

The Accomack County Board of Social Services met at its facility on Tuesday, August 16, 2011, at 9:30 A.M. Present were Mr. R. Dodd Obenshain, Chairman; Ms. Reneta Major, Vice-Chairman; Ms. Betty Wood; Ms. Kay Lewis; Mr. C. Ray Davis; and Mrs. Mary E. Parker, Secretary.

Mr. Obenshain called the meeting to order. Ms. Lewis gave the Invocation.

Mr. Obenshain proceeded to **Item 3 – Approve Minutes of July 19, 2011**. On motion by Mr. Davis, seconded by Ms. Major, the Minutes of July 19, 2011 were approved as written.

Mr. Obenshain proceeded to **Item 4 – Fraud Update – Fraud Investigator Jack Thomas**. Mr. Obenshain stated the Board had commented on the number of air conditioners he had saved the Cooling Program during the current year. Mr. Thomas stated for the last couple of years he had gotten referrals from Office Associate III Tammy Bennett regarding certain clients wanting to pick up air conditioners rather than having them installed. This year, Linda C. Rew, supervisor of the Energy Assistance Program, asked him if it would be possible for him to do Front-end fraud detection on every applicant who wanted to pick up their air conditioner. He stated it was a lot of work; however, it paid off. During the month of July he stopped 23 air conditioners from being given to people who were ineligible. For the period from August 1, 2011 through August 14, 2011, 14 more were determined to be ineligible for a total of 37 air conditioners for the two month period. Anytime we can save funds in the heating or cooling programs this allows us to have more funds available for the needy clients.

Mr. Obenshain inquired why he would not allow the clients to have the air conditioners. Mr. Thomas stated the policy states if a client already has an operable air conditioner, we cannot pay for another one. A lot of homes he investigated had three or four in the windows. Mrs. Parker stated the intention is not to supply the entire home with air conditioning. A client must meet one of the three criteria in order to be eligible for an air conditioner; i.e., over the age of 60, disabled or have a child under the age of six. The program allows for a space in the home to have air conditioning where the family can go and get relief from the humidity. Mr. Obenshain inquired whether the clients want the air conditioners to put in their homes or possibly for sale. Mr. Thomas stated there are probably situations when the latter might apply.

Mr. Davis then inquired whether there is an application for clients to complete and whether there is a stipulation on the application that the clients are not to have other air conditioners in the home. Mr. Thomas stated that was correct; however, the clients want to pick them up themselves which gives us a signal something is wrong. Mr. Thomas stated there was one client who wanted to pick up an air conditioner; however, when Mr. Thomas checked, the client had four air conditioners in his home. Mr. Davis inquired whether the client with four air conditioners had signed the application stipulating he did not own an air conditioner. Mr. Thomas stated that was correct. Mr. Davis stated he felt there was a self perpetuating problem if there is no penalty for the fraud committed. Mr. Thomas stated there are different situations and he does prosecute some of the cases because they are tied into Food Stamps. He stated the price of an air conditioner is \$350 if they pick it up. Mr. Obenshain inquired whether there was a way an applicant who completed a fraudulent application could be denied future benefits. Mrs. Parker stated that is not

our choice. Mrs. Parker stated we could refer all of them to the Commonwealth Attorney. Mr. Davis stated an example should be made of someone; i.e., the client who had four working air conditioners in his home. Mr. Thomas is hoping the word will spread around that he is checking on everyone who wants to pick up their air conditioner and that next year's Cooling Program will have less fraud. Mr. Obenshain stated the downside of not doing anything is it is taking a lot of Mr. Thomas' time to investigate.

After further discussion Mr. Obenshain thanked Mr. Thomas for his presentation.

Mr. Obenshain continued to **Item 5 – Director's Update. Regular Meetings and Trainings:** On August 4, 2011 Mrs. Parker attended a regular CPMT meeting.

**Regional/State Meetings:** On August 1, 2011 Mrs. Parker and Sara Seaman, Deputy Emergency Services director for Accomack County, attended an overview of the Phoenix system, a software program for registering and tracking evacuees at emergency shelters held at Christopher Newport University. Mrs. Parker stated this is a scanning system the State DSS has purchased for use in shelters and is free to all local departments of social services choosing to use it. The scanner has the ability to scan a person's driver's license and use that information to populate the registration pages. If you do not have a driver's license, they cannot do it that way. Everyone going to a shelter would be scanned or put into the system manually. Each person would receive a wristband for identity purposes. Then, if they left the shelter a worker would simply scan the wristband and it would tell what time they left. You must use a laptop computer; emergency services have access to a couple of laptops. Laptops in our agency are assigned to specific employees. Mrs. Parker has one; however, that would go to the Emergency Operations Center with her. We would need at least two laptops per shelter.

Mrs. Parker stated on August 3, 2011 she received a call from the office of Bill Hazel, Secretary of Health and Human Resources. He was to be on the Shore on August 4, 2011 to visit Eastern Shore Rural Health offices in Onley and Franktown. He also wanted to meet with Richard Sterrett, Director of Northampton County DSS, and Mrs. Parker. She and Mr. Sterrett had a CPMT meeting that afternoon which is normally held at the Accomack County Airport in Melfa. They decided to move the meeting to Eastville so the Secretary could stop in Eastville on his way back across the Bay. He spent approximately two hours with them. Sean Milner, Director of the Department of Juvenile Justice, was also present. They discussed the Comprehensive Services Act, the loss of 824 funds that provided companion services to disabled and aged adults as well as CPS prevention services, the Northwoods Compass system used by Northampton DSS, prisoner re-entry, and mental health services available on the Eastern Shore. It was a great opportunity to speak with him. Following the discussion a demonstration of the Compass system was presented.

Mr. Obenshain proceeded to **Item 6 – Internal Control Assessment Tool.** Mrs. Parker reviewed the Assessment Tool document prepared for ACDSS. Integrity and Ethical Values are covered in the Local Manual developed by the State in concert with local departments of social services. We must

assure that staff have read the Local Policy Manual and understand the information.

Performance targets are mandated by State and Federal guidelines. The workload for all staff has increased and due to economic conditions caseloads have increased without additional staff. While this could lead to violations of ethical standards, we have no evidence of this. Errors could increase due to the amount of work to be accomplished and the lack of sufficient staff to accomplish the work in a timely manner. Plus, the stress level for staff can contribute to absenteeism. Workers could also be out more because they are stressed out and need time to decompress.

Ms. Lewis inquired about writing job descriptions for workers and whether they were written for a specific job title or individually based. Mrs. Parker stated they are supposed to be based on the individual worker. This was unclear at the time of implementation in 2009, so we are still clarifying individual core responsibilities. For example, in the Front Desk Unit for many years some of them were dedicated specifically to benefit programs because the feeling was the majority of the work they did was related to the benefit programs. Now they are classified as joint workers. Not everything they do is benefit programs and unless you can show everything is on one specific side, the position has to be considered joint. A portion of the funds come from benefits and a portion of the funds come from service. A lengthy discussion followed relative to the completion of the Internal Control Assessment Tool.

Mr. Obenshain continued to **Item 7 – Benefit Program Caseloads – Poverty Rate by Locality**. Mrs. Parker stated some of the Counties are not listed on the sheet. With Medicaid she could only go back to 2006 to get a report. For SNAP she pulled the report for the year 2001 which showed we paid out \$200,001 in Food Stamps. In 2006 there were 1693 total households for almost \$304,000. In 2007 things were getting worse economically; we had 1,800 households with \$340,000 paid out in total benefits. In 2008 we had almost 2100 households and about \$485,000 paid out in benefits. In 2009 we jumped to 2100 households and \$473,000 paid out in benefits. In 2010 we had 2582 households and \$713,238 paid out in benefits. For 2011, which was computed through June, there were 3000 households and \$813,953 paid out in benefits. It is a huge caseload and we manage it.

Mr. Obenshain inquired where Accomack County stands today in the poverty rate level. Mrs. Parker stated the current poverty level is 16%.

In 2006 our unduplicated Medicaid count was 6882. In 2007 the number went down to 6497. The drop between 2006 and 2007 is because DMAS revised how they were counting individual cases. In 2008 it jumped to 6827 and in 2009 we had 6900 unduplicated cases. In 2010 the number increased to 7211 with total payments of \$34,892,950.

Mrs. Parker stated TANF caseload sizes remain between 150 and 190 cases. Clients are also limited in the number of payments they receive, with two years on and two off, with a five-year lifetime stipulation. Before VIEW and Welfare Reform started, we had a caseload of approximately 500-600.

Mr. Obenshain continued to **Item 8 – Financial Statement**. In the absence of Administrative Office Manager Shirley Harmon, Mrs. Parker reviewed the statement. We have finished our second month of the new Fiscal Year and there appears to be no problems. The handout she gave was

relative to the child care program. We are now paying vendors. When we go live for the new child care program, the State will pay the vendors. In order for them to pay the vendors we will have to give them back the money. In order for our match to draw down Federal and State money we have to have it all together. You can keep your local match so this year the local match funds can reside in our budget and be used for other purposes. The State and Federal funds will go back to Richmond so they can draw the checks.

Mr. Obenshain proceeded to **Item 9 – 787 Trunk Line**. On the afternoon of August 9, 2011 Benefit Program Supervisor Patricia Morris went to Mrs. Parker and asked if she could call out on her 787 line. Mrs. Parker tried to call her home; however, all she got was a continuous busy signal. She then called an 824 number for people in Northern Accomack County. The number she called in Chincoteague worked. We called Verizon and put in a repair order. It was determined the problem was not in our internal system. There was no dial tone available. They said it would be August 17, 2011 before they could fix it. She sent an email to the Board.

Mr. Obenshain advised Mrs. Parker to call Verizon back and tell them she was going to file a complaint with SCC. Mrs. Parker did so and later found Verizon also ignored the SCC request. State and Regional DSS offices were notified of the outage and local radio stations were given information for broadcast regarding the number to call for CPS and APS complaints as well as the 824 trunk line number that was working. We used both agency and personal cell phones as well. The line is still not working. Mr. Davis stated Verizon had been on strike which probably caused the issue to continue.

On motion by Ms. Wood, seconded by Ms. Lewis, the Board went into Closed Session for the purpose of discussing Personnel (Leave Without Pay) and Acceptance of Custody (Foster Care Case #001-048921007), as permitted by Code of Virginia Section 2.2-3712.

On motion by Ms. Wood, seconded by Ms. Lewis, the Board returned to Open Session. On motion by Ms. Major, seconded by Ms. Wood, the Board confirmed the matters discussed in Closed Session (Ms. Wood – yes; Ms. Major – yes; Ms. Lewis – yes; Mr. Davis – yes).

On motion by Mr. Davis, seconded by Ms. Major, the Board was polled and approved the following Personnel issue (Ms. Wood – yes; Ms. Major – yes; Ms. Lewis – yes; Mr. Davis – yes):

- I. Personnel:
  1. Leave Without Pay - FMLA:
    - a. Bonnie Munn – Office Associate III  
07-18-11 – 09-09-11 – 72.5 Hrs.

On motion by Ms. Wood, seconded by Ms. Wood, the Board was polled and approved the Acceptance of Custody (Ms. Wood – yes; Ms. Major – yes; Ms. Lewis – yes; Mr. Davis – yes):

- II. Acceptance of Custody:
  1. Foster Care Case #001-048921007
  2. Foster Care Case #001-049431003
  3. Foster Care Case #001-049432000

Mr. Obenshain stated the next regular meeting would be held on Tuesday, September 20, 2011, at 9:30 A.M.

APPROVED: \_\_\_\_\_

ATTEST: \_\_\_\_\_