

MINUTES
ORANGE COUNTY BOARD OF SOCIAL SERVICES
April 20, 2015

THE ORANGE COUNTY BOARD OF SOCIAL SERVICES MET ON MONDAY: April 20, 2015 at the Hillsborough Commons, Hillsborough, North Carolina.

BOARD OF SOCIAL SERVICES MEMBERS PRESENT: Tamara Dempsey-Tanner, Vice-Chair; Earl McKee; and Ann Wilkerson.

GUEST: None.

BOARD OF SOCIAL SERVICES MEMBER ABSENT: Claire Millar.

STAFF PRESENT: Nancy Coston, Director; Denise Shaffer, Assistant Director; Sharron Hinton, Human Services Manager; Duston Lowell, Program Manager; Joyce Lee, Business Officer; Tina Clark, Child Care Supervisor; Renee Bynum, Adult Services Supervisor; and Eric Palmer, Adult Services Social Worker.

I. Call to Order and Introductions

DSS Vice-Chair, Tamara Dempsey-Tanner, called the meeting to order at 4:09pm.

II. Board Comments

Nancy Coston will provide Tamara Dempsey-Tanner with blank copies of the application for the vacant Board position, as well as a link to an online application. Earl McKee stated that there is a consent agenda item for tomorrow's Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) meeting requesting the BOCC's support of the My Brother's Keeper initiative in Orange County. County Commissioner Price has met several times with representatives from the Family Success Alliance, which is now focusing on the needs of the cohort that will be served. Earl McKee stated that he thinks that the initiative will benefit everyone involved. There is a meeting for the Family Success Alliance on May 9 from 10:00am to 3:00pm.

III. Public Comments

None.

IV. Agenda Changes

None.

V. Action Items

On a motion by Ann Wilkerson, the Board approved the minutes of March 16, 2015. Earl McKee seconded the motion. The motion was carried without dissent.

VI. Items for Discussion and/or Decision

1. Development of Multidisciplinary Team for Orange County

Duston Lowell reported that Orange County's Multidisciplinary Team (MDT) must be operational in order to receive state funding for a Child Advocacy Center (CAC). The MDT includes all professionals involved in county child abuse and neglect cases. At regular MDT meetings, these professionals discuss cases in order to better streamline their services.

MINUTES
ORANGE COUNTY BOARD OF SOCIAL SERVICES
April 20, 2015

The County Manager asked Nancy Coston to hold a leftover school social worker position in the DSS budget for an MDT Coordinator until she finishes the county budget. Nancy Coston reported that she and the County Manager agreed that DSS is an appropriate home for the MDT Coordinator for now. Chatham County currently has an MDT Coordinator, and Orange County needs one in order to move forward with the CAC. This position may come up in budget deliberations with the BOCC and may need to be reclassified. Nancy Coston reported that the majority of the school social workers at DSS returned to the school system this year.

2. Child Abuse Prevention Month

Denise Shaffer reported that DSS ordered pinwheels for Child Abuse Prevention Month but unfortunately will not receive them until June. DSS also ordered pamphlets and distributed them at the Orange County Expo. Social workers will distribute these pamphlets at future speaking engagements as well. At the Expo, Denise Shaffer was interviewed by WCHL and told listeners how to report suspected abuse and/or neglect, how to become a foster parent, etc. Ann Wilkerson asked for more information about the pinwheel initiative. Denise Shaffer explained that the pinwheels promote child abuse prevention and that organizations plant gardens of them. Last year, NC DHHS in Raleigh planted a pinwheel for every child who died from abuse. Denise Shaffer stated that the pinwheels are a national abuse prevention initiative and that children tend to love them.

Nancy Coston reported that there was a good turnout at the Expo this year and that most of the programs at DSS were represented. One of last year's flood victims was at the Expo and thanked DSS for helping her to recover from the flood. She now has her own apartment and is doing well.

3. Adult Services Programs

Renee Bynum and Eric Palmer spoke to the Board about the various services provided by their unit. Adult Protective Services (APS) takes care of adults who are physically or mentally disabled and might be abused, neglected, or exploited. Renee Bynum reported that APS is receiving more referrals from banks. Adult Services takes care of people who elect to go into nursing and rest homes. Adult Services has a worker who makes sure that these homes meet state requirements. Adult Services currently has 32 guardianship cases; in these cases, an individual has been declared incompetent by the courts, and DSS has assumed guardianship of the individual. This could include making medical and/or financial decisions on behalf of the individual. Adult Services helps to coordinate adult daycare for some clients. The unit also participates in Medicaid Administrative Claiming (MAC), which involves educating at-risk clients about Medicaid. There is a Community Alternatives Program (CAP) that serves 58 Medicaid eligible individuals who require services in order to remain in their homes.

Eric Palmer spoke about the in-home services program, which helps to maintain clients in their homes. Participants are not Medicaid eligible (there are other programs for clients who are). According to Eric Palmer, the number of clients receiving in-home services has increased from 18-22 to 28-30 in the last few years. Renee Bynum explained that people are living longer and need help but want to age in their own homes and communities. Nancy Coston recently secured some additional funding for the program, primarily for aides who are paid through contracts. Next year, the cost of these aides will likely increase, but she does not anticipate that the need for services will decrease. Specifically, the cost of aides will increase if the county decides to pay aides a living wage next year. Nancy Coston stated that she prepared this information for the County Manager. Medicaid's rates have not increased, but most of these aides are employed by private companies. There has not yet been a waitlist for in-home services. However, there may be a waitlist if the living

MINUTES
ORANGE COUNTY BOARD OF SOCIAL SERVICES
April 20, 2015

wage increases and DSS does not receive an increase in funding. Earl McKee stated that, with the increasing number of seniors in Orange County, he sees the demand for services going up. There are now as many seniors in the county as there are students.

Nancy Coston explained that these decisions can take a toll on staff. Adult Services workers are involved in making DNR decisions for wards. To make these decisions, DSS gathers all available medical information on the client and collaborates with medical professionals and family members. A worker may have an individual on his or her caseload for most of the individual's lifetime. Workers become like family for some of their clients. The staff take DNR and other medical decisions very seriously.

Tamara Dempsey-Tanner asked how staff determine the intensity of services needed by a client. Eric Palmer replied that DSS uses a Comprehensive Assessment developed by the state. DSS also employs seasoned social workers who can determine which services are needed after talking with a client in the client's home. These workers are skilled at getting a client's family members to participate in his or her case. Earl McKee asked if DSS can compel family members to participate. Renee Bynum and Eric Palmer replied that there is not. Sometimes, DSS is placed in a difficult situation between clients and family members who are exploiting them. In these cases, social workers are very clear with family members that their role is to act in the client's best interest. Renee Bynum and Eric Palmer could not recall a case where a client pressed charges against a family member.

4. Hillsborough Commons Expansion

Nancy Coston reported that most of the resource area will be open with comfortable seating so that people can use laptops to look for jobs. The site will include a café run by participants of the subsidized employment program. Youth and Veterans Services will also be housed there. The site will be connected to DSS via a hallway. The architect is working on a blueprint of the site. Employment Supervisor Robert Gilmore recently used the space for a job fair. The site will have an open, cement look, perhaps with charging stations and a staff member walking around with an iPad to help clients. Nancy Coston thinks that DSS will start making major progress on the site in the next few weeks once she receives the plans from the architect. Earl McKee stated that he wants there to be a strong partnership between DSS and Durham Tech for job training.

5. Director's Report

DSS will present on child care at the BOCC meeting tomorrow evening. Nancy Coston provided the DSS Board with the agenda abstract for the BOCC meeting and graphs showing trends in child care over the past several years. Tina Clark explained to the Board that in 2012, DSS ran out of funding and was not removing anyone from the waitlist, so the number of children on the waitlist increased and surpassed the number of children being served. Nancy Coston explained that spending on child care can be difficult to predict. The County Manager asked her to develop several different scenarios, which are outlined in the agenda abstract. She calculated that adding another 50 children would cost \$300,000 on average. She explained that keeping children on the waitlist for more than 6 to 8 months becomes a problem. DSS expects to receive guidance from the BOCC regarding the agency's next course of action.

Earl McKee stated that, after speaking with state representatives, he does not expect the state budget to be passed until after June, possibly as late as September. Nancy Coston does not expect to receive as large of a state reallocation next year as the Child Care Subsidy Program received this year. Ann Wilkerson asked about emergency cases from out-of-state. Tina Clark explained that

MINUTES
ORANGE COUNTY BOARD OF SOCIAL SERVICES
April 20, 2015

DSS usually does not serve these children before Orange County children on the waitlist. Nancy Coston explained that Orange County has identified several priority groups (Work First, CPS, children in foster care, adolescent parents, and homeless families) for child care. These groups are exempt from the waitlist. Earl McKee explained that the BOCC has set aside some money each year (approximately \$450,000 this year) in a Social Justice fund. Ann Wilkerson asked Nancy Coston about her preferred outcome for the BOCC meeting tomorrow night. Nancy Coston stated that she would not recommend allowing the waitlist to stand for longer than 6 to 8 months. She also stated that the flexibility to move money around in the budget is key. Earl McKee stated that the BOCC has been supportive of child care and that DSS likely will not encounter resistance.

The WCHL Community Forum will take place on Thursday, April 23, 2015. Nancy Coston will serve on a panel on poverty from 12:00 to 1:00pm.

VII. Announcements

The next regular meeting is scheduled for Monday, May 18, 2015 at the Hillsborough Commons, 113 Mayo Street, Hillsborough, North Carolina at 4:00pm.

Earl McKee moved to adjourn the meeting at 5:37pm. Ann Wilkerson seconded the motion. The motion was carried without dissent.

Submitted by:

Nancy Coston
Director

Tamara Dempsey-Tanner
Vice-Chair