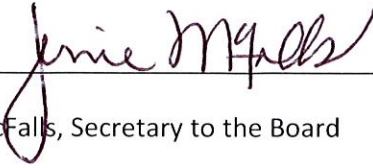
H. Adjournment

Mr. Simpson asked if there were any additional items for discussion. There were none presented. Chair Simpson made a motion to adjourn the meeting, Mrs. Lowrance seconded the motion. The motion passed. Mr. Simpson adjourned the meeting at 1:33 p.m.



Melinda Lowrance, Vice Chair

Date 4-18-23



Jerrie McFalls, Secretary to the Board

Date 4-18-23

Attachments:

- I. Director's Report – March 2023
- II. March Employees of the Month
- III. February 2022 – February 2023 Statistical Report
- IV. Program Administrators' Report – March 2023
- V. Financial Report – March 2023
- VI. FY 23-24 Budget Packet