

**Lee County Department of Social Services  
Board Meeting  
January 15th, 2019**

The Board of Social Services for Lee County Department of Social Services convened at 12:00 P.M., in the Board of Commissioner's Room at the Lee County Government Center, 106 Hillcrest Drive, Sanford, North Carolina. Board members present were Margaret Johnson, Paul Utley, William Pickard, Amy Dalrymple and Ophelia Livingston.

Chairperson Johnson called the meeting to order.

Chairperson Johnson asked if there were any adjustment or changes to the January Agenda. Ms. Noel asked for an item to be added to the agenda to discuss the 2019-2020-N.C. General Assembly Social Services Consortium Legislative Priorities. Ms. Johnson asked for a motion to amend the agenda as requested. A motion was made to accept amended agenda, add as Item XI, move item XI, Adjourn, to item XII by Dr. Livingston and 2<sup>nd</sup> by Mr. Utley.

AYE: Pickard, Livingston, Utley, Johnson and (Ms. Dalrymple was not present for the vote.)

NAY: None

Chairperson Johnson asked if there were any changes or corrections to the December minutes.

Hearing none, a motion was made to accept December minutes by Dr. Livingston and 2<sup>nd</sup> by Mr. Utley.

AYE: Pickard, Livingston, Utley, Johnson and (Ms. Dalrymple was not present for the vote.)

NAY: None

**Public Comment**-No one signed up to speak during the Public Comments section of the meeting.

**INTERNAL GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE POLICY**-Ms. Noel reminded the board that at last month's meeting she presented the Internal Grievance Policy. She told the board if they had any questions after reading the policy she would be glad to answer. Ms. Johnson asked the board if anyone had questions and if not she would accept a motion to approve. Mr. Utley made a motion to accept and Dr. Livingston 2<sup>nd</sup> the motion.

AYE: Pickard, Livingston, Utley, Johnson and (Ms. Dalrymple was not present for the vote.)

NAY: None

**FEDERAL SHUTDOWN IMPACTS**-Ms. Holly Lamm, Food and Nutrition Supervisor informed the board of the recent letter received from the State on January 11, 2019 with the regards to the impact the Federal Shutdown would have on Food and Nutrition Services. The state advised Social Services that the certification period would be extended through February for all Food and Nutrition cases with January 2019 as the last month of certification. The letter also explained that the county is still required to process all re-certifications following normal procedures. Ms. Lamm told the board that there has been issues with this change and the state has been made aware that at this time the county is unable to process re-certifications due to the system seeing these clients as no longer up for review due to being automatically extended through February. Ms. Lamm told the board that the state is working on a resolution but it could be days before cases can again be processed. She told the board that this puts more work on the caseworker and they will have less time to do it in. She went on to tell the board that the letter also stated that the USDA would be releasing February benefits to clients early so that they would have them for use no later than January 20<sup>th</sup>. Ms. Lamm also told the board with this early issuance that a lot of clients will use these benefits and expect more in February. She said the clients may not realize

that they received their February benefits early. With this early issuance, she told the board that the call volume would increase tremendously. Call volume increase starting last week with clients being concerned about not receiving their benefits. She said that next month the callers will want to know where their February allotment is, because they may not realize they received February benefits early. These calls she told the board are time consuming for the workers as they are trying to do the normal daily work. Ms. Lamm went on to tell the board that DHHS had advised the counties that they are waiting on further guidance from the USDA related to the impact of the shutdown for non-expedited applications that would be approved between January 21<sup>st</sup> and January 30<sup>th</sup>. At this time, she told the board that she was unsure when these clients will receive the Food and Nutrition Benefits. This will also cause an influx of calls and clients coming in to see their caseworker. Ms. Lamm also told the board that there could be the potential for caseworkers to have more work down the road related to the early release of February benefits. Ms. Lamm also made the board aware that after this letter another letter was received explaining that over the weekend the automatic extension had taken place and some cases had issues and were not automatically extended. She explained to the board that the caseworker would have to go in and review the cases, resolve the issues and make sure these benefits are released no later than January 16<sup>th</sup>. The caseworkers will receive notification in NC Fast as a task. She told the board this will also put more work on the caseworkers.

Ms. Noel wanted the board to know that even if the Federal Government opened tomorrow there will be a tremendous amount of work the caseworkers are going to have to follow up on. She made the board aware that they are reprogramming the natural process that is in place for issuing benefits so with that comes the potential for technical issues which is inevitable. The USDA which is our Federal partner that oversees the FNS program has provided guidance to all states that they are required no later than January 20, 2019 to issue February benefits to active recipients. Each state has a different date they will be issuing February benefits.

Ms. Noel said she had been cautious about giving out information unless it came from DHHS. Information received from DHHS does state that there will be no

funding for Food and Nutrition or TANF benefits after February if the government stays shutdown.

Ms. Noel told the board that if the government remains in shutdown status, those clients will not receive benefits. She referred the board to their packets and two letters that DHHS sent out on January 11, 2019. The letters looked very similar. The first addressed the Food and Nutrition benefits for February and the administrative cost. There will be a tremendous amount of work whether the shutdown ends or not due to all the extra work. Ms. Noel explained that the administrative cost for January and February would proceed as normal on the 1571 process of reimbursement which is the state reimbursement to the counties. At this time the county would be covered through February by the state.

Ms. Noel discussed the impact on the county and the process of getting the word out to the residence through social media, community resources, churches and schools. She then told the board that the next concern would be the March benefits. She also told the board that a press release from DHHS was sent to Jamie Brown, Lee County Community and Governmental Relations Manager, and she has individualized it to Lee County. Ms. Brown will be sending it out to the newspaper. The hope in doing this is it will educate individuals to budget wisely. Those receiving benefits in January for February will not receive again until March.

**NC FAST CHILD WELFARE GO LIVE-** Ms. Noel told the board that Child Welfare, Project 4, will go live next week. Child Welfare will start with intake and assessment. The process will begin with the call from the public, the intake worker will be key the information directly into NC FAST and use the criteria for abuse, neglect or dependency to screen the report in or out. Those screened in will have an assessment case created. She then went on to tell the board that the investigations unit would investigate the case and work with the family. Ms. Noel told the board that the CPS staff was completing the last set of trainings this week and would be going live January 22, 2019. She said the staff had been excited until they found out that the mobile app would not be deployed at the same time

due to the need to improve the app. The social workers were excited to take their iPads to the field whether or not they had WIFI and be able to do a safety assessment with the family. They also would have the parent sign electronically using the iPad and mobile app then return to the building and load directly into NC FAST. Ms. Noel directed the board to a copy of a letter she would be sending out to all the community partners informing them of the public transition into NC FAST for Child Protective Services. She wanted the partners to know that going into the new system could take longer for the intake process while stay make the transition.

**NC FAST PROGRAM INTEGRITY GO LIVE-**Ms. Franklin updated the board on Program Integrity going live in NC Fast at the beginning of the month. She told them all was going well at this time.

**FY20 BUDGET KICKOFF-**Ms. Noel told the board that the budget kickoff for the 2019-2020 budget has begun. The supervisors where asked to submit their request for their unit to Sabrina Franklin, Budget Officer. Ms. Noel told the supervisors that this is a tight budget year. She told the board that although she has not had notification from Lisa Minter, County Finance Officer when the budget will be due it is normally presented at the beginning of March. Ms. Noel said this makes it impossible for her to present to the social services board prior to meeting with the county manager and the county finance officer. When she presents to the board at the March meeting if any adjustments are needed at the board's recommendation, she will make those adjustments at that time and present the changes to county management.

**PERFORMANCE SCORE CARD-** Ms. Noel reviewed the monthly scorecard with the board. She went over new information. She told the board that at this time Child Welfare was working with the state representative for federal fiscal year 2018 on the monthly face to face visits for foster care. The baseline is 95%, Due to varying issues, data was not entered into the system to capture the visits. The county has been able to go back and enter some visits and receive credit. This has allowed the percentage to be brought up to 91%. The system will not allow keying for

visits completed on closed cases so the state representative has said she will enter those. Once these are entered, we should exceed the 95%. The next item Ms. Noel reviewed with the board was the new CFSR (Child and Family Services Reviews) for the discharge to permanency which represented the time between October 2017 and September 2018. Ms. Noel explained to the board that the baseline was not met, but that Lee County traditionally does meet however across the state it is uncommon. She went on to tell the board even though the baseline was not met that 39.3% is very good. Ms. Noel then went over the Children in foster care placement moves and reminded the board that several months ago they will remember that it was difficult meeting the 4.1% baseline. She told the board the workers have been working really hard and planning accordingly when placing a child and are thinking ahead for less moves of a child. The Child Support measures she reminded the board are annual and some have been met early. The next item she went over with the board was the Work First Participation Rate. She explained that this baseline will not be met as the majority of individuals cannot be placed in a work requirement due to disabilities and there is not enough to offset to meet the baseline.

Ms. Noel asked the board to look at the end of the Performance Score Card where she had added asterisks and the importance of each asterisk. She told the board DHHS was working very hard at having one location for all reports but at this time not all are there yet. Ms. Noel explained for example that Program Integrity has (4) asterisks and this shows that the report she has seen has discrepancies. She said that typically they meet the 100%. The county is accustomed to using an old report, FRD 407 that shows the number of claims established timely/untimely but that with the new report that DHHS has created they do not match. Ms. Noel said this could be a time frame issue, but would need to track manually to see what caused the discrepancies.

### **2019-2020-N.C. GENERAL ASSEMBLY SOCIAL SERVICES CONSORTIUM**

**LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES**-Ms. Noel went over the handout from the NCACDSS and NCACBSS. She told the board she had just received it and would be too late to present to the board at next month's meeting as they will meet on January 30, 2019. She discussed Item 1 which she said for the last several years they have

presented wanting adequate funding for Adult Services in Adult Protective Services and Guardianship. Ms. Noel told the board that Adult Services is the most underfunded program in DSS. She went over the funding with APS having 0% state funding, 81.5% county funding and 18.5% federal funding. She told the board that the association put this as a priority to the legislation. The second item they would like re-evaluated is the Medicaid Eligibility Determination that was put in place in 2017. The legislation in 2017 made the counties responsible for Medicaid overpayments. She said the association would like to put in place a baseline for counties to apply the federal accuracy rate threshold. They also want to place a cap on the claim amount at 5% or no more than \$5000.00 for a Medicaid overpayment that was found as a result of a state or federal audit. Item 3 she said the association wants the block grants to be used as intended and the last Item 4 the association wants to support the Social Services Working Group recommendations.

With no further business to come before the board, Chairperson Johnson moved to adjourn the meeting. Upon a vote, the results were as follows:

Aye: Utley, Johnson, Livingston, Pickard and Dalrymple

Nay: None

Chairperson Johnson ruled the motion had been adopted unanimously and the meeting adjourned.



Margaret Johnson

Chairperson



Melissa Lett

Secretary to the Board