

**Scotland County of Social Services Board**  
**April 20, 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 Board Chair, BJ Gibson, Mollie Flowers, Andy Kurtzman

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

The meeting was called to order at 8:30 a.m. by Leon Butler. Mollie Flowers led the opening prayer.

A motion to approve the agenda for the April 20, 2023 meeting was made by Dorothy Tyson and seconded by Mollie Flowers. The board unanimously approved the motion and the agenda was accepted.

A motion to approve the March 16, 2023 meeting minutes was made by Andy Kurtzman and seconded by Mollie Flowers. 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:**

During the March Board meeting, the Board discussed the SCATS trip rate and expenditures versus revenue. Revenues in SCATS outweigh the expenditures. This is partly due to the reimbursements with medicaid trips. All time spent on medicaid trips is 100% reimbursable.

Director Snead explained, there is always county cost involved in SCATS, as different grants require a percentage of local funding. County finance also placed more money into the budget than what the Department expected SCATS to spend in FY 23. Mr. Butler inquired about additional funds being placed into the budget. Director Snead discussed that the County will look at an overview from previous years worth of spending to project what will be needed for the upcoming year. In previous years, before SCATS was acquired by DSS, overtime was allowed and paid out. This no longer occurs, reducing salary spending drastically. The salary line item and the benefits line item are the only two line items that DSS finance does not control.

**Personnel:**

Director Snead discussed how the hiring efforts of social workers have impacted after the salary study lowered the positions one salary grade. Currently, the salary has been decreased by essentially \$2,000. Mrs. Tyson questioned if the current salary would be for someone with no experience in child welfare. Director Snead informed the Board that salaries posted are for fully qualified staff. Someone with no experience would be offered below the salary posted.

Director Snead expressed concerns with hiring for social workers with Mr. Patterson, County Manager, and Susan Butler, County Human Resources Director. During those discussions, Director Snead was informed that she has the ability to offer up to 5% more than the number listed at the beginning of the salary range. The Director expressed concerns of doing so due to the inconsistencies that could develop in the building with salaries. The Director also discussed disagreeing with doing so across the board as it would not be feasible to offer someone who was not fully qualified 5% more of the salary typically discussed. Unfortunately, fully qualified staff will go to another county as the starting salary will be higher again.

Monnie English, Senior Human Resources Administrator at the Department, informed Director Snead that currently, there are no applications coming in, although the current posting has received more than 200 views. Director Snead informed the Board that one candidate refused the offer to hire for the Social Worker Investigative Assessment and Treatment position due to the lower salary. The candidate was a resident of Scotland County and lived in Laurinburg. It was determined that Director Snead was unaware of the ability to offer 5% higher than the starting salary. Mrs. Tyson asked if it would be possible to offer that to the person now. Director Snead stated that this would not be done as the candidate had no child welfare experience. The candidate stated to Director Snead that the position had previously been posted with a higher salary range of over \$51,000 and had now been posted for around \$49,000.

Mr. Butler asked Director Snead about answers to the hiring problem with social work positions. Director Snead stated that although she has the ability to offer 5% more, she is uncomfortable doing so. Two years ago, the County Commissioners approved for all county social workers to receive a 10% raise. County personnel then had to adjust those salaries and in turn, those positions were moved up two salary grades. The salary study then recommended that those positions be moved down one salary grade. Mr. Gibson stated that the Commissioners hired a company to perform the salary study. Director Snead stated that overall the salary study has had a positive outcome for county staff. Mr. Gibson stated that the salary study was expensive, but was conducted by experts and what they have decided, is what will be. Mrs. Tyson agreed and stated that it would not make sense for the county to purchase the expensive service and then make so many changes. Mr. Kurtzman stated that current postings should be grandfathered into the old salary. Mr. Gibson informed the Board that as of now, the county will need to take the bad with the good and if needed, issues could be resolved at a later time.

In reference to the decrease in the salary grade Mrs. Tyson asked if it would be possible to offer the 5% increase to those that are fully qualified. Director Snead stated that this would be possible, but perimeters would need to be created for doing so.

### **Economic Services**

#### **Family and Adult Medicaid:**

Currently the Department has not been notified of a start date for Medicaid Expansion. Extending reviews allows both units to give more notice to clients. This will also allow staff to not become overwhelmed with reviews.

### **Social Work Services**

#### **Children Services:**

Investigations are in a critical place as of now as there are only two investigators right now. However, a previous worker has been contracted to help as of last Tuesday. Also, a temporary worker will begin next week. Director Snead expressed gratitude for Mrs. Hammonds' side of child welfare for managing during difficult times.

Foster Care has reduced the number of children in foster care from around 100 to 83. This was made possible through adoption and other efforts. One staff member is currently transitioning from foster care to adoptions and licensing. She is being trained to do so.

#### **Reentry:**

April is Second Chance Month. A reentry event will be held on April 27th and will take place in the Probation and Parole parking lot. This will begin at 10:00 a.m. and will end at 1:00 p.m.

**SCATS:**

The Transportation Advisory Board (TAB) voted in favor of beginning to hire drivers without the CDL requirement. Director Snead has had conversations with Ed Johnston, County Attorney, about doing so. Discussions have also occurred about ways to reduce the liability for the County. Discussions have also taken place between Director Snead and Mr. Patterson. Director Snead stated it is appropriate to move forward and discuss this at a Board of County Commissioners meeting. Mrs. Tyson asked if there are any numbers from other counties, such as the number of accidents involving non CDL drivers. She stated having this information would be beneficial when presenting to the Commissioners. Director Snead stated that the Department has reached out to 10 counties similar the size of Scotland County for other information. However, it would be beneficial to reach out to those counties about numbers pertaining to accidents and lawsuits involving non CDL drivers. Mr. Kurtzman asked if background checks are performed on potential drivers. Director Snead informed the Board that both criminal and driving background checks are performed.

It was discussed that drivers with a CDL would be brought in at a higher starting rate than those without a CDL. Perimeters will need to be created to determine what will be deemed acceptable in terms of any marks on a driving record. Also, training will be increased as well. Mrs. Tyson asked if there are currently people that are interested in becoming a SCATS driver, but do not have a CDL. Director Snead informed the Board that there have been occurrences of someone being interested in becoming a SCATS driver, but they do not have a CDL. Mrs. Tyson stated that those occurrences should also be discussed at the Commissioners meeting.

Title VI may be on the agenda for the May Commissioners meeting as well. Title VI is currently being proofread. Mr. Kurtzman asked for clarification on what Title VI encompasses. Director Snead stated that Title VI includes equality and accommodations. Mrs. Hine further elaborated that Title VI states that SCATS will not discriminate in terms of employment or ridership, discusses the demographics of who SCATS serves, as well as how SCATS promotes those demographics.

Mr. Butler inquired about how driving records are obtained. Director Snead stated that the Department and the County pay a company to research driving records. Mr. Butler stated that he recommends SCATS to everyone and commended SCATS for their services.

Mr. Butler asked if the current Social Worker IAT posting reflects the change from \$51,000 to \$49,000. Director Snead informed the Board that each job is posted separately and each job will reflect the current salary range.

A motion to approve the Administrative Report was made by BJ Gibson and seconded by Dorothy Tyson. The Board unanimously agreed and the motion was approved.

#### Unfinished Business

- None

#### New Business

- FY 24 Budgets

Beth Hobbs has suggested keeping all budgets (DSS, SCATS, and Reentry) separate. Director Snead discussed that there is approximately a million dollar increase in the FY 24 budget when comparing it to the FY 23 budget. The salary study results, along with a reduction in State and Federal allocations would explain the increase. It is important to keep in mind that the budget is designed in a way that reflects all positions in the Department being filled. It also includes an estimated 2% Cost of Living Increase (COLA). Longevity payments, as well as merit increases for all staff are also factored into the budget.

Director Snead will not ask for the additional Medicaid Income Maintenance Caseworker II positions at the beginning of the budget year due to the start date for Medicaid Expansion being unknown. The County cost would be \$40,000 has reimbursement for the full amount, which is over \$100,000 is 75%

The Social Worker II staff member requested will not have a caseload. The need for the position stems from the unit not currently having the time to recruit for foster homes. This position would be responsible for holding the necessary classes to become a foster parent, recruitment efforts, and supporting foster parents. Mrs. Tyson asked if it would be necessary for that position to be full time if the staff member will not be responsible for a caseload. Director Snead stated that part time versus full time would be something to think about. The decision to ask for a Social Worker II instead of a Social Worker III was due to the worker not having a caseload. Mrs. Tyson discussed having the position start out as a part time position and the County would not need to cover benefits. Mr. Gibson agreed with that statement as well.

Radios are needed for social workers when they are out of the office and in the field.

Mr. Gibson asked Director Snead if the requests are her raw ask for items listed. Director Snead stated that yes, that is correct. A copy of the FY 24 Budget Requests will be sent to Mr. Patterson as information was given verbally by Director Snead previously.

IT was also discussed. Director Snead informed the Board that the Department is not equipped with new copiers, dual monitors, and thin clients. The new equipment has allowed DSS to not anticipate any large IT purchases for a number of years. Mrs. Tyson also discussed the new positions. Director Snead stated that new positions are built into the budget.

Mr. Kurtzman inquired about the cost of upgrading the bathrooms. Director Snead informed the Board that the bathrooms are quite large, with each having an average of 5 stalls, 5 toilets, and 5 sinks. Mr. Gibson stated that the Commissioners have taken a tour of the building and this may be an advantage as the Commissioners have been able to physically see the current state of the bathrooms. The bathrooms that are currently in place are the original bathrooms and have not been updated since the Department was built.

Mrs. Tyson asked if there are any concerns that have developed since the change in benefits for Food and Nutrition Services is imminent. Mrs. Lewellen informed the Board that while the calls have certainly picked up, there are very few clients that have a massive concern with the changes. Mrs. Lewellen stated that there is currently one appeal in that unit. Mrs. Tyson asked if staff are referring clients to local food banks and other resources in the community. Mrs. Lewellen stated that clients are informed of local food banks and other resources. Also, Food Lion has a healthy food partnership for those receiving Food and Nutrition Services which allows for those clients to get up to \$40 of fresh fruits and vegetables at no cost to the client.

A motion to approve the FY 24 DSS budget requests was made by Dorothy Tyson and seconded by Andy Kurtzman. The Board unanimously agreed and the motion was approved.

The SCATS budget request was presented. Discussion of the transition of a part time driver to full time for SCATS was discussed. Director Snead informed the Board that the current part time driver is being paid full time wages due to them being needed so often. However, they are not receiving benefits as they are classified under a part time position.

A 20' Light Transit Van with a wheelchair lift costs about \$130,000, but State and Federal funding will cover the majority of the cost. The County will only need to pay 10% of the cost.

The Department will shop for a minivan with a wheelchair lift if approved, which would be an expansion of the current fleet of vehicles for SCATS. As of now, a bus is being used to transport one person out of town if that person needs the assistance of a wheelchair lift. Mr. Butler inquired about how often out of town medical trips are taken. Director Snead stated that the minivan could also be used for in town transportation as well. Mr. Butler asked if it would be possible to replace some buses with minivans when those buses are due to be replaced. Director Snead stated that this may be something that can be done. During the transportation conference that Director Snead, Joy Hine, and China Lett attended earlier this week, micro transit was discussed. Micro Transit is a new service and works well in small communities. The services would be similar to the designated fixed route, but would not require a bus to run in a circle around town all day. For this, a vehicle with nine seats would be a great fit.

Mr. Butler asked if the County would pay \$23,000 for the transition of a part time driver to a full time driver. Director Snead informed the Board that this is correct, but would include the cost of benefits as well. Drivers have a starting salary of around \$13 per hour.

A motion to approve the FY 24 SCATS budget requests was made by Andy Kurtzman and seconded by Dorothy Tyson. The Board unanimously agreed and the motion was approved.

A motion to enter into executive session was made by Andy Kurtzman and seconded by Mollie Flowers. The motion passed unanimously and the Board entered into executive session.

#### Executive Session

- Pursuant to NCGS 143-318.11 (a)(6) To consider the qualifications, competence, performance, character, fitness, conditions of appointment, or conditions of initial employment of an individual public officer or employee or prospective public officer or employee; or to hear or investigate a complaint, charge, or grievance by or against an individual public officer or employee.

A motion was made by BJ Gibson and seconded by Mollie Flowers to reenter regular session and adjourn the meeting. All in favor.

Jessica Buehler, Clerk to the Board

Leon Butler, Board Chair

# Administrative Report

April 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 February is:
  - DSS 71%
  - Reentry 33%
  - SCATS 48%
- 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 February, \$616,731.24 of the \$698,155 county portion had been spent and \$218,750 (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. Part IV training is complete. **(Strategic Plan)**
- When comparing December 2022 payroll expenses to January 2023 payroll expenses there was a \$59,000 increase. County finance explained this was due to comp time payouts, resignation payouts, etc.

## Personnel Services

- The Department has eight vacancies, one SW II (Reentry), three SWIAT, two SW III, one IMC II, one IMV I (frozen). The turnover rate for FY 23 is 19% through the month of March compared to FY 22 agency wide turnover rate of 20%.
- Recruitment efforts for social work staff have been hurt by the change of social worker grades from the salary study. Social workers were lowered one grade, lowering starting salaries and the recruitment hiring range. This has already been questioned by applicants, reduced applications received, and resulted in an applicant not accepting a job offer.

Example of Change - SW IAT 51,971 to 49,685

Beginning salaries of surrounding counties:

Scotland: \$49,685

Bladen: \$50,778

Hoke: \$53,000 (In July)

Moore: \$52,569

Richmond: \$57,738

Robeson: \$53,064



- To continue improvement of the hiring process, reference forms were re-evaluated and now in use. Training methodologies were also reviewed and updated in February. **(Strategic Plan)**

### **Child Support**

- Child Support is meeting goals in all areas of self-assessment and incentive measures.
- The unit strives to collect \$100,000 on Show Cause Court Dates, a goal that they surpassed in February. As of March, the unit has collected a total of \$120,883. **(Strategic Plan completed)**
- 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 March, 28 cases have not had a payment in the first 90 days, 22 have had a show cause filed. The unit is at 79% of the goal. **(Strategic Plan)**
- The year started with 808 arrears cases without an arrears frequency. As of the end of March, the unit has reduced the number of cases by 178 with a goal of reducing by 50%. **(Strategic Plan)**

### **Economic Services:**

#### **Child Care**

- The Daycare unit currently serves 568 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 state budget forecasts increased rates for child care providers in the coming year.
- The Daycare unit is meeting MOU goals consistently for timeliness. Work is in process to improve accuracy.

#### **Food and Nutrition**

- The FNS unit is meeting MOU goals consistently.
- USDA approved a waiver to stop most FNS reviews through June 2023. This extends certification periods, waives interview requirements, and allows for telephonic signatures.
- The unit strives for a same day processing goal of 40% for expedited applications and a 12 day average for non expedited applications. During the month of March expedited applications were at 69% and non-expedite were at an average of 9 days. **(Strategic Plan)**

## **Family and Adult Medicaid**

- House Bill 76 - Medicaid Expansion passed but is not ready for immediate implementation, as it is tied to the state budget.
- The public health emergency is set to end May 11, 2023 - reviews for April and May 2023 will be extended in an effort to help counties meet the two month ahead requirement.
- Both Medicaid units continue to exceed timeliness requirements of the MOU.
- Medicaid Transportation to implement a paperless filing system. The system is scheduled for a demonstration this week. **(Strategic Plan)**
- Scotland County has been participating in the expansion of Recertification Straight-Through Processing (STP) since 1/1/23. There is no report available to determine how this may be decreasing the Medicaid workload.

## **Work First**

- The Work First unit is meeting MOU goals consistently

## **Program Integrity**

- The Program Integrity position has been filled and began training April 3rd in her new role.
- 100% of cases are being investigated timely.

## **Quality Assurance/Training**

- During the month of March, QA reviewed 142 files for accuracy and facilitated two group training sessions.
- 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 March 2023, 30% of social work time was coded to MAC. **(Strategic Plan)**

### **Children Services**

- April is Child Abuse Prevention Month - Activities include:
  - Child Abuse Ceremony and Proclamation
  - Recognition and Proclamation at County Commissioner Meeting
  - National Wear Blue Day
  - Facebook Posts
  - Educational Videos
  - WLNC Live on Main

- WEWO Radio Spotlight
- Recording of PSA
- Awareness at Parks N Rec Easter Egg Hunt
- Awareness at Reentry Day
- Awareness at Health Department Spring Fling
- Thank you to law enforcement, hospital, school hospital, local pediatricians
- Children services currently has several vacancies, three SWIAT, and two SW III. To assist with caseload requirements one Vanguard temporary staff and one contract staff began assisting last month. This is especially challenging, as all SW IAT vacancies are in investigations.
- Initiate 95% of all screens in CPS reports within required time frames. For March 2023, 100% 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 March 2023 repeat maltreatment is 17%. Case decisions are being reviewed to determine if these decisions are feeding into this number. **(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 March, 2023 the rate of permanency within 12 months is 43%. **(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 March, 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 March, 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 has begun monthly training with CSU staff and began monitoring files. **(Strategic Plan)**
- All social work documentation will be current within seven days. This continues to be an area of focus. Protected Time is also required on Fridays 8 am-12 pm for documentation. Supervisors are also working with staff individually to plan for documentation as required. **(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 2023 Reentry Conference was held April 3rd - April 5th in Charlotte, NC. Three Executive Committee members and a staff member attended.
- Reentry Month is in April 2023. Events include:
  - Reentry Day Community Event
  - Four community days of awareness
  - WLNC Live on Main
  - WEWO Radio Spotlight
  - Recognition and Proclamation at County Commissioner Meeting
  - Facebook Posts
- The Reentry program has one vacancy at this time for a Reentry Social Worker.

### **Scotland Area Transit System (SCATS)**

- SCATS ridership increased 16% from from the same period of fiscal year 2022. **(Strategic Plan)**
- On 12/19/22 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. Fixed line trips for April were down from March.
- Consideration of hiring without a CDL was approved by the Transportation Advisory Board (TAB). Qualifying was reviewed by Ed Johnson, county attorney and recommendations will be made to the Board of Commissioners in June.
- 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. Through February 2023 SCATS revenue was \$290,519 vs. SCATS expenditures were \$287,369. (Strategic Plan)

### **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.
- Medicaid based legislation required all Medicaid staff to have specific customer service criteria in messaging and responses by 4/1/23. All pieces of the requirement have been reviewed and are in place.

### **New DSS Initiatives**

- The leadership team will deploy a new virtual feedback option for staff who would like to provide feedback and suggestions anonymously. This is in addition to the existing anonymous suggestion box.

- The Department offered the first quarterly Self Care Lunch and Learn sessions facilitated by the county Employee Assistance Program on 9/14/22, 11/30/22, and 3/8/23. These sessions focus on self care, stress management, etc.
- 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, job descriptions, displayed throughout the agency, and have been worked 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