

The Accomack County Board of Social Services met at its facility on Tuesday, February 20, 2018, at 9:30 A.M. Present were Ms. Reneta Major, Chairman; Ms. Laura B. Gordy, Vice-Chairman; Mr. Robert D. Crockett; Mrs. Elsie B. Mackie; Mrs. Nicolette Hickman; Mr. John Sparkman; and Mrs. Vicki J. Weakley, Secretary.

Ms. Major called the meeting to order. Ms. Gordy gave the Invocation.

Ms. Major proceeded to **Item 3 – Approve Minutes of January 16, 2018.** On motion by Mrs. Mackie, seconded by Mrs. Hickman, the Minutes of January 16, 2018 were approved as written. Mr. Crockett abstained as he was not present at the meeting. The motion carried.

Ms. Major continued to **Item 4 – Report from Benefits: Adult Unit by Supervisor Gar Kellam.** Mr. Kellam gave an overview of the different programs of the Adult Unit. He gave handouts to the Board showing the various programs; ABD (Age, Blind or Disabled) Medicaid; SNAP (formerly Food Stamps) for adult only households. This unit is responsible for all of the ongoing cases in adult only households. They maintain and complete renewals after a case is transferred from intake. For example, if a person were to come into the agency and apply for benefits, they would file an application and it would be assigned to the Intake Unit to process the application. If the client is eligible the case would be assigned to a worker in the Adult Unit. An annual renewal is then completed to see if that client would continue to meet the criteria to be eligible. Over 65 ABD would be determined disabled through the Social Security Administration. The unit has 1,400 cases in the ABD caseload.

Mr. Kellam further stated his unit also handles the Long Term Care Medicaid; i.e., people in nursing homes, assisted living, Hospice patients and people receiving at-home health care. This is the most complex Medicaid as we are looking at different things, such as, property transfers, where we get more in depth with their resources. Currently the Adult Unit has approximately 500 cases in the Long Term Care caseload. He stated there is no brochure for LTC; however, if a family is interested we would like for them to come and talk with us if there is a need, as this program is so complex and staff can better explain it.

Mr. Crockett inquired what the time frame was for an older parent to transfer his/her property to a relative. Mr. Kellam stated they look back five years. Any time within that five year timeframe could affect their eligibility.

Mr. Kellam then stated SNAP – formerly Food Stamps – is now the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program. He stated his unit only has adults with no children, in the household. He stated he could not find any current statistics for Accomack County, showing how many cases we have for the adult unit. He pulled up a report for Accomack County showing the Adult Unit and the Families and Children, combined, have 2,900 cases serving over 5,500 individuals. He further stated there is a great need for this service in the population in Accomack County.

Mr. Kellam stated at the present time he has six fulltime employees. He stated taking himself out of the equation only one of the six employees has more than six months of experience. He stated they are experiencing growing pains. They are in training and his goal for the next six months is to see all new employees receive the proper training, in order to meet all of the requirements. It used to be the practice for a new worker to come and immediately inherit a caseload. Now we are starting from scratch and building their caseloads, from the ground up. Each month they receive a few more cases and the more comfortable they become the more their caseloads will continue to grow.

At this time Mrs. Mackie inquired how it was going with the State and training. Mr. Kellam stated it takes too long to get a new worker into training. It used to take one year for a worker to obtain all of the training necessary to complete the job duties. He stated SNAP training is normally offered in the Virginia Beach area on a quarterly basis. So, if you have a new worker starting at the beginning of that quarter you might not get them into a SNAP training for three months. We have a lot of workers who are sitting and waiting for trainings. To prevent them from being too bored we are doing some in-house training; i.e., sitting with seasoned workers. In this manner they are getting interview techniques from a seasoned worker and organizational skills, as well.

Ms. Major inquired about webinars for SNAP. Mr. Kellam stated there are prerequisites for training; however, SNAP does not have many. Medicaid has approximately eight modules to take prior to attending training.

Mrs. Mackie inquired how often Medicaid training is offered. Mr. Kellam stated it is quarterly; however, there is a problem when they do not have enough enrolled in the session and it is then cancelled. This occurred last month. Other regions across the State appear to have the same issues. Mrs. Mackie then inquired whether the State is offering computer training for VACMS. Mr. Kellam stated there is a three day VaCMS basics training in a classroom. Mrs. Mackie inquired how often this occurs and Mr. Kellam stated every month. This working out well and they are getting into the system and learning.

Ms. Major asked if Mr. Kellam could review how people can apply for SNAP and/or Medicaid. Mr. Kellam said there are several ways to apply; i.e., (1) they can come into the office and talk with us, (2) there is a phone number through CoverVA where they can call and apply; and (3) they can apply online. Once a person receives benefits they can go online and manage their account or update a change to their case. He further stated there is talk creating an Android or IOS application which would assist people.

Ms. Major stated Mr. Kellam gave a good overview and the Board thanked him for his presentation.

Mrs. Mackie asked Mrs. Weakley if she had spoken with anyone about the problem with the training. Mrs. Weakley stated it is an ongoing issue with the State and it comes up at every meeting that she attends. Mrs. Mackie inquired whether a specialist would come to ACDSS and do a training for our new workers. Mrs. Weakley stated they are very strict about the training and nothing can be done until workers do the basic training. The specialists are not the staff doing the training. Mrs. Mackie stated they could give some guidelines on it. Mrs. Weakley stated if we have workers who are doing things incorrectly, the specialists will come and do a special training for that.

Ms. Major proceeded to **Item 5 – Fraud**. Mrs. Weakley stated there was no fraud report, this month. Mrs. Weakley stated we are hiring previous Fraud Investigator, Jack Thomas, to come back and train our new Fraud Investigator. Mrs. Weakley stated Mr. Thomas informed her, he believed one of the things that had happened with collections is that word had gotten around he had retired and clients thought no one was checking, so some had not come to pay back collections. He planned to work with new Fraud Investigator, Frances Bailey, to get in contact with the clients who had stopped paying on their collections.

Ms. Major continued to **Item 6 – Director’s Report**. Mrs. Weakley stated she had a CPS Appeal, which was a local conference. We were scheduled for a State conference; however, that was cancelled due to the snow. She also attended the Opioid Task Force meeting, a CPMT meeting, a couple of Arcadia/Quail Run

planning team meetings, attended a ESCSB Board meeting, a meeting with the Health Department nurses to help things run more smoothly with the screenings with APS and their position on the FAPT team and how we saw that working in the future.

Ms. Major inquired about how many nurses go out with our workers to do an assessment. Mrs. Weakley stated there was one dedicated nurse, but she is getting ready to retire. They have had a nurse from Northampton County who has done some of Accomack's screenings. There is also a new person they are training and there will be another person hired primarily to do screenings. We have one APS worker who is out on medical leave; however, when she returns to the agency, she will be dedicated to doing screenings. This should make it a smoother operation.

Ms. Major inquired on an average how many screenings we receive. Mrs. Weakley stated she was not sure, because it varies. Some weeks we get approximately 20-30 per week and other weeks possibly 5-10. Mrs. Weakley stated it fluctuates especially, with Consumer Directed Care. People are getting the word they can have a cousin, niece or someone else in the family be paid to take care of them. People are calling and saying "my daughter is taking care of me and I want her to get paid." When they call they have to be screened within thirty days.

Mr. Crockett inquired about what criteria is required to get the Consumer Directed Care. Mrs. Weakley stated there is a physical criteria for the person who needs the care and the screening determines whether or not that person needs help with their daily living activities to qualify. There is also a financial qualification they must meet.

Mrs. Weakley further stated she had attended a couple of truancy meetings.

She also wanted the Board to know we had a SNAP audit. We have not received the final report yet; however, the verbal report stated it went very well. We had the same issues they see across the State, which the state will be addressing. We also had a Child Welfare Review that resulted in only minor errors.

Ms. Major proceeded to **Item 7 – DSS Profile Report SFY 2017**. Mrs. Weakley stated the report shows the poverty rate in Accomack County is 20%. We are clearly much higher than the rest of the State, with 6,493 people living in poverty in Accomack County. Page 2 shows the unemployment rates for the State. It is high, but it has clearly dropped since 2010. It shows 38% of our children are living in single parent households which raised some issues. Page 4 talks about people who are receiving SNAP or TANF and that number is dropping due to welfare reform and work requirements. Some of the numbers in the report are for the calendar year and some are for the fiscal year. Page 5 shows the total number of children that we received complaints on the last fiscal year were 396. That is an unduplicated count so there could have been more complaints but some were children we already had as cases. There were 139 adult reports.

Mr. Crockett inquired how many CPS cases were founded and unfounded. Mrs. Weakley stated she did not have the count, but she would get it for the next Board meeting,

Ms. Major continued to **Item 8 – Veteran's Job and Resource Fair**. Mrs. Weakley stated we participated in this on January 24, 2018. Staff saw 8 Veterans, two of which were identified as homeless and they connected them with appropriate

resources. Several agencies that helped came and requested VEC to coordinate it again. They plan to do it every six months or annually.

Ms. Major proceeded to **Item 9 – Angel Tree Project**. Mrs. Weakley stated the Adult Services Unit does the Angel Tree, each year. Also some of the churches, private business and schools help to provide items for children and some provide for adults. 121 children were served representing 100 families and 49 adults – either elderly or handicapped adults.

Ms. Major continued to **Item 10 – New DSS Commissioner Duke Storen**. Mrs. Weakley stated he has worked with DSS and DSS related agencies, in the past. Some of her colleagues who have met him have been impressed. She is looking forward to working with him.

Ms. Major proceeded to **Item 11 – 2017 Fuel Assistance Program Total**. Mrs. Weakley stated for this fuel season we served 1,459 households for a total cost of \$592,148.36. She further stated the statewide total was \$45 million.

Ms. Major continued to **Item 12- SNAP Testing Completed**. Mrs. Weakley stated the Federal and State governments are very particular about what information people are receiving and making sure everyone receives information when they call the agency inquiring about SNAP (Food Stamps). They are very specific about what they want staff to say to the people when they call. They do random tests and which the agency is not informed of, until after the test, when someone from the State will call and pretend to be a customer to obtain information. ACDSS received such a call on January 3, 2018. We passed with flying colors. During the SNAP audit, the auditors also had someone go up and sit in the clerical unit to listen to what they were saying to clients. Their main objective was to make sure staff referenced SNAP at least once and in the few minutes she was there, she heard the word SNAP five times. The auditor was very pleased.

Ms. Major proceeded to **Item 13 – Family Partnership Money Earned**. Mrs. Weakley stated we had discussed this before. We earn money back when we have Family Partnership meetings. We received one Award Letter this time and it was for \$300.00. The money can only be used to have more Family Partnership meetings.

Ms. Major continued to **Item 14 – CHIP Reauthorization**. Mrs. Weakley stated we had also previously discussed CHIP, so she wanted to let the Board know on January 22, 2018 Congress approved the funding for CHIP – Children's Health Insurance Program – which includes FAMIS and FAMIS moms. This will be in effect for six years.

Ms. Major proceeded to **Item 15 – Police and DMV Checks**. Mrs. Weakley stated this would be an ACTION item. In the State policies it indicates we can do police and DMV checks. Some agencies do this and some do not. We are required by policy to do CPS checks on all of our employees. We can do Criminal and DMV checks; however, the Board has to approve same. The CPS checks do not cost us anything but the Police checks (fingerprinting) are around \$59 and we have software here to do the DMV checks.

Her reason for this is the Police checks enable us to not hire someone who might have been arrested for a crime anywhere in the United States. We do have the potential of hiring someone who has a history taking advantage of an elderly person or done something to a child, which would not show up on a CPS check, partially because these are limited to the State of Virginia. On motion by Mr. Crockett, seconded by Mrs. Mackie, the Board approved the Police and DMV

checks on all employees. The motion carried.

Ms. Major continued to **Item 16 – February is Benefits Month.** Mrs. Weakley provided the Board with a copy of the Proclamation. In the past the agency has paid for the staff to go out to lunch. This year benefit workers have asked to have food brought in for them and then do some team building activities. We have a young benefits group and they are just coming together as a team. Ms. Major stated February is Benefits, March is Services and April is Clerical.

Ms. Major proceeded to **Item 17 – Financial Statement – Administrative Office Manager Shirley Harmon.** For the month of January our Total Expenditures were \$321,026.32. Our Year-To-Date Total Local Adjustment was \$354,032.63 and our Total Local Balance is \$425,466.37. We have four months left in the State's Fiscal Year and five months left in Accomack County's.

Mr. Crockett stated it appears we are in a strong position. We have used 56% of the budget and we are two-thirds through the Fiscal Year. He asked Ms. Harmon whether she saw anything that could be a problem. Ms. Harmon stated there isn't anything at this point.

Ms. Gordy stated she had a question. We have never had the money to hire a CSA person and now we are doing that and promoting people. Where is the money coming from now that we never had before? She said when she reads about promotions that means an increase in salaries and we were always told there is not enough money. Mrs. Weakley stated a lot of promotions are related to retirements, and not an actual new position. There were a couple of positions that were not related to retirements. A number of our retirees were here for a long time and had extremely large salaries so when they retired, that money was available to us. Ms. Gordy said that had been a problem to her.

On motion by Ms. Gordy, seconded by Mr. Crockett, the Board went into Closed Session for the purpose of discussing GF Horne/Arcadia Update and Director Consult.

On motion by Mrs. Mackie, seconded by Mrs. Hickman, the Board returned to Open Session.

Ms. Major stated there weren't any items to be approved. The next regular Board meeting will be held Tuesday, March 20, 2018, at 9:30 A.M.

On motion by Mr. Crockett, seconded by Mrs. Hickman, the meeting was adjourned at 10:43 A.M.

APPROVED: **C. Reneta Major** _____

ATTEST: **Vicki J. Weakley** _____