

April 28, 2026

The Alamance County Social Services Board met with its regular monthly meeting on this date. The meeting was held at HSC Building (1st Floor) 319 N. Graham Hopedale Rd., Burlington NC with the following in attendance were: Ms. Tyronna Hooker, DSS Board Vice-Chair; Dr. Darrell Warner, DSS Board Member; Ms. Candy Snyder, DSS Board Member; Commissioner Ed Priola, DSS Board Member; Ms. Candice J. Gobble, DSS Director; Ms. Virginia Hunker, DSS Business Officer; Ms. Lynette Wellons, Assistant Director of Services; Ms. Jamie Hamlett, DSS Attorney; and Ms. Sherry Hook, Alamance County Assistant County Manager were present.

Ms. Tyronna Hooker, DSS Board Vice-Chair, opened the meeting.

Public Comment:

None

Consent Agenda: Tyronna Hooker, DSS Board Vice-Chair

March 2026 items on the consent agenda approved. Ms. Candy Snyder, DSS Board Member, made the motion to approve and was seconded by Dr. Darrell Warner, DSS Board Member.

Staff Reports:

Fiscal: Virginia Hunker

Expenditures – March 2026			
Year to Date through March 31, 2026	Expenditure Target Rate = 75%		
ACCOUNT DESCRIPTION	Budget FY 25-26	Expenditures	Spending %
SALARIES & BENEFITS	\$ 18,035,875.00	\$ 12,677,838.00	70%
OPERATIONS	\$ 1,927,898.00	\$ 1,352,547.00	70%
SERVICES	\$ 8,869,156.00	\$ 3,239,758.00	37%
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	\$ 28,832,929.00	\$ 17,270,143.00	60%

Revenues – March 2026			
Year to Date through March 31, 2026	Revenue Target Rate = 67%		
ACCOUNT DESCRIPTION	Budget FY 25-26	Expenditures	Spending %
FEDERAL	\$ 12,460,823.00	\$ 9,575,452.00	77%
STATE	\$ 1,397,026.00	\$ 1,013,567.00	73%
COUNTY	\$ 107,596.00	\$ 53,521.00	50%
TOTAL REVENUES	\$ 13,965,445.00	\$ 10,642,540.00	76%

Ms. Virginia Hunker reported DSS is trending low for expenditures and trending high for revenues.

Fraud: See report –

Unit	March 2026	March 2025	Current YTD	Prior Fiscal Year
Fraud	\$16,092.29	\$22,380.95	\$239,864.61	\$254,191.39
Fraud Referrals Received	43	15	58	171

Services: Lynette Wellons, Assistant Director of Services-

Child Welfare:

No Updates – Please see Social Services Dashboard:

- Interviews continue for vacant positions in social work positions.
- Caretaker support (training and education to support family members caring for loved ones)
- Challenges with Healthy Blue Care Together serving foster children
- Continued inadequate placement availability (children and adults)
- April is Child Abuse Prevention Month. DSS and community agencies have planted pinwheel gardens in recognition of the month. The historic courthouse is also lit up with blue lights at night for the month of April.
- May is National Foster Care Month. We will host a filed day for our foster children and their placements, as well as focusing attention on the need for recruitment of new foster families within the county.
- Preparation work has begun for child welfare ongoing services integration into PathNC. The entry date is December 1, 2026.

Child Support –

Unit	March 2026	March 2025	Current YTD	Prior Fiscal Year
Child Support Collections	\$1,002,931.84	\$910,523.17	\$8,098,617.94	\$8,057,552.53

Adult Services -

- No report.

Economic Support: Danae Pickard, Economic Services Division Director

- All Energy Programs have wrapped up. All money has been distributed.

- NC will vote on Medicaid funding bill. This measure is designed to prevent the program from running out of money before the end of the fiscal year, as Medicaid was projected to exhaust its funds.
- Created a pre-employment assessment for Economic Services to assess skills before gaining skill set for potential new staff. New hires continue to struggle with grasping the complex policies of Economic Services programs while also managing the high daily workload required to meet the time standards outlined in MOU.
- Expanded verification and documentation requirements coming with H.R.1 is exposing critical gaps in DSS technology. We have noticed some updates in NCFast to help with case processing to help ease administrative burden, but the current systems still face challenges keeping pace with growing complexities. The Counties are asking the State for further investment in automation, system upgrades and improved data-sharing to maintain compliance and reduce workload.

Operations – Director Candice J. Gobble

Administrative Support/Personnel: Candice Gobble

Director Gobble reported:

Metric	Current Month
Total Filled Positions	204
Total Vacancies	35
New Hires	12
Separations	6
Internal Transfers	0

Director’s Report – Candice J. Gobble, Director–

Director Gobble provided the following updates:

- Director Gobble reported VAYA plan has been submitted by County Attorney Stevens. We continue to wait for a response from VAYA.
- Director Gobble reported we met with County Manager to present DSS budget last week with requests we presented at Board meeting. We look forward to County Manager recommended budget for County on Monday, May 18, 2026, at 6:30pm.
- Director Gobble shared with Board Members she has worked on Bylaws of Board regarding rules and procedures as it relates to SOG book. Director Gobble will gather information and present to board members with new statutes and rules and procedures.

- Director Gobble asked board members to look over the new manual and give any feedback after the May board meeting, if needed.

New Business: Workforce Experience & Service Delivery

Director Candice Gobble presented the Workforce Experience & Service Delivery: Understanding the Impact of Experience and Workforce Capacity.

Director Gobble added we tend to talk about DSS vacancies, but today's presentation will shift to discuss more about the overall workforce. We began these discussions while preparing for H.R.1 and expanded with broader conversations about units who have experienced high turnover, looking at the experience levels of those teams.

Workforce Capacity Develops Over Time:

- New staff require training and supervision (*18 – 24 months to fully develop skills & operate independently*).
- Increased supervisory and peer support needs
- Overall unit capacity is lower with less experience
- Reduced independent case capacity early on
- Slower progression to full productivity

Workforce Snapshot by Program:

This snapshot is not a measure of performance but simply an overview of how experience levels are distributed across our program areas.

Program Area	Experience Level	Vacancy Level	Overall Risk
FNS Intake	 Low	 Low	 Moderate
FNS Ongoing	 High	 Low	 Stable
F&C Medicaid Intake	 High	 Low	 Stable
F&C Medicaid Ongoing	 Mixed	 Low	 Moderate
Adult Medicaid	 High	 Low	 Stable
Child Welfare Assessments	 Low	 High	 High Risk
Child Welfare In-Home	 Low	 High	 High Risk
Child Welfare Foster Care	 Low	 High	 High Risk
Adult Services (APS)	 Very Low	 Some	 High Risk
Guardianship	 Mixed	 Some	 Moderate

- Green = High Experience/Stability
- Yellow = Mixed
- Red = Low Experience/High Vacancy

What this Looks Like in Practice:

- Cases often assigned to new staff
- Staff developing critical decision-making skills
- Increased need for supervision
- Slower case progression
- Greater demand for experienced staff

Why Workforce Stability Matters:

Stability within our workforce directly impacts how services are delivered.

- Experience Builds Over Time
- Reduces Training & Supervision Demands
- Stability Improves Consistency
- Supports Stronger Service Outcomes

Operational Impact:

- Increased supervision and oversight
- Slower case processing
- Risk of inconsistency in decisions
- Strain in experienced staff
- Greater impact on high-risk areas

Rebuilding Workforce Capacity:

- Stabilizing staffing in high-impact areas
- Strengthening onboarding and early development
- Expanding mentoring and supervisory support
- Building internal experience over time
- Creating a resilient, sustainable workforce

Key Takeaways:

- Experience impacts service quality
- Capacity develops over time
- Stability strengthens outcomes for the community

Question/Answer Session:

Question: What's your vacancy number today?

- We currently have 31 vacancies. We do have 5 in the hiring process.

Question: Do you have a Peer-to-Peer program?

- We currently do not have a formal peer-to-peer program. In some units, we promote "shadowing" to see the day-to-day process.

Question: Do you have a profile of applicant who does not show up for interviews?

- We know there are younger applicants for Social Work positions (currently out of college and/or graduating). Most positions require bachelor's degrees for all Social Work positions. But, for Economic Services, High School diploma meets the qualifications. We do use "Work Against" to attribute for degrees that are not in Social Work but qualify due to bachelor's degrees. But there are a lot of counties who will not use "work against".

Question: What's the risk that you discussed in the workforce snapshot?

- The risk could be liability in case decisions and there could be a financial risk in Economic Services due to audits and paybacks.

Question: What's the typical span of time for SW where there is low risk?

- For Assessment, at least 2 years to do the work to achieve the experience.

Question: Do you feel like you will ever be fully staffed?

- With the nature of the work, burn out and managing time wisely, it's very difficult to answer that staff will staff two years.

Question: Have you ever tried to combine teams – one SW does the assessment and the other does the paperwork?

- We have tried similar model – SW take the report and then pass the report to another worker to finish the case – it did not work because we needed all trained in rotation. Staff would prefer to "buddy up" especially in those crisis cases, we just don't have enough experience staff to do so.

Question: How do you lower the stress level?

- With PATHNC, staff have reported that this system is more efficient with paperwork and lowers the stress level of making sure all paperwork is completed. The system will not allow staff to go to the next step if information is not submitted.

Question: Are you able to use AI for documentation?

- No, due to confidentiality it would be difficult to try to use AI.

Question: When you come to DSS in an entry level position, how long do you have to wait to move up in leadership positions?

- Normally once staff are moved into leadership positions they rarely leave. Some recent retirements and staff moving to another County opened two positions in Economic Services. In the new strategic plan, we have created an "Ambassador Program". Economic Services we currently have a training position which is a step towards leadership due to evaluating new staff in the first months of hire.

Question: What's the starting salary for social work position?

- For Child Welfare, approximately \$56k a year.

Question: What are the reasons why Economic Services staff leave?

- The volume of work, often go to other Counties to make more money and already training, benefits are beyond our control, some feel they are not appreciated within the County due to “longevity” is not one of the current benefits for those veteran staff.

Announcements:

None

Adjournment -

The next board meeting is 12:00 pm **Tuesday, May 26, 2026,** at DSS – Professional Board Room located on the 1st Floor at 319 N. Graham Hopedale Rd., Burlington NC.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 1:10pm. Motion was made by Candy Snyder, DSS Board Member and second by Commissioner Ed Priola, DSS Board Member, to adjourn the meeting.

Respectfully Submitted:

Carmen L. Morrow

Date Approved: _____