

MINUTES  
ORANGE COUNTY BOARD OF SOCIAL SERVICES  
April 18, 2016

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**THE ORANGE COUNTY BOARD OF SOCIAL SERVICES MET ON MONDAY:** April 18, 2016 at the Hillsborough Commons, Hillsborough, North Carolina.

**BOARD OF SOCIAL SERVICES MEMBERS PRESENT:** Earl McKee, Ann Wilkerson, and Pat Garavaglia.

**GUEST:** None.

**BOARD OF SOCIAL SERVICES MEMBERS ABSENT:** Claire Millar and Tamara Dempsey Tanner.

**STAFF PRESENT:** Nancy Coston, Director; Lindsey Shewmaker, Human Services Manager; Denise Shaffer, Assistant Director; Sharron Hinton, Human Services Manager; Duston Lowell, Child Welfare Program Manager; and Micah Guindon, Management Analyst.

**I. Call to Order and Introductions**

DSS Vice-Chair, Ann Wilkerson, called the meeting to order at 4:08 pm.

**II. Board Comments**

Earl McKee asked if the agency was still able to serve all children who applied for child care subsidy. Nancy Coston responded that there is still no waiting list. Commissioner McKee also asked about a contingency plan for child care in NC FAST. Ms. Coston responded that the pilot has been delayed until October to allow for further testing. She also noted that staff met with child care providers to give more detail about NC FAST related changes.

**III. Public Comments**

None.

**IV. Agenda Changes**

None.

**V. Action Items**

On a motion by Earl McKee, the Board approved the minutes of March 21, 2016. Pat Garavaglia seconded the motion. The motion was carried without dissent.

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

1. Overview of Job Fair

Sharron Hinton provided the Board with an overview of the job fair held at the agency two weeks ago. More than 260 people and 90 employers attended. Renee Smith from the Food and Nutrition Services Employment and Training Program at the State of North Carolina attended and was very impressed with what Orange County is doing to get people employed. Employer evaluations were very positive.

Earl McKee asked how many people obtained employment through the job fair. Ms. Hinton responded that Robert Gilmore and his staff are still working on collecting that data. Most hires

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take several weeks after the job fair so staff should be able to update the Board at the next meeting. Commissioner McKee asked whether the agency had considered using The Friday Center if University Place was unavailable for the next job fair. Ms. Hinton responded that she would look into it and noted the next event would take place in the Fall.

2. Child Welfare Update

Denise Shaffer gave the Board two handouts to explain the Child and Family Services Review. The review evaluates safety, permanence, and well-being. The evaluation helps the agency and the state determine what areas need the most focus. The State of North Carolina failed to meet the standards based on the review.

Earl McKee asked what triggers this review to occur. Nancy Coston replied that all states are reviewed by the federal government using both statewide data and individual cases. Orange County did not have any cases pulled for the review, although county data was included in the statewide data set.

The lack of a statewide system led to some of the findings. All the findings will need to be addressed in the state's program improvement plan.

Duston Lowell informed the Board that the state has been doing one-day reviews of each county. The initial findings indicated that Orange County has a few things it needs to work on.

- Cases need to be accurately opened and closed in the system so that the state systems reflect the current number of cases in the county.
- Documentation on cases needs to be updated in the electronic systems.
- Staff should receive all the required training each year based on their assigned area.
- All diligent efforts need to be made to track down absent parents.
- Each foster child should have a life book created that includes pictures of their family and tracks their lives.
- Document all discussions between staff and supervisors regarding cases and case decisions.

There will be another one-day review in August and a three-day review will occur next year to review actual cases. In May staff will evaluate cases internally based on the Child and Family Services Review tool. Ms. Coston also noted that the agency requested a Management Analyst in the budget process to assist with reviewing cases and data related to child welfare. Commissioner McKee added that it makes sense to have an outside perspective on internal audits.

Ann Wilkerson asked how many social workers are employed in this work. Mr. Lowell responded that there are 31 social workers doing child welfare and about ten others who support this work.

Mr. Lowell also spoke briefly about issues surrounding mental health treatment for children involved with child welfare. The sense of urgency at Social Services is often very different than the sense of urgency of the providers and Cardinal Innovations. There are children who are waiting for services or placements and need Medicaid approval that takes up to 15 days to receive from the providers and/or Cardinal Innovations. There are times when a child is discharged from a provider without the provider able to find the next best placement even though that is a requirement and the provider receives funds for those efforts. The kids who have the highest needs tend to be most impacted. Commissioner McKee asked that this information be consolidated to one page and given to the County Manager's Office.

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Commissioner McKee noted that there has been a recent change from leadership at Cardinal Innovations and they seem much more willing to engage on how to improve services and service access. Mr. Lowell added that recent events indicate that there is more effort being made by Cardinal to meet needs.

3. Orange County Food Insecurity

Micah Gundon presented briefly her research on food insecurity in Orange County. There are several groups working on initiatives and the human services department directors are working together to determine the next course of action to support these efforts or fill service gaps.

4. Director's Report

None.

**VII. Announcements**

**The next regular meeting is scheduled for Monday, May 16, 2016 at the Hillsborough Commons, 113 Mayo Street, Hillsborough, North Carolina at 4:00pm.**

Earl McKee moved to adjourn the meeting at 5:36pm. Pat Garavaglia seconded the motion. The motion was carried without dissent.

Submitted by:

Nancy Coston  
Director

Ann Wilkerson  
Vice-Chair