

Henderson County Board of Social Services

May 21st, 2024, Regular Meeting Minutes

A. Call to Order

The Henderson County Board of Social Services meeting was called to order by Chair Simpson at 12:00.

Board Members Present	Josh Simpson, Member Melinda Lowrance, Member Stephen Gwaltney, Member Judy Smith, Member Rebecca McCall, Member
Staff Leadership Present	Jerrie McFalls, Secretary to the Board/Director Lorie Horne, Social Work Program Administrator Melissa Novack, Finance Officer Debby Freeman, Economic Services Program Administrator Candice Fowler, Administrative Assistant/Board Clerk
Guest	Sandra Gonzalez-Income Maintenance Supervisor II-F&C Medicaid

B. Public Input

None

C. Adjustments to the Agenda

Closed session will be held at 12:45 a phone call with Karen Ensley HR Director.

D. Approval of Minutes

Chair Simpson asked if there were any changes to the minutes from the April 16th, 2024, regular meeting, there were none. Mr. Gwaltney made a motion to approve, Mrs. Smith seconded.

Chair Simpson asked if there were any changes to the closed minutes from April 16th, 2024, there were none. Mr. Gwaltney made a motion to approve, and Mrs. McCall seconded.

E. Board Education

Mrs. Sandra Gonzalez provided information about the new functionality of the federal marketplace. Mrs. Gonzalez spoke about North Carolina moving from a federally facilitated marketplace assessment state to a determination state. This means that North Carolina Medicaid eligibility from marketplace is final. Caseworkers determine eligibility for the cases that the federal marketplace is unable to verify. The marketplace process is designed to eliminate some of the workload and have a straight through process. Mrs. Freeman stated that only 4% of the cases went straight through that originated in the marketplace.

Chair Simpson asked what the workers are verifying. Mrs. Gonzalez stated that they are verifying income, citizenship, and residency status.

Mrs. Smith asked if all adults are required to be citizens. Mrs. Gonzalez stated that they must be citizens or lawfully present. To be considered lawfully present applicants must possess a permanent resident card or employment authorization card.

Chair Simpson asked what the biggest struggle has been. Mrs. Gonzalez stated that the determination from the marketplace has been an issue. The mother has the determination, but the child does not. The applications must be processed, but sometimes there are inconsistencies between documents on the marketplace and what the workers are given.

Mr. Gwaltney asked about the benefits being authorized if the whole household is not approved. Mrs. Gonzalez stated that the application cannot be processed until the whole family is approved.

Ms. Lowrance asked how long the process takes. Mrs. Gonzalez stated that the workers have 45 days to process an application and the benefits can be retro activated up to three months.

F. Reports

Director's Monthly Report (Attachment I)

Questions Only

Mrs. McCall asked what would be considered the county's most important initiative. Director McFalls stated that Senate bill 625 needs to be looked at closely. The state is trying to remove immunity from the county and the employees. DHHS is going to try to remove the state liability even though DHHS does the audits of cases.

Director McFalls stated that the language could eventually be taken out of bill 625 and put into another bill with nothing related to get the bill passed.

The advocacy committee will keep up with legislation and follow up to advocate for DSS.

Mr. Gwaltney asked how Senate bill 625 would increase the number of kids that DSS takes custody of. Director McFalls explained that hospitals won't keep kids with mental health issues. The kids are medicated and released within 48 hours and hospitals expect DSS to take custody. This also means that kids will be staying at the agency and multiple staff members are required to stay on the premises as well. Henderson County DSS does not have the necessary resources to take kids when they are released as the needed mental health facilities and foster homes are not available.

May Employees of the Month (Attachment II)

Questions only

None

May 2023- May 2024 Statistical Report (Attachment III)

Questions only

None

May Program Administrator's Report (Attachment IV)

Questions only

Mr. Gwaltney asked why the report indicates a big drop in food stamps. Director McFalls explained that the numbers are going up and down and recertifications are coming due. People who were previously eligible during the pandemic are no longer eligible. Mrs. Freeman explained that when school gets out, the numbers will go back up. We are struggling with the state for our numbers. The state has a new website and sometimes the numbers are incorrect. The case numbers are 2.5 times the number they should be. The State can't produce data or back up the data. Staff will research this and provide updated information if indicated.

Mr. Gwaltney asked if the LINKS number should be higher. Director McFalls explained that teens must agree to the support and agree to the guidelines of the program. For this program they must

work a certain number of hours or be enrolled in school. They are automatically aged out at 21 years old.

Mrs. Smith asked why the child services unit was transitioned to adult services. Director McFalls explained that adult services are in higher demand. The foster care numbers are going down in Henderson County. Kids are going home safely or going to adoption. Adult service numbers increased during the pandemic and have not gone down.

Financial Report May 2024 (Attachment V)

Questions only

None

2nd Quarter Personnel Report

Questions only

G. Old Business

DSS Staffing Update

Director McFalls stated that we currently have 15 vacancies. We have a few external candidates coming in. We are in a good place with internal stability and are filling income maintenance positions with external candidates.

H. New Business

Chair Simpson spoke about the nomination for the upcoming board vacancy. Amy Holt was the only applicant.

Chair Simpson formally nominated Amy Holt, Mrs. McCall seconded the motion and the motion passed.

SSI Convention

The conference will be held at the Hickory Convention Center July 30th through August 2nd. Board members were encouraged to attend.

MOU- (Memorandum of Understanding)

Director McFalls spoke about the signatures and consent agenda. Some counties are refusing to sign the MOU.

Director McFalls stated that NCACDSS is asking for the policies and procedures to be put in one place for accessibility and training purposes. Right now, the workers can't easily find income requirements when working with clients. Some policy is in Dear County Director letters- terminal messages, administrative letters, change notices, emails from OST and actual policy.

Director McFalls spoke about the necessity of security officers being trained properly. We are obligated to keep information confidential.

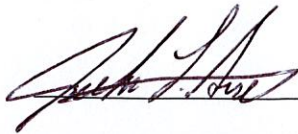
Signing or refusing to sign does not change what we are responsible for, we must continue to be consistent. We will be placing the MOU on the County commissioner's agenda in June.

I. Closed Session

Mr. Simpson made a motion for the board to go into closed session at 12:46; Mrs. Lowrance seconded the motion. The Board moved into closed session to discuss progress of the Director search.

J. Adjournment

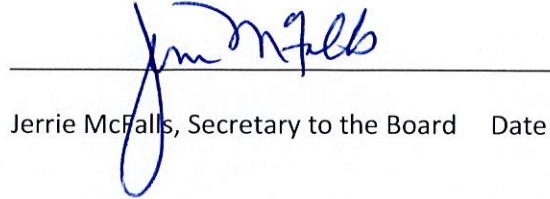
Mr. Simpson asked if there were any items remaining there were none presented. Mrs. Lowrance motioned to adjourn the meeting; Mrs. McCall seconded the motion. All present were polled, and the motion passed. Mr. Simpson adjourned the meeting at 1:22pm.



Josh Simpson, Chair

6/18/24

Date



Jerrie McFalls, Secretary to the Board Date

Attachments:

- I. Director's Report –May 2024
- II. May Employees of the Month
- III. Statistical Report – April 2024
- IV. Program Administrators' Report –May 2024
- V. Financial Report – April 2024
- VI. SB 625