

Scotland County of Social Services Board
February 16, 2023
Regular Meeting

The vision of the Scotland County Social Services Board is to foster individual responsibility and to create a strong cooperative community that is responsive to the needs of its citizens.

DSS Board Members Present: Leon Butler Board Chair, Dorothy Tyson Vice Chair, Mollie Flowers, Andy Kurtzman

DSS Board Members Absent: BJ Gibson

DSS Employees Present: April Snead, Director, Jessica Buehler, Administrative Assistant/Clerk to the Board, Carolyn Lewellen, Income Maintenance Program Administrator, Joy Hine, Income Maintenance Program Administrator, Shannon Hammonds Social Work Program Administrator, Wendy Stanton, Social Work Program Administrator

The meeting was called to order at 8:32 a.m. by Leon Butler. Leon Butler also led the opening prayer.

A motion to approve the agenda for the February 16, 2023 meeting was made by Dorothy Tyson and seconded by Andy Kurtzman. The Board unanimously approved the motion and the agenda was accepted.

A motion to approve the January 23, 2023 meeting minutes was made by Andy Kurtzman and seconded by Dorothy Tyson. The Board unanimously agreed and the minutes were approved.

Public Forum

- None

Director Snead gave the Administrative Report

Please see the attached report

Discussion from the report:

Budget and Finance:

The leave balances that staff see in Executime are not correct. Director Snead expressed concern for those that have low leave balances but Executime shows they have more leave in error. Staff may feel they can take this leave and it actually results in Leave Without Pay (LWOP). Supervisors are aware and monitoring leave balances. Mr. Kurtzman questioned if there was a

contact person for staff to ask about their leave balances. Director Snead stated that the correct balances are not currently available. This has been a recurring issue since the County transitioned to the Munis system in January. Mrs. Tyson questioned if time for December can be used to get an accurate balance. Director Snead stated this can be done and staff were encouraged to print their leave balances in December. Director Snead stressed to the Board that the County is currently working on the issue.

Mollie Flowers wondered if this is a priority for the County. Dorothy Tyson stated this was addressed at the County Commissioners' meeting. Munis is the new finance system and acquired Executime in the process. Director Snead stated that 401k deductions have changed, as well as benefit deductions if staff made changes, and has an effect on pay, as well. Director Snead stated that the payroll issues seem to have been resolved for our Department.

Personnel Services:

All vacancies are currently in the hiring process.

Child Support:

New copiers were installed on January 31. Since the installation, the child support printers have not worked correctly as they are not currently connected to the state. As of now, Director Snead is having ACTS print jobs sent to Richmond County. The County Manager has been notified, as well as County IT. One form needs to be sent to the state to begin resolving the issue. IP addresses need to be added and the form will need to be sent to the state in order to have the Child Support printers connected to the state system.

Director Snead stated that conferences have been held for the past six months between DSS, County IT, and COECO. IT states they were unaware of the project. Director Snead stated that County IT has the form that needs to be sent to the state.. Mrs. Tyson asked if this can be equated to time lost, money lost, etc. Director Snead stated that yes, to a degree, this can be equated to those issues. As of now, a worker is having to drive to Richmond County to pick up the print jobs every day. Mrs. Flowers asked how many IT employees there are. Director Snead stated that there are four IT workers, one being the Department Head.

Director Snead stated that if one printer can be connected correctly, information can be directed to the printer until all other Child Support printers are set up. This was the recommendation given to Kevin Patterson.

This printing problem will affect our Child Support numbers and goals. Mrs. Tyson stated that Scotland County was currently number one in collections and this issue has the potential to affect that.

Economic Services

Food and Nutrition:

Automatic renewals will be ending soon. Director Snead stated that most people in that unit have not worked here without Covid-19 restrictions in place. There is going to be a large difference in the work pace needed once the automated renewals are stopped. The strategic plan goal is currently going well and will continue to be monitored.

Family and Adult Medicaid:

House Bill 76, Medicaid Expansion, is a current bill that will affect both Medicaid units, if implemented. This has the potential to go into effect as early as July 1, but it has to pass through the legislature by March in order to go into effect by that time. This will have a large impact on the units' workload, as well. They are currently two months ahead.

Social Work Services

Children Services:

One Vanguard worker began yesterday to help with investigations and another will begin soon to help with adoptions. Foster care is fully staffed, as well as in-home social workers. Even with those staffing restrictions, most MOE goals are still being met.

DSS Reentry Program:

The Reentry Program is eligible for another \$150,000 a year. The grant application is due March 3rd.

Scotland County Area Transit System (SCATS):

One part-time driver has started at the Department today. This driver is also a School Bus Driver. Mr. Kurtzman asked for an update on potentially changing the CDL requirements for SCATS drivers. Director Snead stated that after meeting with Ed Johnston, the option of "CDL preferred" was discussed. This will be discussed in more detail at the next Transportation Advisory Board. Mrs. Tyson asked if there are plans to get larger buses. Director Snead stated that this may not happen, but we may need more buses of the same size. Mrs. Hine stated that many areas in the state are moving towards "micro-transit".

Mr. Butler asked about the ridership. Joy Hine stated that monthly the average is around 1,500. Mrs. Hine discussed prioritizing rides as ridership continues to grow. Director Snead stated that since the need for transportation is rising, SCATS is currently looking at the protocols as they are dated. Currently, there is a combined manual for riders and drivers. SCATS is looking to separate this manual. It is inevitable that one day someone will be denied due to time and space restrictions. SCATS needs to be prepared by having written rules in place for prioritizing rides. Staggering SCATS operating hours was suggested as well.

Mr. Butler stated that he rode SCATS to the Board meeting this morning and the driver was courteous.

Mr. Kurtzman asked about the fixed route. Mrs. Hine stated that it is still being used, but ridership has decreased. The citizens that are currently using the fixed route are those that are not planning ahead. Director Snead stated that statistics will be brought to the next DSS Board meeting. This will be three months of data.

SCATS can cross county lines, but does not currently have the infrastructure to do so. Counties that are currently doing this are charging for that service. SCATS does not charge riders.

Other Impacts on DSS:

The Fire Marshall has stated that microwaves, coffee makers and refrigerators cannot be in offices. Director Snead has been working with county maintenance to install five additional kitchenettes throughout the building. Director Snead informed the Board that the break room cannot accommodate 120 staff. Refrigerators have not been removed from offices as of now.

New DSS Initiatives:

At the February Regular Board of County Commissioners meeting, Director Snead was accompanied by three social workers to discuss the current travel reimbursement rate. As a result, the Policy Committee has recommended that the county reimbursement rate will be 90% of what the federal rate is on July 1st of each year.

Social Workers, Maintenance, and EMS, in particular, are affected by the Petty Leave Policy. Those staff are not able to use their petty leave, as it has to be used after comp time. As of now, those staff have an abundance of comp time, which means their petty leave for the year is unused. The policy committee will recommend the County Commissioners change this to allow for this to be used before other types of leave time. Also, with the current Petty Leave Policy, petty leave consists of 15 hours that can only be used 3 hours at a time. Director Snead also

stated that the Policy Committee will recommend to change this to 16 hours, and allow those hours to be used in any increment.

Director Snead discussed the different types of time. Dorothy Tyson discussed that comp time is the hours worked over the required time each week. Director Snead stated that comp time is not paid out to supervisors when leaving the county. Dorothy Tyson: Is there a deadline on how to use comp time? Director Snead stated that every quarter, it is paid down to leave the staff member with 40 hours.

Unfinished Business

- None

I.E. Johnson Discussion

Mrs. Flowers stated that while listening to the radio, she was informed that Scotland County would be moving forward with the plan to move Social Work Services to the I. E. Johnson building. Director Snead informed the Board that although she has been sent several designs, a finalized plan has not been selected. Director Snead informed the Board that with the current floor plans being sent, Social Work Services will have no room for growth.

In order to receive reimbursement, DHHS has to approve the design. The Department would receive about 50% reimbursement if a new building was built, or expansion on the current building took place. However, reimbursement is not guaranteed currently because an old building is being revitalized to share with other departments and include Social Work Services.

It is important to note that Social Work staff have multiple concerns about the possible transition, as well. They are concerned about their client's confidentiality, as social workers would be placed in cubicles. Director Snead stated that although current floor plans have an interview room, this would not be useful when clients call in to speak with their social worker about their case. Board Chair, Leon Butler, also discussed the issues that will arise with transportation, as well as management. Director Snead would need to split her presence between two different buildings. Director Snead also stated that social workers would lose work time, as clients would need to be transported to both buildings at times. Oftentimes, clients receiving social work services, also require other Department services such as daycare, food and nutrition services, and drug screens (which are completed at the Health Department).

The Board revisited their initial thoughts on a letter of support showing concerns for the move of Social Work Services. Mrs. Tyson discussed that while a letter of support would be good, it may

not help. Mrs. Tyson stated that based on social workers attending the last commissioners' meeting, travel reimbursement was taken to the policy committee for review. Having social workers attend a commissioners' meeting to discuss how the move will affect them will be more beneficial than the Board writing a letter. Mr. Kurtzman also suggested having the Commissioners come to DSS.

Director Snead asked about inviting social workers or Commissioners to the DSS board meeting. It is effective to allow for staff to talk and to write a letter, and both can be done. Mr. Butler asked how aware are social work staff of the move. Director Snead informed the Board that at the last round table meeting with social work staff, she was asked about the I.E. Johnson plans. The location and design were discussed. Social workers showed concern for the current cubicle plan in regards to client confidentiality.

Mrs. Tyson stated that the North side of town has been neglected. She discussed that the North side of town is described as unsafe. Mrs. Tyson discussed that it is unsafe everywhere, no matter who you are. Good things come for the North side of town just like anywhere else. DSS represents those clients and the county as a whole cannot keep thinking that it is unsafe. Mrs. Tyson stated that when it is said repeatedly, the citizens living in that area begin to believe it is true. She continued by stating that discrimination is prevalent in Scotland County and should not be tolerated.

Mollie Flowers made a motion for the Social Services Board to write a letter to the County Manager and the Board of Commissioners opposing the separation of social work services from the Department of Social Services building. Andy Kurtzman seconded the motion and indicated splitting the agency would be ineffective for the working purposes of DSS and the county. Dorothy Tyson opposed the motion stating that social workers attending the County Commissioners meeting would be more effective. The motion passed.

Mr. Kurtzman discussed having an open forum for staff in conjunction with writing the letter to the Commissioners. This would allow staff a place to voice their concerns in regards to productivity and work efficiency.

New Business

- DSS Staff Survey

Mr. Butler discussed that when the surveys began, there were many issues that needed to be addressed. He questioned the Board if surveys needed to be continued. Mrs. Tyson stated that with the survey being anonymous, staff may feel more comfortable discussing issues that they

may not discuss otherwise. Director Snead stated that the issue with anonymous surveys is that it becomes difficult to pinpoint where an issue is. It is hard to take the information and discuss it when there is no clear starting point. Also, the survey does not have a good response rate. During the last survey in 2021, only 40 out of 120 staff responded.

Mrs. Hine discussed that meeting options have increased in all aspects throughout the building in terms of frequency. Agency emails also give transparency. Exit surveys are helpful in identifying issues. Mr. Butler stated that staff seem to be in a comfortable position discussing concerns with their supervisor. Mr. Kurtzman added that if the survey was not completed this year, staff should be notified and reminded of the options to discuss any concern with their supervisor.

A motion was made by Andy Kurtzman that there does not appear to be a need for the annual survey, as staff are able to address concerns through the chain of command. Therefore, a survey will not be necessary this year. Mollie Flowers seconded the motion. Dorothy Tyson opposed the motion stating that new employees are unaware of the survey. Also, staff may be uncomfortable to address concerns with their supervisors and the survey is an outlet for them to do so. The motion passed.

Director Snead informed the Board that employees complete surveys quarterly while on probation, which lasts nine months. Those are given to personnel. The information is shared with the supervisor or program administrator of that unit to work with and improve. Mrs. Tyson stated this does provide insight on how a new employee is doing, as well as their intent to stay with the Department. Mrs. Tyson also praised the supervisor that trusted their staff to be present in a roundtable without them.

Mr. Butler stated that the old Willow Place building is being rezoned and has been purchased by New River LLC. Director Snead stated she was invited there about two weeks ago. Progress is being made and they are looking to open up a group home. The group that has purchased the building has the intent of creating a PRTF. They are planning to have sixty beds and are in the process of becoming licensed. Director Snead stated that this would place beds in our community, however, the rest of the state will also be able to use the facility.

Director Snead's evaluation is due in June. Leon Butler discussed the evaluation scoring with the Board. Director Snead stated that this matches the way that other staff are measured. The County used NeoGov for evaluation purposes and that is what DSS uses as well. Measures vary between each job. Mr. Kurtzman asked if there is a definition for those measures used. Director Snead informed him that while there is not, DSS has defined 1-4 and she will share that information

with the Board. Director Snead also informed the Board that if they would like to use NeoGov, the Department can set that up. Mrs. Tyson stated that if the evaluation was going to be done using a different tool, the Director should have known that at the beginning of the year. Director Snead agreed to send out the evaluation measures and scoring guide to Board members this week.

A motion to adjourn was made by Leon Butler, and seconded by Andy Kurtzman. The motion was passed and the meeting was adjourned.

Jessica Buehler, Clerk to the Board

Leon Butler, Board Chair

Administrative Report

February 2023

Budget and Finance

- The FY 23 DSS budget amount is \$8,544,084. The FY 23 SCATS budget amount is \$619,512 requiring an approximate 20% match in county funding. The Reentry budget is in mid-year, as the budget runs from September 10th to September 11th each year. Spending through December is:
 - DSS 51%
 - Reentry 21.42%
 - SCATS 37.5%
- Increase the percent of MOE spending to maximize federal funding. Daysheet coding for Children Services, Daycare, Work First has been changed to begin the fiscal year. In FY 22, the agency collected \$374,603 (41%) of available MOE funds. Through December, \$545,377 of the \$698,155 county portion had been spent and \$216,605 (36%) of federal funds collected. **(Strategic Plan)**
- Cross train in the DSS reimbursement process. Part I training is ongoing. Part II of the 1571 report training with the Finance Technician including the new process for Medicaid reimbursement is complete. **(Strategic Plan)**
- Staff continue to experience some issues with leave balances and receiving timely pay increases. When comparing December 2022 payroll expenses to January 2023 payroll expenses there was a \$59,000 decrease. County finance has been contacted to review and explain the differences.

Personnel Services

- The Department has six vacancies, one SWS III, two SWIAT, one IM INV II, one IM IMV I (frozen), and one CSSA. The turnover rate for FY 23 is 12% (two retirements, two dismissals) through the month of January compared to FY 22 agency wide turnover rate of 20%.
- Additional duties have been placed on personnel from county finance/personnel. If an additional position is needed to complete increased duties is under consideration.
- To continue improvement of the hiring process, reference forms were re-evaluated and now in use. **(Strategic Plan)**

Child Support

- Child Support is meeting goals in all areas of self-assessment and incentive measures.
- The unit's performance increased in 11 of 13 self-assessment and incentive categories for the month of January. All areas are on track to meet the required goals.
- The unit strives to collect \$100,000 on Show Cause Court Dates. As of January, the unit has collected a total of \$90,109, already putting them at 90% of their end of the year goal. **(Strategic Plan)**

- The unit will Show Cause 90% of all new orders when no payment is made in the first 90 days of court order origination. As of the end of January, the unit has only had 8 cases that did not have a payment in the first 90 days. Seven have had a show cause filed on them. **(Strategic Plan)**
- The year started with 808 arrears cases without an arrears frequency. As of the end of January, the unit has reduced the number of cases by 155 with a goal of reducing by 50%. **(Strategic Plan)**
- Child Support cannot print or receive any required information from the DHHS ACTS system. New printers were installed on 1/31/23. Attempts have been made to work with county IT to resolve the problem.

Economic Services:

Child Care

- The Daycare unit currently serves 574 children. This number fluctuates each month based on the attendance reported by the daycare centers. The waiting list has been depleted at this time. These children are attending 18 daycares in Scotland County and 32 daycares outside Scotland County.
- The Daycare unit is meeting MOU goals consistently for timeliness. Work is in process to review to improve accuracy.

Food and Nutrition

- The FNS unit is meeting MOU goals consistently.
- USDA approved a waiver to stop most FNS reviews through March 2023. Staff are continuing to scan files, to complete the paperless process, and to key LIEAP applications.
- February 2023 will be the final month for FNS emergency allotments in addition to regular eligible benefits, impacting recipient benefits. Notices will be sent by DHHS to households that have active cases. Our FNS department will be able to provide them with additional food resources that may help, such as WIC and food bank referrals.
- The unit strives for a same day processing goal of 40% for expedited applications and a twelve day average for non expedited applications. During the month of January expedited applications were at 50.85% and non-expedite were at an average of 10 days. **(Strategic Plan)**

Family and Adult Medicaid

- House Bill 76 is moving through the legislator and in a third reading today. This will have an impact on our agency and caseload sizes and may begin as early as July 1st. To begin in July, the legislation would have to pass by March.
- The Medicaid file review of the Single County Audit occurred on August 9th and completed on October 26th. Information from DHB is still

- being reviewed to determine potential Medicaid reimbursement.
- Both Medicaid units are working two months ahead of recertification due dates.
- Both Medicaid units continue to exceed timeliness requirements of the MOU.
- Medicaid Transportation to implement a paperless filing system. Building the metadata is in process through MCCI. **(Strategic Plan)**
- Scotland County has been chosen to participate in the expansion of Recertification Straight-Through Processing (STP). Go-live for recertification STP was live January 1, 2023. This process seems to be going well, however there are some cases still falling out of Straight-Through Processing that staff process manually. Most of these are income related, either new income or discrepancy in income.

Work First

- The Work First unit is meeting MOU goals consistently
- Beginning January 1, 2023 WFFA began receiving EPASS applications as well as in person, fax, mail or over the phone.

Program Integrity

- The Program Integrity position has been reposted and interviews are being conducted.
- 100% of cases are being investigated timely.

Quality Assurance/Training

- During the month of December, QA reviewed 121 files for accuracy.
- The unit is working towards all four staff being cross-trained in each program.

Social Work Services:

Adult Services

- Increase MAC reimbursement by 5%. In January 2023, 43% of social work time was coded to MAC. **(Strategic Plan)**

Children Services

- Children services currently has three vacancies, To assist with caseload requirements one Vanguard temporary staff and one contract staff will begin this month.
- Initiate 95% of all screens in CPS reports within required time frames. For January 2023, 98% of reports were initiated within time frames. **(Strategic Plan, MOU measure)**

- For all children who were victims of maltreatment during a 12 month period, no more than 9.1% receive a subsequent finding of maltreatment. As of January, 2023 repeat maltreatment is 20%. **(Strategic Plan, MOU measure)**
- Of children entering foster care in a 12 month period, 40.5% are discharged to permanency within 12 months of entering care. As of January, 2023 the rate of permanency within 12 months is 45%. **(Strategic Plan, MOU measure)**
- Of children entering foster care in a 12 month period and discharged to permanency within 12 months through reunification, kinship care, or guardianship, no more than 8.3% re-enter foster care within 12 months of discharge. As of January, 2023, 0% of children re-entered foster care within 12 months. **(Strategic Plan, MOU measure)**
- Of children entering foster care in a 12 month period, the rate of placement moves per 1,000 days of foster care does not exceed 4.1%. As of January, 2023 the rate of foster care moves was 3%. **(Strategic Plan, MOU measure)**
- The Social Work QA process focuses on Child Welfare and will expand to Adult Services as well. The QA social worker was promoted and a new QA social worker is in place. **(Strategic Plan)**
- All social work documentation will be current within seven days. This continues to be an area of focus. Social Workers have begun working one Saturday per month in an effort to meet this goal. Protected Time is also required on Fridays 8-12 pm for documentation. **(Strategic Plan)**

Work First Employment

- The agency has one Work First Employment social worker with a caseload of Work First participants required to have a Mutual Responsibility Agreement.

DPS Reentry Program

- The Program received a one time allocation of \$36,000 required to be spent by December 12th. This funding was used for salary, benefits, and participant costs.
- The 2023 Reentry Conference will be held April 3rd - April 5th in Charlotte, NC.
- The Request for Proposal for the next Reentry grant has been released and is due on March 3rd.

Scotland Area Transit System (SCATS)

- SCATS ridership increased 13% from December to January. Overall ridership is up 11.5% from the same period of fiscal year 2022. **(Strategic Plan)**
- The 5311 Capital and Administrative grants have been submitted. A public hearing was held on 1/9/23 at the Commissioner's meeting. Approval of grants are pending. This normally takes several months.
- On December 19th, the agency transitioned to a hybrid model for transportation offered to the general public. One fixed line continues to operate, while adding a demand response route for all riders in the county. The trips scheduled as demand response are increasing, as more public are made aware.

- SCATS has zero provider no-shows across all areas of scheduling.
- Analyze and determine the cost per each SCATS trip. At this time the cost per trip has been analyzed as such:
 - Cost per passenger trip - \$17.40
 - Cost per hour - \$32.55
 - Cost per mile - \$2.54

More work will continue to monitor this and use a second tool to verify cost per trip. **(Strategic Plan)**

- SCATS has hired and trained a new part time driver. Consideration is being made to hiring without a CDL. Qualifying was reviewed by Ed Johnson, county attorney and recommendations are being drafted.

Other Impacts on DSS:

- A fire marshal inspection required all staff to remove microwaves, coffee pots from offices and will also require the removal of refrigerators. The agency is working in conjunction with county maintenance to install “kitchenettes” throughout the agency.
- LIEAP began on 12/1/22 for a limited population. On 1/1/23 the application process was opened to all citizens who meet the eligibility. All recipients of LIEAP in 2021 automatically received LIEAP this year.
- After representation at the Commissioners meeting in February, the Commissioner policy committee met to discuss increased mileage reimbursement rates.

New DSS Initiatives

- The Department now has new copiers with custom features. These will now allow scanning straight to email, secure printing, and secure printing while off site.
 - New thin clients were installed for two additional units. These units also have dual monitors. The remaining thin clients have arrived and IT will be requested to install.
 - The Department offered the first quarterly Self Care Lunch and Learn sessions facilitated by the county Employee Assistance Program on 9/14/22 and 11/30/22. These sessions focus on self care, stress management, etc. Another is scheduled in March 2023.
 - The FY 23 Leadership Development class has begun and meets regularly. Participants are working on team projects and beginning to present a leadership team topic to the group.
 - The agency created a Values Committee to define the values for DSS. The values have been defined as Respect, Teamwork, Dependability, Accountability, Innovation and Excellence. Values are now in job postings and job descriptions. Values are displayed throughout the agencies, including in job recruitment postings, included in job descriptions. Administrators are working to engrain values into job evaluations.
- (Strategic Plan)**

Common Acronyms

ADA - American with Disabilities Act

APS - Adult Protective Services

CPS - Child Protective Services

COVID - 19 - Coronavirus

DCDEE - Department of Child Development and Early Education (Daycare)

DHB - Department of Health Benefits (Medicaid)

DHHS - Department of Health and Human Services

FNS - Food and Nutrition Services

IT - Information Technology

LIHEAP - Low Income Housing Energy Assistance Program

LIHWAP - Low Income Housing Water Assistance Program

LBL - Local Business Liaison

MAC - Medicaid Administrative Claiming (funding source)

MOU - Memorandum of Understanding

OHSR - Office of Human State Resources

OST - Operational Support Team

REDA - Recipient Eligibility Determination Audit

SCATS - Scotland County Area Transit System

SSBG - Social Services Block Grant (funding source)

SNAP - Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program

SWAP - Scotland Wellness Assistance Program

PPE - Personal Protective Equipment

PSNAP - Pandemic Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program

WFFA - Work First Family Assistance