

Scotland County Department of Social Services Board

April 21, 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: Board Chair Leon Butler, Board Vice Chair Dorothy Tyson, Carol McCall, John Ferguson (Via Phone Call)

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

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

A motion was made by Carol McCall to approve the agenda for the April 21, 2022 Board meeting. Dorothy Tyson seconded the motion. The Board unanimously passed the motion to approve the agenda for April 21, 2022.

Open Forum

- None

A motion to approve the minutes from the March 17, 2022 Board meeting was made by John Ferguson and seconded by Carol McCall. The motion passed unanimously and the minutes accepted.

Director Snead gave the Administrative Report for the month of April.

Please see the attached report.

Discussion from the Administrative Report:

Budget and Finance:

Mr. Butler asked if the federal government pays for most of the SCATS budget. Director Snead stated that the county matched twenty percent of the funding that is received from both federal and state grants. It was also discussed that although the percentage the county used to match was ten percent, it is now twenty percent, and has been since the department acquired SCATS. The DSS, SCATS, and Reentry budgets are not combined and are separate budgets that are

submitted. Although the budget estimates are well done, there are some factors, such as gas, that the prices cannot always be accurately factored in.

Mrs. McCall asked if the medicaid portion of SCATS is also included in the budget. Director Snead stated that yes, that is also included in the SCATS budget estimate With Medicaid Managed Care, the broker pays SCATS to drive patients to their appointments. The Medicaid portion was budgeted cautiously as it has been difficult this year. Reimbursements are coming in, but not in a timely manner. Mr. Butler asked what two companies are currently used in regards to Medicaid Managed Care. Director Snead informed Mr. Butler that ModivCare and OnCall (which will be rebranding soon) are the names of the two companies. Director Snead also informed the Board that if a better breakdown of the SCATS budget is needed, she can provide the Board with that.

Mrs. McCall asked if there are any riders that there is no source of reimbursement for. She stated that if there is a gap in services, it would be those that are not above the age of 60, not disabled, or live in the Wagram, Gibson, or Laurel Hill areas. To provide further explanation, if there was a caller that lived in one of those areas, services would not be provided to them unless the services were needed on a day in which SCATS goes into that area to provide services.

Personnel:

There are currently six vacancies in the agency.

Spark Hire, which is a service that allows candidates to answer pre interview questions via recording a video, was discussed. Director Snead had spoken with the county risk management attorney about the legality of potentially using this service. The Department currently practices a blind hiring process, which allows for factors such as race to be hidden until the interview stage. The risk management attorney found no issues with the legality of using this service.

Mrs. McCall asked for clarification on how the Department is now substantially equivalent. Director Snead informed the Board that the Department is now substantially equivalent in areas of classification and compensation. Mrs. McCall stated that she believed that being substantially equivalent would also help with the hiring process. Director Snead stated that the Department is not quite there yet, but will hopefully be soon.

Child Care:

Mrs. Tyson asked if the Department is advertising the availability of daycare services. Director Snead stated that the Department is currently advertising this information. Mrs. McCall expressed surprise that the daycare money had not been spent. She was curious if the need for daycare had been impacted by the pandemic. Director Snead informed Mrs. McCall that there are actually

more children served by the daycare unit than ever before. Spending seems to not be as high due to the additional allocations. This is a statewide trend now.

Food and Nutrition:

The unit currently has a vacancy. Also, two of the staff are undergoing training and do not have a caseload at the moment. With that being said, the unit was recently commended in an OST meeting due to their hard work. The unit had 918 reviews in March, with only 39 remaining in April undone.

Adult Services

The Department is now the Guardian of the Estate for three wards. Training for the needed staff has begun. Brandi Bullock and the agency's APR has provided training. Mrs. McCall stated that this may be a function of the Clerk of Court and advised Director Snead to reach out to Phillip McRae. Director Snead stated that there are forms that have to be filed with the court that the clerk of court reviews, but she is not sure if the other work would be their responsibility as well. Director Snead stated that she will discuss this with someone to see if they are willing to take the responsibility over. Mrs. Tyson mentioned that she would think this would be a duty that the county attorney would be responsible for. Director Snead stated that although the county attorney would not be paid for taking on the duty, they would be entitled to take a percentage of the estate proceeds for themselves. Director Snead will discuss this with County Manager, Kevin Patterson, to see if this is a duty that County Attorney, Ed Johnston, could potentially acquire.

Child Welfare:

Currently, there is one outstanding Social Worker I/AT that is being filled. All other positions have been filled at this time. There are currently two Vanguard social workers in the foster care unit. Mrs. Stanton stated that the unit is grateful for the pay increase that was recently granted. Two social workers have rescinded their resignations since the increase occurred. Even though those two workers would have made more money in other counties, they decided to stay because of the working environment as well. Director Snead stated that money is not the only factor in retention. Training and treating people well is also a factor in retaining staff.

SCATS:

After a month of running the Deviated Fixed Line full time, it was noted that riders are on the buses too long. The Department has studied the route to reduce ride time. Now, the public will have to learn how to read the bus schedule as they may use one line to get to their first destination and the other line to get to the stop closest to home again in a quicker time frame. Mrs. Tyson has suggested that a Facebook tutorial of how to read bus routes be created. Director Snead stated that this would be a good idea.

New DSS Initiatives:

SWAP now has the ability to meet both dental and pharmaceutical needs. Mrs. McCall asked if \$400,000 was a realistic number in terms of spending. Director Snead stated that It would be possible to take \$100,000 back and reallocate the funds to another project. Mrs. McCall stated that she would mention this at the next Board of Commissioners budget meeting next week. Director Snead suggested using the \$100,000 to fund the renovation of the public restrooms.

A motion was made to approve the administrative report by Mrs. McCall and seconded by Mr. Ferguson. The motion passed unanimously and the administrative report was approved.

Action Agenda (needing vote)

2022 CCPT Member

Dorothy Tyson volunteered to continue to represent the Social Services Board during CCPT meetings. The board approved.

Strategic Agenda

Proposed Budget Requests

Director Snead informed the board that once Kevin Patterson, County Manager, makes contact about the proposed budget request, she will inform the board about approvals.

NCACBSS Business Meeting

This meeting took place at the beginning of April. There were no Scotland County Social Services Board members present.

A motion to adjourn was made by Mr. Ferguson and seconded by Mrs. McCall. The motion passed and the meeting was adjourned.

Jessica Buehler, Clerk to the Board

Leon Butler, Board Chairman

Administrative Report

April 2022

****COVID reporting/updates will no longer be included in ongoing reports, unless new developments and interventions occur**

Budget and Finance

- The FY 22 DSS budget is \$8,119,375 and the SCATS budget is \$499,839. The DSS budget spending is 68% through the end of March.

- Salary has been under budgeted again for FY 22. For the fiscal year, through March, the lapse salary is \$6,568.
- Social Work staff received a 10% salary increase in March 2022. In addition, all positions at DSS were moved into year two of the Scotland County salary study.
- The FY 23 DSS budget amount is estimated at \$8,860,455 requiring \$2,612,881 in county funds. The FY 23 SCATS budget amount is estimated at \$480,350 requiring an approximate 20% match (\$96,070) in county funding. The Reentry budget is in mid year, as the budget runs from September to August each year.
- Munis implementation began 2/1/22. Training continues to use all aspects of the program. Several processes are not being used in Munis. **(Strategic Plan)**
- Two payee accounts are over the required threshold. Measures have been taken to stop payment and reduce the reserve. **(Strategic Plan)**
- Budget training for DSS was held in March with the Director and finance in attendance. **(Strategic Plan Completed)**

Personnel Services

- The Department has four vacancies, two IMC II's, one IM Investigator II (frozen), one SW IAT, The FY 22 turnover rate through the end of March was 16%. The FY 21 agency wide turnover rate was 31%.
- Paperless personnel files through Neo Gov cannot be funded in the DSS budget. Personnel has begun to scan recruitment files into Neo Gov. **(Strategic Plan)**

Child Support

- Due to COVID-19, the Child Support non-cooperation sanctions have been waived, creating a back-log of cases that agents cannot work on and cannot close. Scotland County has 145 cases that are not cooperating to establish paternity and/or a support order.
- Child Support has completed the training manual. The training manual will be used for all incoming staff. **(Strategic Plan Completed)**
- During FY 22, the unit will focus on increasing the number of cases with a payment to arrears by 300 cases. At the end of March, the unit has added an arrears frequency to 207 additional cases since July 1st. **(Strategic Plan)**
- Using the Order vs. Distribution report, the unit is identifying cases that disbursements do not match the court ordered payment. At this time 99% of cases match. The year started with 261 cases identified. At the end of March, only 39 cases remain. **(Strategic Plan)**
- Scotland County is exceeding pandemic goals in all areas of self-assessment/incentive measures. It is also exceeding the pre-pandemic goals in all areas of self-assessment and exceeding the statewide average in seven of the nine self-assessment categories.

Economic Services:

Child Care

- COVID - 19 Response: No face to face interviews are being conducted.

- The current combined spending coefficient is 84%. In November, Scotland County was given an additional \$448,665 allocation, significantly lowering the spending coefficient.
- The Daycare unit currently serves 441 children. The waiting list has been depleted at this time.
- Parent fees are waived through June 2022. The payment for parent fees will not be removed from the subsidy allocation.
- The Child Care unit is meeting MOU goals consistently. **(Strategic Plan)**

Food and Nutrition

- Review work has begun again in FNS cases. Only those cases certified for six months with the certification period ending during the months of January, February, or March and the FNS and without a previous extension will be reviewed.
- The FNS unit is meeting MOU goals consistently. **(Strategic Plan)**
- The FNS unit will again work to strive for same-day processing. In March, 30% of expedited applications were processed the same day and 9% of non expedited applications were processed the same day. **(Strategic Plan)**

Family and Adult Medicaid

- COVID - 19 Response: No face to face interviews are being conducted. Medicaid benefits cannot be terminated unless a person moves out of state, dies, or volunteers to be removed. Individuals who are required to pay fees/premiums for NC Health Choice or Health Coverage for Workers with Disabilities (HCWD) are exempt from this requirement until further notification.
- REDA Audit AIP has begun. The units are in the fourth month of case review, reviewing March cases.
- Both Medicaid units continue to exceed timeliness requirements of the MOU. **(Strategic Plan)**
- NEMT is not located in NC FAST. Laserfiche has been contacted regarding a paperless project for this program. **(Strategic Plan)**

Work First

- COVID - 19 Response: No face to face interviews are being conducted. No sanctions can be implemented for lack of cooperation with Child Support and/or non completion of work requirements. Terminations of cash assistance for lack of compliance and end of time clock are suspended through the “end of the month in which the COVID-19 public health emergency...is lifted.”
- The Work First unit is meeting MOU goals consistently **(Strategic Plan)**

Program Integrity

- COVID - 19 Response: Collection of FNS and Work First overpayments has been temporarily suspended. Collection of FNS and Work First newly established overpayments has been temporarily delayed. Clients can choose to make payments.

- All Program Integrity MOU goals are being met consistently. **(Strategic Plan)**
- Program Integrity has begun work on becoming paperless in the coming year. **(Strategic Plan)**

Quality Assurance/Training

- Medicaid Transportation and Energy program training modules have been developed and are being used to train new IMC I staff. **(Strategic Plan Completed)**

Social Work Services:

Adult Services

- COVID - 19 Response: Adult Services is operating normally without any practice changes. All staff have various methods of PPE available through the agency.
- The Adult Services unit has been awarded three new wards, including the duty of estate guardian. The Department is working with the Division and attorneys to learn this process.
- New MAC coding allows for increased daysheet use and reimbursement. A 5.4% increase can be noted in the new fiscal year after the first six months of coding. **(Strategic Plan)**

Children Services

- COVID - 19 Response: Child Welfare is operating normally without any practice changes. All staff have various methods of PPE available through the agency.
- FY 22 turnover rate for the unit is 35% (eight resignations) through March 2022. The turnover rate for the unit at the end of FY 21 was 51%.
- Foster care social workers continue to be over the caseload standard. Foster care staff have approximately 20 cases each, caseload standard being 10. Two part time temporary staff are working as of 3/15/22. There is a concern for providing required services to all children in care.
- Court delays and the high average of continuances continues to keep children in foster care and other cases from closure. The Scotland Permanency Collaborative has met two times to work on barriers to permanence and meets again this month.
- The unit is working to improve four goal areas: 12 months to Permanency is 44% achieved, Timely Case Decisions is 87% achieved, and filing petitions timely is 80% achieved, providing more LINKS activities. **(Strategic Plan)**

Work First Employment

- COVID 19 Response: All in person visits are waived.
- 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

- Volunteers from the Executive Committee met and reviewed the by-laws and made changes. The vote has not been completed.
- The Executive Committee and staff are planning the quarterly stakeholders event on April 28, 2022 at the Morgan complex. The theme for this year's event is "Reentry: On this Side".
- Reentry received the first of two \$25,000 additional allocations for program use through 6/30/23.

Scotland Area Transit System (SCATS)

- SCATS began full implementation of the new fixed deviated line on March 1st. After one month of the new line, route stop times are being reviewed for improvement of services. **(Strategic Plan)**.
- 114 new riders have been signed up for regular ridership and Employment trips have increased by 500% from the beginning of the fiscal year.
- The Department is gathering information to begin the process of analyzing the cost per each SCATS trip. Information is required from DOT and county finance. **(Strategic Plan)**
- Several billing cycles have been completed with the two Medicaid Managed Care providers. This process is not fluid at this time and payment is being received as invoiced. **(Strategic Plan)**
- The SCATS Transportation Advisory Board is recruiting members to represent the community.

Other Impacts on DSS:

- The Department is working with IT to correct the voicemail directory. There are concerns this cannot be corrected, having an impact on customer service and provision of services.

New DSS Initiatives

- The 2021-2022 Leadership Development finished the application process and has begun regular meetings and projects. Presentations to the leadership team will begin in April 2022.
- Beginning 2/1/2020 the Department kicked off a customer service campaign - STARS. S-Service, T-Trust, A-Accountability, R-Respect. This continues with painting of the building and revamping the lobby, also creating a "kids corner" in the lobby. Customer Service surveys received are positive feedback.
- The Scotland Wellness Assistance Program began in February 2022. At this time prescription and dental needs can be met. The Department works to get MOA's for optometry and audiological care.
- DSS leadership team hosted another closed day in March. This allowed staff to enjoy team building activities and staff were provided lunch.
- The county and DSS has been working with Spectrum for several months to upgrade the Wifi in the building and the security cameras. Cameras will also be installed to monitor the SCATS bus parking. This project is ongoing.

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)

SWAP - Scotland Wellness Assistance Program

PPE - Personal Protective Equipment

PSNAP - Pandemic Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program

WFFA - Work First Family Assistance