

## **Scotland County of Social Services Board**

**October 26, 2022**

### **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.*

**Board Members Present:** Leon Butler Board Chair, Dorothy Tyson Board Vice Chair, Andy Kurtzman, Mollie Flowers, Carol McCall

**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, Melissa Bennett, Income Maintenance Investigator

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

A motion to approve the agenda for the October 26, 2022 meeting, with the addition of an executive session, was made by Mollie Flowers and seconded by Andy Kurtzman. The Board unanimously approved and the agenda accepted.

A motion to approve the September 15, 2022 meeting minutes was made by Mollie Flowers and seconded by Andy Kurtzman. The Board unanimously agreed and the minutes were approved.

Director Snead introduced Melissa Bennett, Leadership Development participant, to the DSS Board. Mrs. Bennett is the Fraud Investigator at DSS. Attending a DSS Board meeting is a requirement of the Leadership Development Program.

### **Director Snead gave the Administrative Report**

#### **Please see the attached report**

Discussion from the report:

#### **Budget and Finance:**

After using the additional funds that were provided to the Reentry Program for salary and fringe, there is projected to be \$5,000.00 remaining. The Reentry Executive Committee will meet tomorrow and discussion on how to use the remaining funds will take place.

The Board will begin to see MOE spending on the November Administrative Report.

#### **Personnel:**

There are 7 vacancies and they are all in the process of being filled. They are in different parts of the hiring process right now. There are two new hires who have been through the SparkHire process. DSS leadership members were trained on SparkHire on October 25. SparkHire consists of pre-interview questions. Also, there are two questions that require a video response. The Department has contracted SparkHire for a year. Training also occurred on the interviewing and the hiring process. Although County Personnel is no longer a part of the DSS hiring process, Director Snead reached out to them in order to contact the County Attorney to check on the legality of SparkHire.

A discussion of panel interviewing ensued. Mrs. Tyson stated that many people may become nervous when submitting a video interview. She mentioned that the panel should contain supervisors, managers, and even employees, as each person may perceive information differently. Director Snead stated that there is a confidentiality issue with panel interviewing, especially if employees are involved. The Board is reminded that the pre-interview questions allow for an applicant to showcase their grammatical, mathematical, and written skills.

Mrs. Tyson requested that the board receive a report bi-annually or annually that includes the breakdown of vacancies. Director Snead acknowledged and agreed.

### **Day Care:**

Mr. Butler questioned the large increase in children that are receiving daycare services that occurred within the last month. Mrs. Lewellen stated that an increase had taken place, but not as dramatically as it may seem. The number of children receiving care last month was 631, not 564. The new number of children receiving care is 704.

Mr. Kurtzmas asked for clarification on how a daycare becomes subsidized. Director Snead stated in order for a daycare to become subsidized, they have to have a rating of four to five stars. This will allow them to be licensed for Smart Start or subsidy. A daycare can be subsidized and accept private pay simultaneously. Typically, the recipient has to be a resident of Scotland County. However, when the Department has foster children that are placed in another county, the Department will pay for their care.

### **Food and Nutrition:**

A waiver for a portion of reviews through December has been received from DHHS. Applications are not coming in as quickly as before, but there are more applications currently than the unit typically experiences. This is due to supplemental benefits still being offered. Director Snead stated that in the strategic plan, one of the Food and Nutrition goals focuses on same day applications being processed if all information accompanies the application. Last

month is the first month that they have come so close to meeting the goal. Kudos to them for being able to do this in the midst of everything they are working through.

**Family and Adult Medicaid:**

Medicaid expansion has been pushed back to April 2023. More people can apply and potentially be eligible for Medicaid. The Department is currently taking a closer look at how this is going to affect staffing and workload. The State, through NC FAST, now has an automatic system to push through some applications and reviews. About 35 percent were processed this way according to the last report.

**Children Services:**

The Board discussed the current epidemic of placing children in North Carolina. It is becoming increasingly more common for children that are coming into DSS care to stay a night, or several, at the agency. Director Snead discussed that there is a current issue with PRTF's rejecting children with behavioral issues, even when they have the room to board them. Currently, there is discussion with the state, who licenses the PRTFs, to investigate how they are able to turn away children they are qualified to board.

Director Snead explained that when children are staying overnight at the agency, there is a social worker present. An employee, who has volunteered to do so, will stay the night as well. This can be exhausting for the social workers as they are on rotation for this duty. Therefore, social workers are pleased that other employees are willing to help.

The Board has previously discussed a situation with a child that had been in the hospital. The hospital will no longer keep the child. Mrs. Stanton has worked with the hospital and they are willing to keep the child for one more week. The Department is working in conjunction with Eastpointe to avoid the hospital transporting the child to DSS at the end of that week. Director Snead has spoken with attorney Brandi Bullock in order to write a letter to the state, in conjunction with Eastpointe, to explain that this would be a liability. Social workers are not trained to deal with the behaviors of this child.

Mrs. Tyson asked if funding can be denied to the PRTF for this situation. Director Snead informed her that yes, funding can be denied. As of now, they receive \$10,000 a month for this child and they have stated they cannot keep her. This is an extreme case, but it is becoming more of an issue. North Carolina does have crisis beds that are available. Eastpointe assists in the search for placement. However, Director Snead is asking for more help as this becomes an increasing issue. The Department has created a spreadsheet to house placement efforts. For instance, the child previously described has a log of around 300 calls before placement was secured.

Currently, there are around 100 children in care. This number is slowly decreasing as several adoptions have been finalized. Some cases have been moved out of foster care as well. This unit is fully staffed and will be fully trained once two staff members finish training. Although there are four social work supervisor positions, one has recently been promoted to a program administrator. One supervisor is on leave. The Department is currently working to fill the vacant supervisor position within the next two weeks.

### **SCATS:**

Director Snead and Mrs. Hine are working on completion of a leadership training that was hosted by the Department of Transportation. The program required six days onsite, four of those from 8:30 am - 9:00 pm. To finish the program a group project and book presentation must be completed.

A motion to approve the Administrative Report was made by Andy Kurtzman and seconded by Dorothy Tyson. The Board unanimously agreed and the motion passed.

### **Unfinished Business**

#### **DSS Board Rules of Procedure**

No major changes have been made. However, the changes that have been suggested will allow the Board to be more modern and are highlighted in red. For example, the option for a virtual meeting has been suggested. The suggested changes are verbatim from a University of North Carolina of Chapel Hill: School of Government book. Director Snead stated that the suggested changes have been reviewed by an attorney.

A motion to approve the revised version of the DSS Board Rules of Procedure was made by Andy Kurtzman. Mollie Flowers seconded the motion. The Board unanimously agreed and the motion was approved.

Director Snead noted that the previous version will be saved. The new Rules of Procedure will be amended and dated for today's date, October 26, 2022.

### **New Business**

#### **SCATS Potential Redesign of Deviated Fixed Line**

With the current Deviated Fixed Line, SCATS is not pulling down all of the possible reimbursements. For FY 22, SCATS did not use 43% of their ROAP RGP funds. The proposal is to switch from a Deviated Fixed Line to an On Demand Service. As of now, there is a gap in services and the On Demand Service would close that gap. The gap in services is that if you are

not elderly or disabled, SCATS only offers to take you into town once a week from a central location. However, you have to be able to get to the bus stop.

Carol McCall suggested that instead of running two buses on the Deviated Fixed Route, take one of the buses off of that route and use it to make On Demand Service trips. Mrs. McCall's concern is that the Deviated Fixed Route has been available for 20 years. This suggestion would allow for citizens to adjust to the On Demand Service.

Mrs. Hine discussed the organization it takes to run the Deviated Fixed Route. With SCATS fully staffed drivers include 6 full time drivers and 1 part time drivers. While running the Deviated Fixed Route, it takes two full time drivers and one part time driver. The part time driver comes in everyday to cover the other two drivers lunches. Sometimes a line has to be canceled because we do not have back up if a rider is out. SCATS would be able to maximize time and mileage if we are able to weave in everyone on the same bus (EDTAP, Unemployment, Medical). If SCATS would continue to run the line, dedicated drivers would still be required. Doing this would mean that stops would be from one hour to two hours. We would also need to stop for lunch. There will be no reason to go out to Wagram, Laurel Hill, or Gibson once a week because they are able to use the On Demand Services.

Director Snead expressed concern over a hybrid model. It will cost more for SCATS to run a hybrid model. The Deviated Fixed Route would continue to cause SCATS to lose money. On the other hand, the On Demand Service is guaranteed money. If the wheels are moving on the bus, it is a funded trip. It does not matter if the trip is a medical trip or not. This would allow for SCATS to tap into funding that is currently not being accessed. Mr. Kurtzman asked if the On Demand Service would open up ridership to those that are not using SCATS for Medicaid or medical related trips. Director Snead informed him that this is correct.

Director Snead suggests surveying the current 23 riders of the Deviated Fixed Route to gain their perspective. This survey would ask if they would rather continue the current service or would they be interested in potentially being picked up/dropped off at their home.

Mr. Kurtzman suggested testing the On Demand Service. Director Snead stated that if the decision was hers alone, she would do so. Even though this is not a reduction in service, Director Snead feels most comfortable having a public hearing at the Commissioners Meeting to discuss this. Director Snead proposed the following question to the Board: "Do the benefits to our county citizens and residents outweigh the person that may have to adhere to a different schedule?" Mr. Kurtzman expressed that this would be an opportunity to help all residents in the county, not just those that fit into the current populations. Mrs. Flowers expressed that she would be most comfortable with a hybrid model.

Mrs. Hine stated that there are families or single parents that are on Medicaid and receive Food and Nutrition services. They are able to receive transportation to their job, as well as medical appointments. However, they cannot get a ride into town because they live in a rural area and do not have transportation to get to the bus stop once a week. Currently, those people are not being offered adequate transportation.

Director Snead advised against putting a timeframe on the hybrid model. She expressed concern of having an empty bus running if a hybrid model was used. If the Board is comfortable with moving forward,. there is time to get a public hearing set for the November Commissioners Meeting.

A motion was made for Director Snead to move forward with a public hearing notice for the SCATS hybrid model by Andy Kurtzman. This motion was seconded by Mollie Flowers. The Board unanimously agreed and the motion was passed.

A motion to adjourn was made by Mr. Kurtzman. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Tyson. The motion was passed and the meeting was adjourned. The Board did not enter Executive Session.

Jessica Buehler, Clerk to the Board

Leon Butler, Board Chair