

The Accomack County Board of Social Services met at its facility on Tuesday, April 18, 2017, at 9:30 A.M. Present were Ms. C. Reneta Major, Chairman; Mr. Robert D. Crockett; Mr. John Sparkman; Mrs. Nicolette Hickman; Mrs. Elsie Mackie; and Mrs. Vicki J. Weakley, Secretary.

Ms. Major called the meeting to order. She announced Vice-Chairman Laura B. Gordy had been ill, had emergency gall bladder surgery and was currently still in the hospital. She was hoping to go home that day to a rehab facility. She asked for everyone to keep her in their prayers. She inquired whether the agency did anything for a Board Member who was in the hospital. Mr. Crockett and Mr. Sparkman stated that was a good idea. Office Supervisor Linda Rew stated she would see something was purchased and taken to Ms. Gordy from the Board. Mrs. Hickman gave the Invocation.

Ms. Major proceeded to **Item 3 – Approve Minutes of March 21, 2017**. On motion by Mr. Crockett, seconded by Mrs. Mackie, the Minutes of March 21, 2017 were approved as written.

Ms. Major continued to **Item 4 – Fraud Update**. Mrs. Weakley stated we ran into a little glitch relative to **Recoupments Received for this Month**. The report is currently not available in our system. We have talked to Richmond as well as the Regional Office and have been informed they are working on it. Ms. Major stated Fraud Investigator Jack Thomas continues to do a good job.

Ms. Major proceeded to **Item 5 – Director’s Update**. Mrs. Weakley stated she attended the following meetings during the previous month: A&E Board meeting which is with reference to Members Helping Members; Drug Task Force; a webinar at our agency concerning Immigrants & Public Benefits, the training reinforce that the negative consequences reported have not occurred in Virginia thus far. The agency is encouraging people to not close their cases. However, DSS cannot promise we might not have to share information with ICE, if we were asked; CPMT meeting; Emergency CPMT; and Ms. Major and Mrs. Weakley attended the State of the Agency at the Eastern Regional Office.

Mrs. Weakley stated we participated with the Kids Count at the ESCC and there were approximately 85 people in attendance. The group stated the display we did was awesome. Participants broke into groups and discussed various things we could do on the Shore to make things better. The speakers stated in other places where they have shared this information there have been issues regarding territory and who does what, but we worked together very well. It was a nice statement for the Shore.

Mrs. Weakley stated CFSR (Child & Family Services Review) which is a Federal review, would have representatives present on site at ACDSS the week of April 24<sup>th</sup>-28, 2017 reviewing our Ongoing, CPS investigations and Foster Care programs. We were one of two agencies selected to represent our Region. The second agency is Norfolk. Mr. Crockett inquired whether she was confident about the outcome. Mrs. Weakley stated somewhat – part of our issue is there are little details of which we were not made aware. An example was when our CPS investigators go out to interview a victim in a child abuse, they have a requirement regarding who all they are to interview, including siblings of the victim, the parent and if not the parent, the abuser. We have always done that and entered it in OASIS, (computer system). We just learned if we do not put the word Interview as the reason for the contact, we do not get credit for it. Even though we made the contact with the proper interviewee, if we did not put in the correct word, they would not count it. Unfortunately, the cases they pulled were closed cases so we were unable to go back and correct this issue. Mrs.

Weakley stated we will probably get marked down for this, even though we took the correct action.

Mrs. Weakley stated we were confident about the work we did and touched all of the bases; however, with some of the minute peculiarities we are a little concerned. If they had been open cases, we could have gone back and corrected if to reflect the correct wording. Mr. Crockett stated he hoped whoever came to the agency will have common sense pertaining to the issues. Mrs. Mackie stated a lot of times it depends on the reviewer. Mrs. Mackie inquired whether this is something that has been required since the system was brought up. Mrs. Weakley stated we just found out within the last few months when they started doing the QAA reviews and started coming every other month to review cases. Mrs. Mackie stated this could be something they just initiated within the last year.

Mrs. Weakley stated she and Ms. Major attended the State of the Agency meeting at the Eastern Regional Office in Virginia Beach. She stated for the most part she did not feel like she learned anything super new. She stated most of the things they discussed were things she anticipated they would discuss. The biggest issue is the overdue applications – particularly in benefits (Medicaid).

She further stated there are some over dues in CPS. They are trying to resolve those. In terms of CPS investigations one issue is that since the beginning we have always had 45 days to complete an investigation. She further stated approximately 10 years ago they gave us the ability to extend the investigation to 60 days, under certain circumstances; i.e., a sexual abuse case which involved law enforcement. We cannot do this on a regular basis, just in some particular circumstances. With the advent of computer systems the 45 day timeframe has to also include the worker completing the documentation and sending it to the supervisor for approval, as well as the supervisor sending it back for corrections and then resubmission to the supervisor for final approval. This cuts into the 45 days. Workers are having a difficult time getting all of the contacts completed, to include the computer system process, within that 45 day timeframe. We have to work on that. The State suggests we tell workers they have 30 days to complete an investigation and then two weeks for the documentation/approval process. However, with some cases this is a tall order, especially if a family is not cooperative or someone is trying to evade the worker. Another suggestion was we will have a senior worker share that responsibility with the supervisor. When we are able to get back to full staff, we will take a look at this issue again.

Mrs. Weakley stated the Regional Director gave us numbers for the Benefit Units and when she took time to look at them, she realized we were getting more applications than an agency twice our size. However, when Mrs. Weakley got back to ACDSS and she shared it with our staff we received a call from our Regional Director stating she had given us the incorrect numbers. The issue we do have is overdue Medicaid applications. This is one of the issues the new Tri-Take process we have put into place will hopefully address. The regional staff person who previously came to our office to look at how we could address the overdue issue was planning to come this month to see how we are doing. Mrs. Weakley stated she asked her to wait two months to give us time to get the new Tri-Take unit up and running. We are hoping that once all kinks are worked out, it will have a significant impact on our overdue applications, renewals and re-certifications, which are running 26%-40% overdue. Some of this has to do with the new computer system. For example, some of the applications that used to take 20 minutes to complete, are now taking an hour for completion. It is slowing things down, especially when coupled with vacancies we have had. It takes 6-12 months to get a worker fully trained and up to speed. There have also been

some complications with the State's Common Help system, where people are encouraged to go online and complete applications which are then forwarded to us. There is a delay sometimes in getting applications to us. Sometimes by the time we receive the application, they are already overdue. The State is trying to fix that as well. There is a combination of things causing us to be behind with overdue applications. Unfortunately, Accomack County is a little more behind than the rest of the region. We are hoping the new Tri-Take unit will help speed things up.

Mrs. Mackie inquired whether we are fully staffed in benefits and if it is basically Medicaid applications that are overdue. Mrs. Weakley stated Medicaid is the worst offender. We have some difficulties in long term care as well. We only have one person doing long term care. We had a plan to create an additional "half person" whose caseload would be half long term care. Unfortunately, we had a vacancy and were unable to make that change, as planned. At the present time, we do not have any additional staff to assist with long term care, but, we will be working on this.

Mrs. Mackie stated Mrs. Weakley had previously spoken about the Tri-Take unit; however, she wanted Mrs. Weakley to clarify how that worked. Mrs. Weakley stated rather than the workers who are working on re-certifications and renewals and being constantly interrupted with phone calls, they focus specifically on the renewals and re-certifications they have for that month. All other changes go to the Tri-Take unit. Therefore, they are not inundated with phone calls and requests from clients; i.e., I need a copy of this or I cannot remember if I brought in this document, etc. It is freeing them up to do nothing but get re-certifications and renewals done, The Tri-Take unit then handles all of the new applications and of course, all of the changes. They have a rotation schedule set up and we are currently trying to work out some issues with that. One person is taking those phone calls on a particular day and distributing the rest of the work among the Tri-Take workers. The plan is for them to have one day each week, where they are not on duty for anything; i.e., any applications, any phone calls, etc. so they can focus on applications and changes they have received.

Mrs. Mackie inquired whether the over dues were with the applications. Ms. Major said no and Mrs. Weakley stated not exclusively. Ms. Major stated the over dues are mostly with the renewals. Mrs. Mackie stated that was her question. Ms. Major stated she thought the Tri-Take was a good idea and the changes can also be reported online. Mrs. Mackie stated she realized that; however, she wanted clarifications as they talked about overdue applications. She wanted to clarify it was applications as well as renewals and re-certifications. Mrs. Mackie stated this was a previous problem; however, it was cleared up at one point in time, when they brought Regional VaCMS Consultant Amy Phillips here to address the problem. Ms. Major stated it is a lot better than it was.

Mr. Sparkman inquired how short we were in staff. Mrs. Weakley stated at the moment we have one position that is vacant; however, we need at least one additional worker. The State gave us some money for another person but not enough to cover a full position. We will continue to reevaluate where we are with funding, and staffing needs, including where we have the greatest need. The amount of applications we are receiving has increased significantly. This also slows up processing. Ms. Major stated in comparison to NCDSS we are inundated with applications.

Mrs. Mackie stated she had one more question and that was whether the State is providing adequate training on a regular basis and is the training locally. Mrs. Weakley stated they had changed our training center from the Knowledge

Center to the Learning Center. They are now planning on replacing that, because it is not working. There has been a big focus on training and the State has made a commitment to offer it more often; however, it still does not happen as often as we need. When we do not have training available in Virginia Beach, we send workers to other regions, so they can receive the training, quicker.

Mrs. Weakley stated another thing they learned at the State of the Agency meeting is we have old stuff "hanging" because of the computer system. Workers have an Inbox that tells them a change needs to be made. If they do not click on that notice, through the inbox, the computer will not remove the item from the inbox, even though the action has been taken. This has resulted in old stuff that needs to be cleaned up, computer wise. Currently we have an aide in Benefits pulling everyone's inbox each week and giving it to workers on a regular basis to help them get caught up with this.

Ms. Major continued to **Item 6 – Support Staff Appreciation Month – APRIL**. Mrs. Weakley asked Office Supervisor Linda Rew if the group had gone for its luncheon. Mrs. Rew stated it had not been scheduled at that time. Mrs. Weakley stated the Agency would be paying for their luncheon.

Ms. Major proceeded to **Item 7 – Child Abuse Prevention Month**. Mrs. Weakley stated April is Child Abuse Prevention Month. She further stated we had intended to have a pretty blue pinwheel garden out front; however, the pinwheels are on back order.

Ms. Major proceeded to **Item 8 – Adult Abuse Prevention Month**. Mrs. Weakley stated May is Adult Abuse Prevention Month.

Ms. Major continued to **Item 9 – Approval of Phone System Purchase**. Mrs. Weakley stated since 1979 we have had a contract with, Siemens, a telephone company. She further stated our phones were updated 12 years ago. Our current system is now antiquated and we cannot get parts for it. She has clarified the process for purchasing a new system by contacting the State office and the County Administrator. The final resolution was for Mrs. Weakley to get approval from the ACDSS Board to spend the money. The cost of the phone system, together with the headsets, is \$62,266. The company we had previously used is the only one willing to do the work. We have tried to get bids from other companies and they have declined to put in bids. This company is agreeable to using our existing lines as they have been the ones who have been servicing them. Therefore, it is not a total replacement, but an upgrade. We have a maintenance contract with them which will cover some of the labor cost as well. This enables us to keep the costs down some. She talked with County Administrator Mike Mason and discussed the RFP process and then made the decision to go through the Government contracts (EVA system). Using the EVA system will result in a fee which would increase the total amount of the phone system. In order to keep the cost from going over the \$62,266, we will not purchase the headsets at this time. The cost of the headsets was \$7,470. This amount was close to the anticipated EVA fee. ACDSS has the \$62,000 in our budget so Ms. Weakley is request the ACDSS board's approval to upgrade the phones. On motion by Mr. Crockett, seconded by Mr. Sparkman, Mrs. Weakley was instructed to purchase the new phone system for ACDSS. The motion carried.

At this time Mr. Sparkman inquired if we had the money for the headsets and was informed we did. He then stated we should go ahead and purchase the headsets as well. Mr. Crockett amended his previous motion to include the purchase of the headsets and Mr. Sparkman seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Ms. Major proceeded to **Item 10 – Financial Statement – Administrative Office Manager Shirley Harmon**. For the month of March our Total Local Expenditures were \$347,484.58. Our Year-to-Date Total Local Adjustment was \$473,282.30, and our Total Local Balance to Date is \$288,790.70. Mr. Sparkman inquired how we were doing with the budget. Mrs. Harmon stated we were okay; however, there are a couple of programs where we are running a little low on money. One is the Auxillary Grant Program, the IV-E Foster Care Program and the Title IV-E Subsidized Assistance Program. She has already sent notice through the BRS for additional money for those programs.

Mrs. Crockett inquired whether we had done this before and whether she had gotten the funding. Mrs. Harmon stated she had previously requested more funding and we had received funds for the programs. Mr. Crockett inquired how much longer for this FY. Mrs. Harmon stated May was the last month for the State FY.

On motion by Mr. Crockett, seconded by Mrs. Hickman, the Board went into Closed Session for the purpose of discussing G. F. Horne Update, as permitted by the Code of Virginia Section 2.2-3712.

On motion by Robert Crockett, seconded by Nicolette Hickman, the Board returned to Open Session. On motion by Mr. Crockett, seconded by Mrs. Mackie, the Board confirmed the matters discussed in Closed Session (Mrs. Hickman – yes; Mrs. Mackie – yes; Mr., Crockett – yes; Mr. Sparkman – yes).

Ms. Major stated the next regular Board meeting will be held Tuesday, May 16, 2017 at 9:30 A.M.

The meeting adjourned at 10:37 A.M.

APPROVED: C. Reneta Major

ATTEST: Vicki J. Weakley