

The Northampton County Board of Social Services met in the Board Room of the Social Services Building on September 19, 2023. The meeting was called to order under Virginia code §2.2-3708.2 at 11:00 am. Present were Chairman, Spencer Murray, Board Member, Janice Langley, Board Member, Ernest Smith, and Mozella Francis, Director.

On a motion by Mr. Smith and seconded by Ms. Langley, the minutes of the August 15, 2023, meeting were approved. There was no public comment or correspondence.

The Board was provided with a copy of the FY2024 budget. Ms. Francis reviewed the budget sheet pointing out in August for Local Only, Admin, \$2,857.02 was expended to keep a family from eviction. Ms. Francis explained that certain situations do not fall under the budget lines where we are able to assist. Ms. Francis reported that using local only funding is always a last resort as it is allocated to run programs that are required through Social Services however, there are time when it becomes necessary when there are no other options. Chairman, Murray asked that Ms. Francis keep the board apprised of those types of situations moving forward and to be certain to reach out to the board should additional support be needed for funding advocacy.

Ms. Francis updated the Board on all Agency programs:

- Within the Child Care program, our numbers continue to increase. Ms. Francis indicated that she is a member of the committee that is analyzing the effect with the influx of cases in the Child Care program. The State's Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission (JLARC) continues to study the impact of the increased caseload to provide a recommendation on childcare caseload capacity.
- In the SNAP program, the numbers continue to increase. Historically there is always an increased number of people applying for benefits in the Fall. This is partially due to many seasonal jobs ending and the current effect of inflation which makes it more difficult for families to survive. We are also beginning to see customers applying for benefits who are new or who have not been in the system for a significant period.
- In the Foster Care program, as announced at the last board meeting, we had three formal adoption applications in process. Currently, we have two of the three approved and moving towards finalization.
- In-home/Prevention/CPS continues to increase in caseload complexity. We are working to engage fathers which should have a favorable outcome for children and families. Our goal is to hold group meetings here at the Agency with the fathers to engage them more with their children while providing education and support.

- In Adult Services and APS, we are actively recruiting for a Family Services Specialist. We continue to receive referrals, mostly from EMS, within the senior population. The complexity of the cases has changed tremendously and continue to require the need for increased manpower to effectively case manage.

Ms. Francis advised the board on projected impacts with the possible government shut down. Should there be a government shut down we have discussed plans and have previous experience to pull from to help and be prepared as much as we can. Right now, there are no gleaming alerts that we are concerned about.

Ms. Francis provided the latest update on the EBT/SNAP scams that occurred during the COVID period. Ms. Francis advised the supervisors to educate the workers on the various scams that have occurred and how to better avoid them which will prepare the consumers from becoming victims of these scams. Ms. Francis reported that currently, Northampton has (2) customers who met the requirements for reimbursement from the State on benefits that were stolen thru scamming.

The Salvation Army Toys for Tots/Angel Tree Program has begun. The applications were disbursed at the local school systems' Open House events, and we have received 37 applications to date. The gifts will be disbursed on December 12 and 13, 2023.

Ms. Francis thanked Mr. Smith for the kind donation of backpacks for the Backpack Program. We were able to provide them to the children along with other school supplies.

On a motion by Ms. Langley and seconded by Mr. Smith 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 board returned to Open Session.

On a roll call vote certifying to the best of each member's knowledge, only public matters exempted from the public meeting and in the original motion were discussed. The vote was Chairman Murray, yes, Board Member Langley, yes, and Board Member Smith, yes. There were no motions coming out of closed session.

The next Board of Directors meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, October 17, 2023, at 11:00 a.m.

Ms. Francis advised that she will be attending the State Board Meeting in Newport News over the period October 4-5, 2023.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:50 a.m.

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Attested by	
Spencer Murray, Chairman	Mozella F. Francis
September 19, 2023	Director