

The Accomack County Board of Social Services met at its facility on Tuesday, July 16, 2024, at 9:30 A.M. Present in person were Ms. Reneta Major, Chairman; Mr. David Whalen, Vice-Chairman; Mr. Robert Martin; Mr. Jackie Phillips; Mrs. Minnie White; Mrs. Vicki Weakley, Secretary, and Mrs. Nadine Greenley, Assistant Director.

Ms. Major called the meeting to order and welcomed the Board Members. Mr. Phillips gave the Invocation.

Ms. Major continued to **Item 3 – Approve Minutes of June 18, 2024**. Mr. Phillips made a motion, seconded by Mr. Martin, to approve the Minutes as written. Hearing no discussion, the motion carried.

Ms. Major proceeded to **Item 4 – Introduction of New Board Member – Millie White**. Ms. Major introduced Millie White stating that she has known Mrs. White for a long period of time, she comes from the health department and is a representative of District 7 and 8. Ms. Major welcomed Mrs. White to the Board. The Board, in unison, expressed the same.

Ms. Major continued to **Item 5 - Fraud Report**. Mrs. Weakley stated that no fraud referrals have been given to Mr. Parks. The supervisors have been holding them until Mr. Parks' training was complete. Once his training was completed, cooling season began; therefore, he has been working with the fuel department and verifying that the client does not have an air conditioning unit. The \$8,000.00 saved in his report reflects the amount of funds saved from fraudulent findings.

Ms. Major paused between items to read a note of appreciation to the Board from former Vice-Chairman, Elsie Mackie.

Ms. Major proceeded to **Item 6 – Director's Notes**. Mrs. Weakley stated that since the last meeting she attended a full staff meeting, a Benefit Programs Specialist report out following review (An audit was just completed, and they did very well. There were no financial errors. A few items were minuet that did not have any affect on the outcome of the client's eligibility. Mr. Phillips inquired who conducts the audit. Mrs. Weakley stated that the State or the Regional Office conducts the audits. Mrs. White inquired if any of the audits were conducted due to complaints. Mrs. Weakley replied, so far, they have not. Child Welfare also had an audit completed and the auditors were pleased with their findings. The items closely looked at were in-home case contacts and service plan status because the federal review will occur in the forthcoming year and the auditors are preparing for everything to be in order. Historically, there has only been one time that Virginia passed a federal review. This agency passed the last review, but that is the only one that has ever been passed. Mr. Phillips inquired when that review took place. Mrs. Weakley replied that it was in 2017. For the current audits, the agency received 100% both times. The Board in unison expressed their congratulations.), TipCo Case Aide presentation (A case-aid company by the name of Tipco came to do a case aid presentation for the benefit programs. Staff were not supportive of the information given. Some agencies are really excited about it, but it's AI technology. Staff that evaluated it here, felt like it would make clients angry because they would get stuck in a loop of computer-generated voicemail. If we have a client call and say, why hasn't my application been processed, AI is just going to give false information or suggest that the client didn't turn in papers on time. There will be no specifics given about their case. Initially, it was presented as the case aid could take care of simple changes from a client, like an address change or an income change, but in speaking with TipCo, it was learned that the only thing that can be done is write the information down for someone else to take care of. While this may save the workers some interruptions; overall, staff didn't feel it would be of much help. A positive of TipCo is that it's relatively inexpensive. It is not like the case aid services we looked at for child welfare and adult services. Perhaps in an area like Northern Virginia where there is a higher volume of calls and clients are calling just to find out basic information about programs, it may do well. Most of our calls are case specific and the system cannot do anything with case specifics. So, we felt that by the time the client was routed to a real person, they would be very angry and that would serve no purpose except making phone calls more difficult for staff.), a supervisors meeting, a CPMT (Community Planning and Management Team) meeting, a VLSSE (Virginia League of Social Services Executives) Director's meeting, and Mrs. Weakley and Mrs. Greenley attended a virtual directors meeting that was held in Radford.

Ms. Major continued to **Item 7 –Medicaid Unwinding**. Mrs. Weakley stated that, as previously discussed, during the pandemic, clients were given a pass in terms of Medicaid, SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program), and TANF (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families). Agencies were not allowed to close any cases and clients received the maximum SNAP allotment regardless of the size of their family unit. Issues arose when agencies had to return to the original policy and client benefits were cut. The difficulties with Medicaid occurred when, about halfway through the pandemic, DMAS (Department of Medical Assistance Services) would not allow agencies to review Medicaid cases when they came up for renewal. When the pandemic was over, Medicaid returned to its original rules of reviewing cases. The number of overdue cases in the state were massive. The State decided that the two and a half years' worth of overdue renewals should be completed within nine months which would have been a deadline of April 30, 2024. We and other agencies across the state did not meet the deadline; therefore, the State extended the deadline to July 2024. As of yesterday, we now have 602 cases that remain overdue. Two hundred and fifteen were completed in the last week. At that rate and with the regular work staff must complete, we will not meet the July 31<sup>st</sup> deadline either. Our staff is tired. They perform well for a while on the overdue cases and then they're just exhausted and must take a break. We cannot be critical of that because they're working at a tremendous pace. If we can keep up the 200 cases per week, we anticipate that all overdue cases will be completed by mid-August. Ms. Major inquired if there will be a penalty for not meeting the July 31<sup>st</sup> deadline. Mrs. Weakley stated that nothing has been mentioned regarding a penalty. There are agencies across the state that are in worse shape than this agency. Some have close to 5000 cases remaining. The State sent funds to pay staff overtime and to pay others, like retirees, to assist. We have a worker from NCDSS (Northampton County Department of Social Services) assisting us after she completes her workday. The State retracted the funds and said they were only going to give it to the five agencies with the most overdue cases. That did not include this agency. Mrs. Greenley, Ms. Linton, and Mozella Francis, Director of NCDSS, had a discussion with the State and they were told that the funds could be accessed; however, our own staff could not be paid through those funds. It was further explained that the employee from NCDSS assisting us had to be paid by NCDSS and then NCDSS had to make a request to the State for the funds to be reimbursed to them. The retiree from Accomack County DSS assisting us cannot be paid from the State funds. Ms. Major inquired how the retiree gets compensated. Mrs. Weakley stated that the agency must pay her through local funds. Mr. Phillips asked for clarification on how the NCDSS employee receives her overtime pay. Mrs. Weakley explained that the worker tracks every case and then reports it to the Supervisor of this agency. The Supervisor then certifies that the work has in fact been completed. The Supervisor then reports the information to the Director at NCDSS. NCDSS pays the worker, and the Director of NCDSS makes a request to the State for reimbursement. Mrs. Weakley added that it would have been so much easier if Accomack County Department of Social Services could have handled all the steps. Mrs. White inquired how other agencies with larger caseloads are handling it. Mrs. Weakley stated that all agencies are having to do the same thing. If an agency can find someone else from a different agency willing to work for your agency, then you can do the same thing by having their employer pay and ask for the reimbursement. This way of payment and reimbursement causes extra work for an agency already under stress from the overdue caseload. Mr. Phillips inquired if there was a third party that could do this type of work and could fill or are agencies relying on other agencies within the State. Mrs. Weakley stated that there is not a third party that can do the work. Some of our staff were working overtime and we were reimbursing them through the original funds sent from the State. We had through April to use the funds, but the State pulled it back in March. Our retiree is doing a great job, some staff continue to work overtime so they can earn comp-time, and the Supervisors are working cases also. With the computer system, the only people that could ever step in and assist are going to be those who used to work for Social Services. There was a time here when someone from an outside agency assisted with another project, and it was a bad experience; therefore, staff are reluctant to receive the outside assistance to avoid those problems again. The worker from NCDSS used to work for this agency and staff felt that she has a good work ethic. It's been great to have her assistance and the cooperation of the Director, Mrs. Francis.

Ms. Major proceeded to **Item 11 - Purge Position Postings, Vehicle Records, and CSA Cases Information**. Mrs. Weakley stated that there are position postings from April 2021 through July of 2021, automotive records that include operational summaries, usage logs, and gas allocations from August 2020 through June 2021, and CSA case information including monthly LEDRS, check lists, check reassignments, expenditure LEDRS, Purchase of Service Orders and Vendor Invoices (000174) dated August 3, 2017, through July 1, 2019, ready to be purged according to state guidelines. Mr. Whalen made a motion, seconded by Mr. Phillips, that the mentioned records be purged. Hearing no discussion, Ms. Major called a vote for all in favor to signify by Aye. The motion carried.

Ms. Major continued to **Item 12 – Financial Statement**. Dawn Parks, on behalf of Ms. Linton, stated that the local budget was \$944,084.00. The Year-To-Date Local Expenditures were \$58,802.52, and the Total Local Balance-To-Date is \$885,281.48.

**Closed Session** - On motion by Mr. Phillips, seconded by Mr. Whalen, the Board went into Closed Session for the purpose of discussing items stated only on the Agenda (Consent to Adopt – Case #21131426 and Director’s Consult) as permitted by the Code of Virginia, Section 2.2.3712. The motion carried.

On motion by Mr. Phillips, seconded by Mrs. White, the Board returned from Closed Session and confirmed that the only items discussed were the ones listed on the Board Members’ Agenda. Ms. Major called a vote (Mr. Phillips – yes; Mr. Whalen – yes; Mr. Martin – yes; Mrs. White – yes; Ms. Major - yes). The motion carried.

Mr. Phillips made a motion, seconded by Mrs. White, that the Board accept the Consent to Adopt – Case #21131426. Ms. Major called a vote for all in favor to signify by Aye. The motion carried.

**Chair and Vice-Chair Elections**. Ms. Major stated that, as members know, Mrs. Mackie served as Vice-Chair, and she serves as Chair. If members would like to make nominations, the floor is open. Mr. Phillips made a motion, seconded by Mr. Martin, that Mr. Whalen serve as Vice-Chair. Ms. Major called a vote for all in favor to signify by Aye. The motion carried.

Ms. Major opened the floor for nominees for Chair. Mr. Phillips nominated Ms. Major to remain as Chair. Mr. Whalen made a motion, seconded by Mrs. White, that Ms. Major be reinstated as Chair. Ms. Major called a vote for all in favor to signify by Aye. The motion carried.

The next Board meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, August 20, 2024, at 9:30 A.M.

Mr. Phillips made a motion, seconded by Mr. Martin, to adjourn the meeting at 10:27 A.M.

APPROVED: **Cassandra Reneta Major** \_\_\_\_\_

ATTEST: **Vicki Weakley** \_\_\_\_\_