

January 28, 2025

The Alamance County Social Services Board met for 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: Mr. Timothy Britt, DSS Board Chair; Dr. Darrell “Bud” Warner, DSS Board Member; Ms. Tyronna Hooker, DSS Board Vice-Chair; Commissioner Ed Priola, DSS Board Member; Ms. Candice J. Gobble, DSS Director; Ms. Danae Pickard, Economic Services Division Director; Ms. Virginia Hunker, DSS Business Officer; Mr. Robert Ring, DSS HR Director; Ms. Jamie Hamlett, DSS Attorney and Mr. Robert Linens, Adult Social Worker were present.

Mr. Timothy Britt, DSS Chair opened the meeting.

Public Comment:

None

Staff Retirement:

Director Gobble acknowledged Robert Linens, Adult Social Worker who is retiring at the end of January. Director Gobble presented Mr. Linens with a certificate of accomplishment for his outstanding service with Alamance County Social Services from December 1, 2005 – January 31, 2025 (19 years of service). Director Gobble thanked Mr. Linens for his tireless efforts, unwavering support and dedication to DSS mission.

Timothy Britt, DSS Board Chair thanked Mr. Linens on behalf of DSS Board for his service to the citizens of Alamance County.

Oath of Office:

Carmen Morrow, Clerk to DSS Board administered Oath of Office for Commissioner Ed Priola, Alamance County Commissioner.

Commissioner Ed Priola provided brief background to board members. Commissioner Priola shared his background as a professor and values as a County Commissioner.

Consent Agenda: Timothy Britt, DSS Board Chair

Consent Agenda approved for October/November board meeting. Motion made by Dr. Darrell Warner, DSS Board Member and seconded by Ms. Tyronna Hooker, DSS Board Vice-Chair.

Staff Reports:

Fiscal: Virginia Hunker

	DECEMBER 2024	% OF BUDGET	PRIOR YTD	% OF BUDGET
REVENUES	\$5,316,767.00	43%	\$5,825,403.00	52%
EXPENDITURES	\$10,473,503.00	39%	\$9,995,390.00	40%

Ms. Hunker reported revenues always run a month behind. Ms. Hunker discussed the FY 25' – 2nd Quarter Financial Report distributed to board members. The overall revenues are at 43% - we are 41.6% at target. And, for expenditures we are 39% with 50% as the target.

Ms. Hunker reported economic services is currently being reimbursed at an average of 69%. Note: Economic Services is uncapped funding with Medicaid federal reimbursement is 75% per case and Food & Nutrition reimbursement for every case is 50%.

Ms. Hunker also discussed line items as it relates to Child Welfare VAYA funds. We are currently being reimbursed on an average of 58%. Note: The numbers are slightly skewed due to receiving additional funding. These funds are extremely beneficial from VAYA and limit County funds for all eligible expenses as it relates to Child Welfare. YTD VAYA funds used in lieu of county funds are \$140,519.

Ms. Hunker reported last quarter report the State announced they would continue bridge funding for the remainder of the fiscal year. This was achieved by the State reallocating emergency placement funds previously allocated to counties. Due to reallocation, Alamance County DSS funds were reduced by \$14,000, but we will receive reimbursement through bridge funding. This means that we will receive “Gap” funding for children that are Title IV-E foster care eligible. *This is an uncapped funding source for day sheets and maintenance payments. Counties are reimbursed 82% of maintenance payments for IV-E eligible children, compared to 50% for children who are not.* These funds are closely monitored by Child Welfare Program Manager who keeps a list of children that are in congregate care and will make decisions based on the best interest and well-being of the child.

Ms. Hunker reported Adult Services is being reimbursed at an average of 36%. This is due to capped funding sources being lower for adult services than for child welfare. However, there is an uncapped funding source that is available for Adult Services when client is eligible, MAC (Medicaid Administrative Claiming) reimbursement funding. Adult Services Program Manager ensures that MAC funding is used as often as possible to pull down all available funding. MAC funds have been expanded into SA-IH which will bring additional revenue going forward.

Budget Classification Totals as of December 31, 2024.

Revenues		Expenditures	
Federal	\$4,368,511	Staffing	\$7,990,816
State	\$ 401,345	Operational	\$ 501,946
County	\$ 546,910	Services	\$1,980,741
Total	\$5,316,767	Total	\$10,476,503

Lapse Salary as of 12/31/2024	Comp time costs as of 12/31/2024	Overtime Paid Out as of 12/31/2024	Contract Employee Payout as of 12/31/2024
\$454,436	\$64,001	\$39,717	\$47,382

The budget for FY26 is currently in the process of being carefully prepared, with a thorough review of projected financials and resource allocations. Once finalized, the proposed budget will be presented to DSS board for discussion and approval during the Board meeting in March.

Director Gobble added we will meet with County Management regarding the budget process this month.

Fraud: See report –

Unit	December 2024	December 2023	Current YTD	Prior Fiscal Year
Fraud	\$14,479.16	\$18,655.48	\$193,325.95	\$119,539.19

Services – Ms. Lynette Wellons/Assistant Director of Services -

Director Gobble reported for Assistant Director Wellons who is currently at NC State at job fair to recruit new social workers.

Flyers were distributed to DSS Board Members with pictures from the Annual Foster Care Christmas event and Guardianship Christmas event.

Director Gobble announced National Training and Development Curriculum (NTDC) Foster Parent Training will begin on Tuesday, February 18, 2025 at 6pm. This training is designed to help learn how potential foster parents can be successful as foster parents and help make a decision if foster care is the right fit for families. There are five meetings. Attendance at every session is mandatory.

Child Support – (Statistical Report Information) – see report.

Unit	December 2024	December 2023	Current YTD	Prior Fiscal Year
Child Support	\$899,882.95	\$856,883.22	\$5,441,010.66	\$5,291,207.05

Economic Support: Ms. Danae Pickard

- Energy – LIEAP (Low-Income Energy Assistance) applications continue to be received. We will most likely be out of funds by the middle of February. There are several counties within the State that were out of money in January.
- Effective January 2025 - We will house an outpost position at May Memorial Library and/or Graham Public library on the 4th Wednesday. We will switch every other month to assist community members with applying for DSS benefits and/or answer questions. The time range is from 1pm – 5pm. The first date at May Memorial will be January 29, 2025.
- Over 27k applications were submitted and entered for Economic Services for 2024 for Medicaid and/or FNS benefits.

Question: Have you received any more applications due to winter weather?

We continue to receive LIEAP applications. There are limits that are approved based on eligibility information and the amount of funding on hand.

Operations – Director Candice J. Gobble

Administrative Support/Personnel: Robert Ring

See Statistical Report – as of December 31, 2024

Vacancies	36
New Hires	4
Interagency Transfers	0
Resignations	2

As of January 28, 2025 – Alamance County DSS has 28 job openings. There are (14) in Economic Services.

Mr. Ring reported applications received in 2024 are as follows:

- 2093 applications received
- 1132 were sent to Program Managers
- 215 interviewed
- 82 hired

The applications received are checked for basic skills and qualifications and passed to program managers to look and see if these applicants are a good fit for the agency. We have a hiring committee that is charged with helping supervisors/program managers look for the “right fit”.

Question: What are the vacancies?

Director Gobble reported DSS has 238 employees and we have encountered multiple vacancies within Economic Services and Child Welfare.

Question: How many of the 82 hired are still employed?

There are at least 75% of the 82 still employed with Alamance County DSS.

Action: *Mr. Ring will compile information for next board meeting to report regarding how many employees are still here who were hired in 2024.*

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

Department of Health and Human Services announced new Child Welfare plan called CFSP – Children and Families Specialty plan. The plan is a new single, statewide NC Medicaid Managed Care health plan that will provide Medicaid-enrolled children, youth and their families currently and formerly served by the child welfare system with seamless, integrated and coordinated health care.

The health plan will operate statewide, ensuring members can access the health care services they need, including mental health care and continue to work with their doctors as placements may move them across the state. To implement the health plan, NC DHHS will work with Blue Cross and Blue Shield who will manage the health plan under the name Healthy Blue Care Together. The plan will go live December 2025.

Director Gobble reported DHHS and Department of Social Services MOU will continue to be monitored. The Division held off with strict monitoring due to COVID exceptions. As of January 2025, the MOU will be monitored and counties will be held accountable for months not met according to MOU guidelines. If performance measures are not met for 3 consecutive months or goals not met for 5 goals in the course of the fiscal year, DSS can be placed on corrective action plans.

Question: What does that mean?

Director Gobble replied it means if goals are not met, funding could be held from the State, corrective action could be put in place until goals are met and or State can come in and run DSS until all goals are met.

Director Gobble reported on PATH NC (Partnership and Technology Hub for North Carolina) is a technology platform for NC Child Welfare staff that will support their efforts in promoting the safety, permanency and well-being of children and families. PATH NC will streamline data collection with an intuitive, user-friendly and mobile friendly interface. The system will integrate critical information throughout the full life of each case.

Alamance Co. DSS has been fortunate to be able to inform the Division of any issues and/or suggestions for PATH NC. We have also been fortunate enough to be able to send staff to trainings and be able to work with policies. Alamance County DSS will go live with this system on September 2025. This will only be for Child Welfare Intake and Assessments.

Director Gobble announced we are rolling out Self-Care Initiatives to staff to encourage self-care and wellness. VAYA provided self-care training for DSS Social Workers.

New Business: Confidentiality/Ethics/Conflict of Interest Presentation

Jamie Hamlett, DSS Attorney presented to DSS Board Members the following:

Ms. Hamlett gave brief background of DSS Legal Department. The department is as follows:

- 3 Paralegals
- 1 Contract Attorney (Child Support)
- 1 Attorney I position (Vacant)

NCACBSS – North Carolina Association of County Boards of Social Services:

- The purpose of NCACBSS is to inform, educate and empower Board members to become more aware of their duties and responsibilities
- They have resources and information to assist board members with learning more about your role and responsibilities
- Local Social Services Board published by UNC School of Government – Kristi Nickodem

Publications:

- Local Social Services Board published by UNC School of Government – Kristi Nickodem
- Ethics, Conflicts and Offices: A Guide for Local Officials, Second Edition published by UNC School of Government – A. Fleming Bell, II

UNC School of Government:

- There are blogs, articles and other publications issued by the UNC School of Government to assist, covering a broad range of issues. There are specific subjects directly related to social services.

NC General Statute § 108A-9: The county board of social services shall have the following duties and responsibilities:

- To select the county director of social services according to the merit system rules of the North Carolina Human Resources Commission;
- To advise county and municipal authorities in developing policies and plans to improve the social conditions of the community;
- To consult with the director of the social services about problems relating to his office, and to assist him in planning budgets for the county department of social services;
- To transmit or present the budgets of the county department of social services for public assistance, social services and administration to the board of county commissioners;
- To have such other duties and responsibilities as the General Assembly, the Department of Health and Human Services of the Social Services Commission or the board of county commissioners may assign to it.

Confidentiality – Why is this important?

- We respect our clients and want them to feel their private/personal information is protected.
- Almost all information held by Alamance County Department of Social Services is protected and/or confidential.
- The wrongful release of information could result in a law suit.

General Rule:

North Carolina's public records law provides a broad right of access to records of public agencies. The main statutes that define the scope of the law are contained in Chapter 132 of the North Carolina General Statutes.

- NCGS 108A-80 – It shall be unlawful for any person to obtain, disclose or use or to authorize permit or acquiesce in the use of any list of names or other information concerning persons applying for our receiving public assistance or social services.
- 10A NCAC 21A – Clients records are confidential.

Board Access to Records:

NCGS 108A-11 – Every member of the County Board of Social Service may inspect and examine any record on file in the office of the director relating in any manner to applications for and provision of public assistance and social services authorized by this chapter.

No member shall disclose or make public any information which he may acquire by examining such records.

§ 14-234.1 -Misuse of Confidential Information;

- It is unlawful for any officer or employee of the State or an officer or any employee of any of its political subdivisions, in contemplation of official action by himself or by a governmental unit which he is associated, or in reliance on information which was made known to him in his official capacity and which has not been made public, to commit any of the following acts:
- Acquire a pecuniary interest in any property, transaction, or enterprise or gain any pecuniary benefit which may be affected by such information or official action; or
- Intentionally aid another to do any of the above acts.
- Violation of this section is a Class I misdemeanor.

Ethics:

Ethics refers broadly to the standard of moral behavior that the public generally expects from persons who hold public office... And to the legal requirements and prohibitions that regulate the conduct and behavior of social services board members and local government officials.

NC Gen Stat § 160A-87 - All members of governing board of cities, counties, local boards of education, unified governments, sanitary districts, and consolidated city-counties shall receive a minimum of two clock hours of ethics education within 12 months after initial election or appointment to the office and again within 12 months after each subsequent election or appointment to the office

Ethical Expectations for Public Officials:

- Discharge responsibility faithfully, diligently and competently;
- Comply with applicable laws
- Act in the public interest and for the public good and not use their offices for private benefit;
- Provide responsible and effective public leadership;
- Act honestly, courteously and fairly when discharging their public responsibilities; and
- Maintain high standard of morality and integrity in their personal affairs.

§ 14-230. – Willfully failing to discharge duties:

If any clerk of any court of record, sheriff, magistrate, school board member, county commissioner, county surveyor, coroner, treasurer, or official of any of the State institutions, or of any county, city or town, shall willfully omit, neglect or refuse to discharge any of the duties of his office, for default, whereof, it is not elsewhere provided that he shall be indicted, he shall be guilty of a Class I Misdemeanor. If it shall be proved that such officer, after his qualification, willfully and corruptly violated his oath of office according to the true intent and meaning thereof, such officer shall be guilty of misbehavior in office, and shall be punished by removal therefrom under the sentence of the court as a part of the punishment for the offense.

Conflict of Interest:

A conflict of interest is a transaction or arrangement that benefits an officer, board member or employee on a personal level. People other than board members may also present a conflict of interest, including board members who are related to employees, immediate relatives of board members, and dual-capacity individuals (*a person who is an employee that also serves on the board*)

<https://www.boardeffect.com/blog/avoiding-conflicts-of-interest-on-a-board-of-directors>

- Public officials are required to exercise a high degree of fidelity, care and caution
- As a fiduciary, you must act for the benefit of ACDSS
- People have different roles in life, when two different roles are incompatible, there is a conflict of interest
- Must be cognizant of other boards you serve on conflicting, even nonprofit boards
- It is important to consider, if as a board member, you have any outside commitments, person or otherwise, that would divert you from your duty as a board member.
- Conflicts can be real, potential or perceived.

- Try to avoid all forms of conflict.
- Make disclosures.
- If a conflict is real and significant, it may be cause to ask for resignation or removal.

Prohibition from Benefitting from Public Contracts:

§ 14-234. Public officers or employees benefitting from public contracts; exceptions.

- No public officer or employee who is involved in making or administering a contract on behalf of a public agency may derive a direct benefit from the contract except as provided in this section, or as otherwise allowed by law.
- A public officer or employee who will derive a direct benefit from a contract with the public agency he or she serves, but who is not involved in making or administering the contract, shall not attempt to influence any other person who is involved in making or administering the contract.
- No public officer or employee may solicit or receive any gift, favor, reward, service or promise of reward, including a promise of future employment, in exchange for recommending, influencing or attempting to influence the award of a contract by a public agency he or she serves.

Exception Direct Benefit Contract:

Remuneration from a public agency for services, facilities, or supplies furnished directly to needy individuals by a public officer or employee of the agency under any program of direct public assistance being rendered under the laws of this State or the United States to needy persons administered in whole or in part by the agency.

Incompatible Office Holding:

In some cases, it is inappropriate for one person to serve in two roles that are incompatible. For example, is inappropriate for a person to hold two positions when one of them is subservient to the other. This is typically described in terms of a person being his or her own boss, or being the boss of his or her own supervisor. This type of incompatibility is certainly presented when a board member is also an employee.

Announcements:

None

Adjournment -

The next board meeting is 12:00 noon **Tuesday, February 25, 2025** 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 1:07pm.

Respectfully Submitted:

Carmen L. Morrow

Date Approved: _____