

The Accomack County Board of Social Services met at its facility on Tuesday, December 17, 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. Mrs. White gave the Invocation.

Ms. Major proceeded to **Item 3 – Approve Minutes of November 19, 2024**. Mr. Phillips made a motion, seconded by Mr. Whalen, to approve the Minutes as written. Hearing no discussion, the motion carried.

Ms. Major continued to **Item 4 - Fraud Report**. Ms. Major inquired if Mr. Parks has completed all his training and actively working fraud cases. Mrs. Weakley stated, yes.

Ms. Major proceeded to **Item 5 – Director’s Notes**. Mrs. Weakley stated that since the last meeting she attended a virtual Kin First roll out (This is a new program the State is pushing to make sure that the agency is doing their best to place children with relatives before placing them into foster care. Staff cannot place a child into a foster home until it has been cleared through Mrs. Weakley. It then must be justified and sent to the State. Historically, this agency has always had a high placement of kinship care.), a CPMT (Community Planning and Management Team) meeting, Mrs. Weakley treated the supervisors to breakfast for Christmas, holiday celebrations (Each hallway decorated a Christmas tree, Christmas music was played after the Thanksgiving holiday each day over the speakers from 2:30 p.m. till the end of the day, weekly celebration ‘dress-ups’, hot chocolate and desserts is scheduled for next week, and staff were given permission to wear jeans from now until January 2nd.), and Mrs. Weakley and Ms. Linton are working on Budget call (The biggest issue is staffing and retention. A lot of it pertains to salaries even though salaries were raised as much as possible and then the State, a few years ago, did a massive range revision for benefits, services, and Directors, too. They raised the services staff enough to where some were then making more than the Directors in the smaller agencies, so the State made adjustments in those Director’s salaries. Mrs. Weakley stated that she was not impacted by this. It doesn’t seem to be enough, and staff leave here, ironically to go to other public agencies for as low as a \$3,000.00 raise to as high as a \$20,000.00 raise. Three left to work at Social Security, which is a federal position. All are receiving significant raises when they leave. Some public agencies are intentionally recruiting our staff. The other biggest issue is that a thirty-three percent increase has been seen with SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) applications in the past year. The work requirement is creating a higher call volume and an increase in reapplications since there are loopholes in the policy that clients are figuring out, passing them along, and taking full advantage of them. An example is a gentleman who claimed that he was raking leaves twenty hours a week for a woman who was paying him \$5.00. That is considered meeting the work requirements. Ms. Major inquired if the \$5.00 was per hour. Mrs. Weakley stated, no, that was for the entire twenty hours of work. This incident was reported to the State and the State came back with a decision that the work requirement had been met. Therefore, clients who were receiving the allowable three months for a single individual, and their case had been closed are now reapplying because they know they do not have to do much to meet the work requirement. Others are claiming to be homeless even though they have been living at the same residence for the past three years. Claiming to be homeless exempts them from the work requirement. Mr. Phillips inquired what the State guidelines are. Mrs. Weakley responded that the guidelines used to be that a person had to make a minimum dollar amount per hour, but that has been removed. Now, if a person gets paid anything and can say that they are working a few hours a week, it is allowed. Ms. Major inquired how that is possible with benefits, but not for the VIEW (Virginia Initiative for Education and Work) program. Mrs. Weakley stated that she is unable to answer that question because she cannot get a definitive answer from the State why the allowances were made for one, but not the other. Staff are feeling the effects and feel as though everyone in Accomack County has applied for services due to the increased volume of applications and no increase in population.)

Ms. Major continued to **Item 6 – Adoption Assistance and IV-E Foster Care Record Destruction**. Mrs. Weakley stated that there are Adoption Assistance and IV-E Foster Care records from 2003 through 2007 that are ready to be purged according to state

guidelines. Mr. Phillips made a motion, seconded by Mr. Whalen, 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 proceeded to **Item 7 – Increase in SNAP/Medicaid Applications**. Mrs. Weakley stated that this was mentioned with Item 5 and there is nothing to add.

Ms. Major continued to **Item 8 – Medicaid Unwinding Update**. Mrs. Weakley stated that there are eight cases remaining. Four have tickets in for the State to fix an issue on their end and four are new cases from a glitch in the system. The glitch is occurring when a client reappplies, and the system pulls the old case and states that it is overdue when it is not so workers are having to go back in the system to correct the issue. Mrs. Weakley anticipates that the deadline of December 31st for overdue cases will still be met.

Ms. Major continued to **Item 9 – Financial Statement**. Ms. Linton was absent from the meeting. The local budget was \$944,084.00. The Year-To-Date Local Expenditures were \$369,181.26, and the Total Local Balance-To-Date is \$575,902.74. Mrs. Weakley asked if the Board had any questions. Ms. Major inquired if funds needed to be returned in January 2025. Mrs. Weakley stated that there has been some discussion on certain budget lines.

Closed Session – Mrs. Weakley stated that the item listed on the agenda did not need to be disclosed in Closed Session. The State has changed the guidelines for EPPE's in that they are to be completed one month prior to the due date. Her evaluation is due in March; therefore, the Board should complete it at the January 2025 meeting to be timely for the completion date in the month of February 2025.

Mr. Phillips passed to Mrs. Weakley a story that he was told about and the amount of assistance that was received from Ms. Latasha Banks of the Adult Protective Services Unit. The person involved complimented and asked that the information be passed to Mrs. Weakley on the amount of time Ms. Banks spent on the issue to get a resolution. Mrs. Weakley stated that she was aware of the situation and that Ms. Banks had stated that it was a strong group effort. However, the compliment is greatly appreciated.

The next Board meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, January 21, 2024, at 9:30 A.M.

Ms. Major wished everyone a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

Mr. Phillips made a motion, seconded by Mrs. White, to adjourn the meeting at 10:05 A.M.

APPROVED: **Cassandra Reneta Major** _____

ATTEST: **Vicki Weakley** _____