

MINUTES  
ORANGE COUNTY BOARD OF SOCIAL SERVICES  
June 15, 2015

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**THE ORANGE COUNTY BOARD OF SOCIAL SERVICES MET ON MONDAY:** June 15, 2015 at the Hillsborough Commons, Hillsborough, North Carolina.

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

**GUEST:** None.

**BOARD OF SOCIAL SERVICES MEMBERS ABSENT:** None.

**STAFF PRESENT:** Nancy Coston, Director; Denise Shaffer, Assistant Director; Joyce Lee, Business Officer; Katherine Thompson, Management Analyst; Suzanne Hitt, Prevention Services Supervisor; and Crystal Mitchell, Child Protective Services Supervisor.

**I. Call to Order and Introductions**

DSS Chair, Claire Millar, called the meeting to order at 4:04pm.

**II. Board Comments**

Tamara Dempsey-Tanner and Ann Wilkerson attended the Adolescent Parenting Program's graduation ceremony and greatly enjoyed the event. They thanked the staff for organizing such a meaningful event.

**III. Public Comments**

None.

**IV. Agenda Changes**

Nancy Coston explained that she had added brief presentations on the Adolescent Parenting Program Graduation and NC FAST to the agenda. She also stated that Pat Garavaglia would need to take the Board Member Oath of Office.

**V. Action Items**

On a motion by Pat Garavaglia, the Board approved the minutes of May 18, 2015. Earl McKee seconded the motion. The motion was carried without dissent.

**VI. Items for Discussion and/or Decision**

1. Board Member Oath of Office

Pat Garavaglia was administered the Oath of Office by Serena McPherson, Administrative Assistant to the Director, and was sworn in to the Social Services Board.

2. Adolescent Parenting Program Graduation

The Adolescent Parenting Program held a graduation ceremony for its participants. The celebration included dinner and a photo booth. Suzanne Hitt, Prevention Services Supervisor, showed the

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Board pictures of the ceremony and told the Board about participants' post-graduation plans.

3. NC FAST

Katherine Thompson, Management Analyst, provided the Board with a brief update on NC FAST. She showed the Board trend data for the agency's food stamps and Medicaid programs. Nancy Coston explained that these numbers are getting closer to the agency's pre-NC FAST figures. She anticipates that the agency will be caught up on all Medicaid recertifications by June 30.

4. Services to Older Foster Youth (LINKS, United Way)

Crystal Mitchell, CPS Supervisor, provided the Board with an overview of services available to older foster care children. LINKS is a program that connects teenagers in the foster care system with supports in their community. LINKS serves children ages 13 and older (up to age 21 for children who age out of foster care). The LINKS Coordinator is Rhonda Reese. She does case management with the youth and helps them to develop a transitional living plan and independent living skills. She does some group work, but most of her work is one-on-one. DSS maintains periodic contact with children once they age out of foster care. Out of all 12 former foster care children between ages 18 and 21, DSS is in contact with 11. Former foster care children typically come back to DSS because they are in crisis and need help. Crystal Mitchell explained that outcomes for youth who age out of foster care are pretty dismal. Currently, there are 24 teenagers in foster care between the ages of 13 and 18. This number remains fairly steady. An average of 6 youth age out of foster care per fiscal year.

United Way has decided to focus on youth aging out of foster care. The organization had implemented a match savings program, but only 2 of the 12 participating youth had actually saved a substantial amount of money at the end of the program. United Way started the Fostering Youth Opportunities program, which has been implemented in Wake and Durham Counties. Youth who have aged out of foster care are at the center of this collaborative model. Through Fostering Youth Opportunities, several different agencies are connected to one youth, which helps to keep the youth engaged in the program. United Way asked DSS to lead this effort in Orange County. DSS is collaborating with Durham Technical Community College, Youth Villages, the Life Skills Foundation, and the Community Empowerment Fund to provide a comprehensive network of services. DSS applied for United Way funding and received \$60,000 to serve 6 former foster youth ages 18 to 24. The contract began on June 1. Currently, the collaborative is identifying young adults to participate and has three thus far. The collaborative will track data on participants' housing, employment, education, and mental health. Crystal Mitchell explained that DSS is excited to implement a program that will assist this vulnerable population and that the collaborative hopes to add more participants over time. Nancy Coston stated that DSS set aside some subsidized employment funding so that these youths can be in supportive work environments for a longer period of time.

5. Budget Update

The Board of County Commissioners will vote to adopt the county budget at their meeting tomorrow night. Earl McKee stated that he does not think there will be a problem with funding for child care. Nancy Coston discussed a few changes to the proposed budget. First, the United Way eliminated funding for three nonprofit organizations: Volunteers for Youth, the YMCA Boomerang Program, and the Dispute Settlement Center. These organizations may receive funding through the Family Success Alliance. The County Commission will not take action on this issue until they reconvene in the fall, when they can make a budget amendment if needed. Earl McKee explained that there is additional money in the general and social justice funds. He stated that the County Commission did

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not have enough information about the situation to make a decision at the time. These organizations will still receive funding from the Juvenile Crime Prevention Council.

The County Commission voted to move the Pre-Trial and Drug Court programs to the County Manager's office. The contracts for these programs will be extended for three months while the County Manager and her staff consider the best location for the programs. Earl McKee stated that he believes that the intent is to bring the programs in-house. DSS will continue to administer these contracts through June 30. Claire Millar highlighted the importance of the Pre-Trial program, which currently supports 100 clients who are not in jail. Earl McKee stated that the County Manager has experience in administering these programs and will thoroughly research this issue. Nancy Coston stated that a Deputy County Manager and a CFO will be joining the County Manager's office soon, so the County Manager will have additional support.

6. Closed Session (Director's Evaluation)

Pat Garavaglia moved to executive session pursuant to General Statute § 143-318.11(a)(6). Ann Wilkerson seconded the motion. The motion was carried without dissent.

**VII. Announcements**

**The next regular meeting is scheduled for Monday, July 20, 2015 at the Hillsborough Commons, 113 Mayo Street, Hillsborough, North Carolina at 4:00pm.**

Tamara Dempsey-Tanner moved to adjourn the meeting at 5:38pm. Earl McKee seconded the motion. The motion was carried without dissent.

Submitted by:

Nancy Coston  
Director

Claire Millar  
Chair