

The Accomack County Board of Social Services met at its facility on Tuesday, October 21, 2025, at 9:30 A.M. Present in person were Ms. Reneta Major, Chairman; Mr. David Whalen, Vice-Chairman; Mr. Robert Martin; Mrs. Minnie White; Dr. Ronnie Holden; and Mrs. Vicki Weakley, Secretary.

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

Ms. Major, along with other members, expressed their thanks to Mrs. Weakley for the invitation to the Staff Appreciation Day along with the delicious food and gifts.

Ms. Major proceeded to **Item 3 – Approve Minutes of September 16, 2025**. Mr. Holden 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 –Introduction of New Employees: Shyneqwa Warren and Renee Shrieves**. Mrs. Weakley stated that Ms. Warren was in training and will be introduced at the next meeting. Mrs. Weakley introduced Renee Shrieves who is the new Human Services Assistant for Child Welfare. Ms. Major welcomed her to her new position. The Board, in unison, expressed the same.

Ms. Major proceeded to **Item 5 - Fraud Report**. Ms. Major asked Mrs. Weakley to explain PARIS Matches to the newest members of the Board. Mrs. Weakley stated that it stands for Public Assistance Reporting Information System (PARIS), which is a database service that matches recipients of public assistance to check if they are receiving duplicate benefits in more than one state. Usually, PARIS matches are received quarterly but can come more frequently. The database sometimes matches with a case that is legitimate in which someone left this state on the 15th of the month and received the benefit in Virginia and then moved to another state and applied for assistance there. It appears that the recipient is attempting to receive in both states when they are not. Mrs. White inquired if the database covered the entire United States. Mrs. Weakley stated, yes. Ms. Major stated there is also a database that will verify income. Mrs. Weakley stated, there is and it is TALX. A TALX search is completed when someone first applies for benefits or are recertified to make sure the applicant is telling the truth.

Ms. Major continued to **Item 6 - Director's Notes**. Mrs. Weakley stated that since the last meeting she attended a Virginia League of Social Services Executives (VLSSE) meeting with Carl Ayers, the Deputy Director, Family Services Specialist interview, three aide interviews, full staff meeting, CPS appeal, VLSSE Director's meeting in Lynchburg, Human Resources Legal training in Norfolk, CPMT (Community Planning and Management Team), staff appreciation event, Supervisor's meeting, Virginia Association of Local Human Services Officials (VALHSO) all-day virtual conference. The largest item being dealt with at the moment is the potential impact that a delay in the issuance of the November SNAP benefits will cause. It is unknown if the SNAP benefit is going to be released or not. Directors have been told not to talk to the press about it. Mr. Martin inquired if it was because of the government shutdown. Mrs. Weakley stated, yes. Technically the information must be communicated to the State by October 29, 2025, to prevent any delays, but there has been no word yet. Mrs. Greenley is in a director's meeting now where that is probably the topic of discussion and hopefully there will be answers for directors. Ms. Major inquired come November 3rd, is there anything the agency will be doing differently. Mrs. Weakley stated that if the benefits do not come through, there is anticipation many angry phone calls on that Monday morning. She will be calling the Sheriff's Department and requesting that they make their presence known outside of the building and possibly inside the building. At this point, the State is not giving any hints about what is going to happen perhaps because they don't even have the answers. Going forward, it is known that Medicaid is safe through December. January may be something completely different. It seems health insurance is a big catch point as to why the government has shutdown. If the bill goes as suggested, a lot of people's medical premiums will triple and they will have difficulty getting affordable medical insurance. SNAP brings about 1 million dollars into this county every single month. That is huge deficit if that money is lost. We are clearly not the only community that will be affected that way. Mrs. White stated that she read an article about the percentage error rate that the government mentioned with the department of social

services and how that will be tied to the amount issued to the county. Mrs. Weakley stated that as it stands right now, if the agency cannot bring the error rate down, that is a possibility. There has been miscommunications between the federal government and the States. Until a month ago, it was unknown that policy changes were made regarding the error rate effective July 1, 2025. Agencies were informed that the error rate wasn't going to start counting until October 1, 2025. On October 1st, there were issues with it starting because things could not be put in place that needed to be for the error rate to be better. Agencies were told that they would be held harmless because verifications of who was in the household and their incomes could not be done; however, when quality control looked at the agencies records, they asked the clients to verify those things and then marked the agency as having errors because they were approved for benefits they weren't entitled to or they were not given benefits they may have been entitled to based on the client's self-claim. They were holding the agency to one standard and the client to another. There was an agreement that agencies would be held harmless until October 1st. A request was made to extend the October 1st deadline, but there is no word if that will occur. A big part of the error rate issue is the computer system, which has never worked the way it was intended to. Virginia is not the only state struggling with that issue. Unfortunately, it is not a simple issue. It would take years to get a new computer system up and running. CommonHelp is also an issue. It is the State's telephone system where people can call in and make an application over the phone. Sometimes CommonHelp can process the application and approve it. When they get overwhelmed, they send the excess onto the agency. On occasion, what has been seen here and more likely at other agencies is that CommonHelp will approve an application and when it comes to the agency, it is known that the application was approved in error. According to policy, because CommonHelp approved the application, agencies cannot touch it for one year. Therefore, for that year, the client is receiving benefits they are not entitled to. Mrs. White inquired if those cases are sent to fraud. Mrs. Weakley stated that because the State approved it there is nothing that can be done. Mr. Holden added that those errors could not be counted then. Mrs. Weakley replied that they are counted as errors by the State. The board in unison expressed that those errors being counted did not make sense. Mrs. Weakley agreed. CommonHelp is being replaced and will cost several million dollars to do so. The expectation for the replacement is 2027. While it is in the process of being replaced, it will not be in the timeframe issued by the federal government for reducing the error rate. In a lot of ways, agencies are being held accountable for things they have no control over. Mrs. White inquired if the representatives from the shore would be helpful in any way. Mrs. Weakley stated they are aware of the situation and the consequences. There has been discussion about whether or not the State would pick up their portion or if they would pass it on to the localities, assuming the program continues. Accomack County cannot afford it. A lot of other localities are in the same situation. Virginia is a trigger state meaning that if the federal government does certain things, Virginia can shut the program down immediately. It does not have to go for a vote. The food bank will not be able to handle the number of families needing food. The extent of how that will impact the community could be devastating. Traditionally we know that with TANF (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families) people don't get as angry when they lose that as they would if they lost SNAP. People who apply now are being told to not count on benefits because the October 15th deadline to being approved has passed. The meeting Mrs. Greenley is attending now hopefully will give additional guidance. The State has not been giving agencies information quickly and when the information is received, it's past the deadline for compliance or too late to make an announcement. The agency is still processing applications and taking it one day at a time.

Ms. Major proceeded to **Item 7 – Purge CSA Records, Position Postings, and Family Services Records**. Mrs. Weakley stated that there are position postings from July 2022 through October 2022, CSA records from January 2018 through December 2021, and childcare, assisted living assessments, nursing home care, guardianships, companion services, and VIEW (Virginia Initiative for Education and Work) records from July 2003 through September 2021, that are ready to be purged according to state guidelines. Mr. Whalen made a motion, seconded by Mrs. White, that the mentioned cases 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 8 – Increase Travel Reimbursement Amount for Breakfast**. Mrs. Weakley stated that in the past, the lunch and dinner rate was increased. Recently, it was noted that the breakfast amount should increase as well from \$10.00 and

she is requesting the board's permission to increase the amount to \$25.00. Mr. Martin made a motion, seconded by Mrs. White, that the breakfast amount be increased to \$25.00. Hearing no discussion, Ms. Major called a vote for all in favor to signify by Aye. The motion carried.

Ms. Major proceeded to **Item 9 – Financial Statement – Administrative Office Manager – Marco Hernandez**. Mr. Hernandez stated that the local budget was \$962,455.00. The Year-To-Date Local Expenditures were \$240,435.41, and the Total Local Balance-To-Date is \$722,019.59. As of the end of September, the expenditures are just under 25% of the total budget used thus far. Ms. Major stated that she does not see any concerns. She is on the Audit Committee for Accomack County and the last audit meeting she attended it was mentioned that social services had not responded to an audit. Ms. Major asked Mr. Hernandez if he had been contacted by the auditors. Mr. Hernandez replied that he did receive an email from an auditor requesting reports and he was able, with the auditor's guidance, to provide the requested reports. Ms. Major stated that she informed the committee that Ms. Linton was out on medical leave and Mr. Hernandez was part of the fiscal staff filling in for Ms. Linton and would be able to assist. She was glad to hear that the reports were sent in. Mr. Hernandez added that he has not received any emails since and is hopeful that it means good news.

Closed Session – On motion by Mr. Whalen, seconded by Mrs. White, the Board went into Closed Session for the purpose of discussing items stated only on the Agenda (Consent to Adopt #21224353 and Director's Consult) as permitted by the Code of Virginia, Section 2.2.3712. The motion carried.

On motion by Mr. Whalen, seconded by Dr. Holden, 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 (Mrs. White – yes; Dr. Holden – yes; Mr. Martin – yes; Mr. Whalen – yes; Ms. Major - yes). The motion carried.

On motion by Mr. Whalen, seconded by Dr. Holden, that the Board accept the Consent to Adopt #21224354. Ms. Major called a vote for all in favor to signify by Aye. The motion carried.

The next Board meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, November 18, 2025, at 9:30 A.M. Dr. Holden made a motion, seconded by Mrs. White, to adjourn the meeting at 10:14 A.M.

APPROVED: **Cassandra Reneta Major** _____

ATTEST: **Vicki Weakley** _____