

The Northampton County Board of Social Services met in the Board Room of the Social Services Building on January 24, 2023. The meeting was called to order under code §2.2-3708.2 at 9:00 am. Present were Edith Johnson, Chairwoman, Spencer Murray, Board Member, Janice Langley, Board member, and Mozella Francis, Director.

On a motion by Ms. Langley, and second by Mr. Murray the minutes of the November 15 and December 20, 2022, meetings were approved. There was no public comment or correspondence.

The Board was provided with a copy of the FY 2023 budget. Ms. Francis brought attention to budget line 858, Staff and Operations Pass Through, where she had requested an additional \$100K for staff and operations. Ms. Francis informed the board that the funds will not be required since there have been no changes with staffing and therefore returned to the State. On budget line 872, VIEW Purchases, we have approximately \$15K until the end of the fiscal year. VIEW services expenditures will be adjusted to account for the limited VIEW funding at this time. Ms. Francis announced that there will be a notable increase in expenditures on budget line 855 to purchase as many supplies as possible from this current year for the fiscal year 2024. This will help with the budget should we become fully staffed for the fiscal year 2024. Ms. Francis also noted in March there will be a noted increase due to the three-paycheck month which occurs twice a year. APS budget line 895 shows a marked increase. APS staff are working diligently with housing and hopefully, permanent housing will be obtained by the end of March.

Ms. Francis advised that she submitted the budget for FY 2024 to the County Administrator and Financial Director. Ms. Francis indicated that she has requested additional funding from the locality to address retention and recruitment. Public Assistance (Auxiliary Grant), which is support for disabled residents to live in assisted living facilities. Ms. Francis added that there is legislation within the General Assembly to increase the Auxiliary Grant contribution of \$1,500 to approximately \$2,500/month which will impact the local budget. Ms. Francis indicated that she accounted for this change in her FY 2024 budget request. Ms. Francis also reported that she is scheduled to present an overview of the Agency to the Board of Supervisors on February 14<sup>th</sup>.

Ms. Francis updated the Board of Directors on some of the programs. With CPS, we are status quo however, there is a new proposed legislation that may be challenging should it pass. Ms. Francis will keep the Board apprised if this mandate makes it through the House and Senate. With APS/AS, we have seen a significant increase in members of the community requesting UAI Screenings. This is a trend across the State of Virginia. The legislation within APS surrounding guardianship will impact staffing. APS workers will have to increase the frequency of home visits which may require additional staff to meet the workload should the legislation pass. Social Services wholeheartedly supports the legislation; however, the challenge is with staffing. Discussion ensued amongst the board members and the Director.

The Consolidated Appropriations Act allowed for Medicaid and TANF to be carved out of the Pandemic

Health Emergency that is slated to end May 11, 2023. As a result, the processing of Medicaid Renewals will commence on April 1, 2023. TANF recipients who have exhausted their lifetime 60 months will have their TANF cases closed on March 31. The implications will be tremendous because there now becomes the right to appeal. The State and the local agency are anticipating an increase in appeals, especially for Medicaid. During the PHE no negative actions could be taken. There may be people who will lose their Medicaid now that cases will be processed for eligibility. Appeals are very time-consuming and will increase the already at times stressed workload. Social Services is working diligently on processes to maximize efficiency.

Another major impact comes with the SNAP program. The last supplemental benefit that SNAP recipients will receive will end in February. Therefore, individuals who have become accustomed to the maximum reimbursement rate during the past three years will now have to revert to pre-pandemic SNAP benefits. Ms. Francis stated that there was legislation that was being proposed that would allow additional SNAP funding for seniors. I have not heard any additional movement on that legislation at this time. **Ms. Langley inquired that if this legislation was to pass would it provide what the seniors had become accustomed to during the Pandemic? Ms. Francis responded that the supplement would allow for the elderly to receive additional funds, not equivalent to the maximum reimbursement but provide a supplement. Ms. Francis will keep the Board apprised of any updates.**

The VIEW and TANF programs will resume their pre-COVID policy and practices in January 2023. TANF clients who have exceeded the sixty-month lifetime benefit will no longer be eligible effective March 31. Therefore, March will be the last monetary benefit for those who fall within that category.

**Ms. Johnson inquired if the clients have been educated and informed about the impending changes. Ms. Francis responded that the clients have been informed using various forms of media including the local agency.**

Ms. Francis continued with Adoption. The Agency currently has 6 children in Foster Care. We are happy to report that 2 foster youths will begin trial home placements and have a current foster care service plan goal of return to home.

Ms. Johnson's board term will expire in June 2023, and she suggested the recruitment of professionals that may have the department of social services at heart and the desire to serve on the board of directors.

On a motion by Ms. Johnson and seconded by Ms. Langley, the Board went into Closed Session in accordance with Section 2.1-344 of the Code of Virginia, as amended, for the purpose of discussion or consideration of employment, assignment, appointment, promotion, performance, demotion, salaries, disciplining appointees or employees of any public body.

The next Board of Directors meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, February 21, 2023, at 11:00 a.m.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:00 p.m.

_____Attested by_____	
Edith Johnson, Chairman	Mozella F. Francis
January 24, 2022,	Director