

The Accomack County Board of Social Services met at its facility on Tuesday, July 16, 2013, at 9:30 A.M. Present were Mr. R. Dodd Obenshain, Chairman; Ms. Reneta Major, Vice-Chairman; Ms. Betty Wood; Ms. Laura B. Gordy; Mr. John Sparkman; and Mrs. Mary E. Parker, Secretary.

Mr. Obenshain called the meeting to order. Mr. Sparkman gave the Invocation.

Mr. Obenshain proceeded to **Item 3 – Approve Minutes of May 22, 2013.** On motion by Ms. Major, seconded by Ms. Wood, the Minutes of May 22, 2013 were approved as written.

Mr. Obenshain continued to **Item 4 – Fraud Update.** Mrs. Parker stated Fraud Investigator Jack Thomas had been busy. Mr. Obenshain stated he was continuing to do a good job for the Agency, and Ms. Major stated he was an asset.

Mr. Obenshain proceeded to **Item 5 – Director's Update. Community Relations.** On May 23, 2013 the Broadwater Academy Geography class came to the Agency to discuss poverty on the Eastern Shore. However, they were more interested in welfare fraud. Mrs. Parker stated she gave each of them a copy of Mr. Thomas' fraud report. Mrs. Parker stated they left here and went to the Food Bank and to the grocery store. They each had to purchase one week's worth of groceries for a family of three receiving SNAP benefits. She believed it was an eye opener for them.

On May 29, 2013 Mrs. Parker attended the Accomack-Northampton Counties Juvenile & Domestic Relations Court Best Practices Group Workshop at the ESCC Workforce Development Center in Melfa. The group was comprised of attorneys, guardian ad litems, Judge Croxton Gordon, Court Services staff, Child Welfare staff, and Northampton Child Welfare staff. They discussed the best way to serve families when they are in the legal system. Every agency arranged to have someone come and do parts of the training and it was well received.

Regular Meetings. On June 13, 2013 Mrs. Parker attended a Community Partners of the Eastern Shore meeting.

On June 24, 2013 Mrs. Parker attended a meeting with Eddie Swain, Mickie Spangler, Dorrie Thompson and Accomack and Northampton Self-Sufficiency staff to discuss providing customer service training for VIEW participants.

On June 27, 2013 Joni White, Nurse Manager, Eastern Shore Health District and Mrs. Parker toured Arcadia Middle and High Schools and Nandua Middle and High Schools to begin shelter site planning. Mrs. Parker stated they had a layout of the schools and discussed the best places for our staff to be housed and other areas available to us. They will be meeting again about it and will include senior level staff here and at the Health Department. Mr. Obenshain inquired whether the issue relative to regulating the heating/air in the room where our Agency workers would be had been resolved. Mrs. Parker stated at the last shelter Mr. Talbert asked the principal which room he was going to use. He told them certain rooms; however, he put our staff in a room where the heating/air was not regulated and our workers nearly froze. Mrs. Parker stated this would be worked out in the future.

On July 10, 2013 Mrs. Parker attended a follow-up meeting regarding customer service training.

On July 11, 2013 Mrs. Parker attended a Community Partners of the Eastern Shore meeting.

On the afternoon of July 11, 2013 Mrs. Parker attended a regular CMPT meeting.

On July 12, 2013 Mrs. Parker attended a lunch meeting with Ina Birch, Adult Career Coach for ESCC. She wants to come one morning per month and meet with clients who are in the waiting area or were referred to assist them with getting into school if they want to study something, or if they are in school, she could help them. Her job is to keep them in school, finding a way to pay for it and to help someone who has been in the workforce and wants to go back to school.

Regional/State Meetings: On June 10, 2013 Mrs. Parker attended the Eastern Region Director's meeting in Virginia Beach. She stated it was an enlightening meeting. They were informed Health Care Reform would begin October 1, 2013. VACMS/CommonHelp will be the platform used for applications and Deloitte is developing the program and will be testing it while at the same time staff will be trained on its use. It will go live in October 1, 2013.

On June 18, 2013 Governor McDonnell had a conference call with all DSS Directors regarding the kick-off of his Adoption 1000 initiative – to get 1000 children adopted. There are 1000 children out there that have a goal of adoption but a lot of them are already in the adoption stream.

On June 19, 2013 Mrs. Parker attended the State Board of Social Services meeting in Virginia Beach.

Mrs. Parker stated in the meantime she had been meeting bi-weekly with the Benefit staff regarding the Laserfische scanning program which replaced E-Z Filer and discussing issues workers are experiencing. She stated several staff attended training in June and while some staff are still hesitant; however, we are moving forward.

Mr. Obenshain continued to **Item 6 – Social Worker Title Protection – Nursing Home Pre-Admission Screenings.** Mrs. Parker stated when the Social Worker Title Protection was being discussed in the General Assembly she gave the Board a position paper which spoke to the issue of certain codes requiring “social workers” to sign off on certain types of screenings. The reality now is according to the Code of Virginia you are required to have a BSW or MSW to be called a social worker. Mr. Obenshain inquired how many BSWs we have in the agency. Mrs. Parker stated we have two. We have several BASW's (Bachelor of Arts in Social Work). Longwood, Mary Washington, and Salisbury State are among many universities where students majoring in sociology received a BA, rather than a BS degree. The course load is basically the same. There may be a few more science courses in the BSW, but you cannot put a BSW after your name if you do not have that type of degree.

On Friday, May 31, 2013, at approximately 6 P.M. the VDSS Human Resources sent out an email stating we had a dilemma. Adult Services staff along with a nurse from the Health Department is tasked with completing a Virginia Uniform Assessment Instrument (UAI) for individuals requesting home based services. to qualify. The 13 page form by Code requires a social workers' signature and is sent to the State Health Department and DMAS and they make the determination of whether the person qualifies. It has to be signed by a social worker. Family Services Specialist II Bessie Floyd is a member of our Adult Services staff. With Family Services Specialist III Kathleen Kenyon's retirement at the end of July, Family Services Specialist III Nadine Greenley will assume

responsibility for her Adult Services caseload. Mrs. Greenley has a BASW so Ms. Floyd will have to sign off on all UAIs completed by Mrs. Greenley.

Mr. Obenshain proceeded to **Item 7 – Eligibility Modernization**. Mrs. Parker stated the business plan outlined in Eligibility Modernization is geared toward having customers file applications and renewals online in order to free up staff time dealing directly with customers. We have had almost 300 online applications since CommonHelp began and Northampton County has had approximately 90. A lot of residents do not have a computer or do not know how to use a computer. Those who work will find filing applications online will work well for them. We will do our best to encourage our customers to file online but our reality is if someone comes to our office, they want to see their worker.

The Affordable Care Act (ACA) requires that applicants have access to file an application either online, by telephone through a phone bank, or in person. Families with children are the only group eligible for coverage through ACA.

Mr. Obenshain continued to **Item 8 – VSSS Local Dept. Eligibility Modernization Development Plan**. Mrs. Parker stated this is her plan. This came with the Regional Directors' meeting. We had to work on a plan at the meeting and go back to our individual agencies and develop plans to be sent to the Regional Director. SPARK, our State DSS internet page, has program information for workers and they can go daily to SPARK and read pertinent information about DSS and the various programs. The day after the meeting I came back and called ESRH Director Nancy Stern as I noticed they had job listings in the paper called navigators. After reading it I thought it had to do with Healthcare Reform. I figured these were people who would be going out and trying to connect people with the Healthcare Act. We need to know what they are going to be doing and vice versa. I talked with Ms. Stern and she has designated staff for this purpose. Mrs. Parker stated she was going to contact other DSS Directors which are similar in our size. Mrs. Parker stated every week we review the status of online applications and every two weeks Mrs. Parker meets with staff to discuss Laserfiche. She further stated she instructed staff to go online every day and read what was new. We do not have an implementation team; however, we do have a group which meets relative to the program and will probably become the implementation team at our agency.

Mr. Obenshain continued to **Item 9 – Change in the VACMS – A Child Care Perspective of Project 1 – MAGI**. Mrs. Parker stated this is saying how childcare is going to change in October 2013. Some pieces are going to be good. Whenever someone goes into the system to change an address that will populate in other programs which will definitely save workers time. As other programs go online the information will filter into them as well. This is full integration with Common Help. When someone applies for childcare it will go directly into My Work Space, which it does now. Information will then be imported into VACMS – the childcare piece – by way of new data and it will populate those things. If someone files an application for what they call MAGI – Healthcare Reform – the information pulled down by IRS will populate into the childcare so you do not have to manually reenter it. They have also added pages that are called Rapid Data Entry for designed call centers to use. You will not have to go through a lot of pages. You put in the data and it will automatically be imported to the proper document. If they submit an application for more than one program it will not go to ADAPT. The medical assistance and childcare pieces will become a part of VACMS and eventually they plan to do away with ADAPT.

Mr. Obenshain proceeded to **Item 10 – Safeguards Internal Inspection.** Mrs. Parker stated this is an IRS required visit and on May 21, 2013 we were inspected. Mrs. Parker further stated she was aware our Agency would have some security issues. Before our inspection Mrs. Parker had planned to make all file rooms accessible swipe cards on the two file rooms which are on each hallway. Our biggest problem is custodians who work in our building after the agency has closed. In order to be perfect each worker would have to clean his/her own office and the custodians would just be responsible for the hallways and other rooms where documents are not located. The lady who came stated we are further along with our safeguards than some other agencies are. We have not previously had a sign-in book in the front reception area where everyone would sign in, date, and state who they were here to see. Our workers have been going to the reception area to get their clients, walking them back to the offices and returning them to the reception area when they are finished. However, we do have the vending machine workers who come to refill our machines and other people who come to the Agency for other things. We have not had any problems but we are required to take care of these issues.

Mr. Obenshain continued to **Item 11 – Financial Statement – Administrative Office Manager Shirley Harmon.** Mrs. Harmon stated we have started the new budget year. For the month of June our Expenditures were \$286,430.78. Our Year-To-Date Total Local Adjustment is \$39,360.09 and our Total Local Balance to Date is \$684,750.91. Mrs. Parker stated the budget is not broken down by benefits and services anymore. We have one staff and operations line.

Mrs. Parker stated Child Welfare Supervisor Libby Beasley and representatives from other County agencies have been participating on a health insurance committee that Accomack County Finance Director Mike Mason organized. Mrs. Parker stated wanted to share some information with the Board. They have had three meetings. They are looking at health insurance benefits for retirees. At the present time retirees can stay on the County's health insurance if you have been a County employee for at least 15 years and are 65 years old. Most of the people who have worked at our agency have stayed because they wanted to have the ability to stay on the health insurance when they retired. You have to be at least 65 when you retire. This new plan would not be good for workers who are nearing retirement age.

Mrs. Beasley stated these have been brain-storming sessions. What seems to be in concrete is the retirement health benefit that we have been promised for approximately 15 years is going to be taken away. You have people who have worked here for 40 years. If the proposals currently being discussed are adopted by the Board of Supervisors and they do not retire within the next three year period, then they will not get the benefit. If you are 64-1/2 within three years, you will be six months from taking it. Their plan is to eliminate that health benefit but pay health benefits for people who retire early. They are taking from the old and giving to the young. This is now just a discussion; however, what they want is if you are 55 and have 20 years of service and retire, they will pay the same portion of your health benefit that they pay now until you reach 65. Mrs. Beasley's question to them is how much is that going to cost? If you offer people early retirement with this benefit then you possibly will have a lot of people who will retire. She told the committee we have employees at our agency who might be six months from retirement or people who have worked for 35 years and cannot retire because they are not 65. Mrs. Beasley then stated if you force people to take retirement at 65 in order to get this benefit then they are one year from being able to receive an unreduced Social Security benefit; i.e., for that next year they would have to live on their retirement or they have to go out and find another job. She further stated it is not likely that a 65 year old individual would be able to go out and find another job.

Mrs. Beasley's request to the committee was instead of saying three years make it five years so that everyone who is at least 60 would be able to retire within the next five years to be eligible for the benefit. She stated she got nowhere with five years. She stated Mr. Mason wanted two years. Mrs. Beasley informed him that two years is not enough time for employees to get their finances and plans together to finish out the work they are doing and get retired for the benefits. Her biggest problem is taking from the old to give to the young. Mr. Mason's rationale was it would encourage people to retire so you could replace long term employees who make more money with new employees who would be hired at a lower salary. Mr. Mason informed the committee the Accomack County Board of Supervisors is not going to let the current health insurance stay in effect. He further stated it is too much money and this is the best they can do. Mrs. Beasley then stated the group still has not decided how they are going to pay the young retirees health care benefits. Mr. Mason stated he would ask the actuary to try and figure up the benefits that would be paid to early retirees when the old retirees are off the plan. He further stated older people on health insurance policies drive up the health insurance costs. Mr. Obenshain inquired whether this was legal. Mrs. Parker stated maybe we need to get a legal opinion on the matter as it sounds like age discrimination.

Mr. Sparkman stated this is based on a false savings. It is not always older people who run up costs. It could be someone much younger who has a sick child. Mrs. Beasley stated Mr. Mason's rationale is older workers run up the health insurance costs and young people have to pay more because older people are on the policy. Mrs. Beasley stated this might be moot if the General Assembly decides to offer localities the State health insurance plan. This would be good because after you retire from the State, one-half of your medical benefit is paid forever. Her feeling is when a promise is made to someone and you have given them 40 years of your life, the County should follow through. Mr. Obenshain stated the final decision lies with the Board of Supervisors.

Mrs. Beasley stated if you work 15 years and you retire at 65 or older, one-half of your carve-out is paid by the county under the current plan. Mrs. Parker noted employees age 60 and beyond who are thinking about retiring and have been without a raise for several years would like to have that to build on for their retirement. She further stated we are getting a 3% raise beginning August 1, 2013. Ms. Major inquired if the above statement by Mrs. Beasley relative to working 15 years and retiring at 65 or older, one-half of your carve-out is paid was a County policy. Mrs. Beasley advised it was adopted by the Board of Supervisors several years ago. She further stated she did not know when the next meeting would be held as Mr. Mason was waiting to hear from the actuary. Mr. Obenshain stated there would probably be a public hearing relative to this item.

On motion by Ms. Gordy, seconded by Ms. Major, the Board went into Closed Session for the purpose of discussing Personnel (Employment, Leave Without Pay, and Consent to Adopt/Adoption Subsidy), as permitted by the Code of Virginia Section 2.2-3712.

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

On motion by Ms. Gordy, seconded by Ms. Major, the Board was polled (Ms. Wood – yes; Ms. Major – yes; Ms. Gordy – yes; Mr. Sparkman – yes) and approved the following:

- I. Personnel:
 - 1. Employment:
 - A. Laura Bundick – Office Associate II, Effective 7/1/13
 - B. Alba Castillo – Office Associate II, Effective 6/16/13
 - C. Shaquanna Bibbins – Office Associate II, Effective 7/8/13
 - D. Cristina Delaney, Benefit Program Specialist II, Eff. 7/1/13
 - E. Traci, Smith, Emergency Benefit Program Specialist III, Eff. 7/1/13

On motion by Ms. Major, seconded by Ms. Wood, the Board was polled (Ms. Wood – yes; Ms. Major – yes; Ms. Gordy – yes; Mr. Sparkman – yes) and approved the following:

- II. Leave Without Pay:
 - A. Mary Beasley, Benefit Program Specialist III – 66.5 Hrs. – 5/10 – 7/8/13
 - B. Theresa Franklin, Benefit Program Specialist II – 71.25 Hrs. – 5/22- 6/12/13

On motion by Ms. Wood, seconded by Ms. Major, the Board was polled (Ms. Wood – yes; Ms. Major – yes; Ms. Gordy – yes; Mr. Sparkman – yes) and approved the following:

- III. Consent to Adopt/Adoption Subsidy:
 - A. Foster Care Case #001-049431003
 - B. Foster Care Case #001-049432000

The next regular meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, August 20, 2013.

On motion by Ms. Major, seconded by Ms. Wood, the meeting was adjourned at 11 A.M.

APPROVED: **R. Dodd Obenshain** _____

ATTEST: **Mary E. Parker** _____