

March 24, 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: Mr. Timothy Britt, DSS Board Chair; Ms. Tyronna Hooker, DSS Board Vice-Chair; Dr. Darrell Warner, DSS Board Member; Ms. Candy Snyder, 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; Ms. Whitney Lipscomb, HR Manager; and Ms. Sherry Hook, Alamance County Assistant County Manager were present.

Mr. Timothy Britt, DSS Board Chair, opened the meeting.

Public Comment:

None

Consent Agenda: Timothy Britt, DSS Board Chair

February 2026 items on the consent agenda approved. Dr. Darrell Warner, DSS Board Member made the motion to approve and was seconded by Ms. Tyronna Hooker, DSS Board Vice-Chair.

Staff Reports:

Fiscal: Virginia Hunker

Expenditures – February 2026			
Year to Date through February 28, 2026	Expenditure Target Rate = 67%		
ACCOUNT DESCRIPTION	Budget FY 25-26	Expenditures	Spending %
SALARIES & BENEFITS	\$ 18,035,875.00	\$ 11,250,250.00	62%
OPERATIONS	\$ 1,927,898.00	\$ 1,098,622.00	57%
SERVICES	\$ 6,175,797.00	\$ 2,903,724.00	47%
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	\$ 26,139,570.00	\$ 15,252,596.00	58%

Revenues – February 2026			
Year to Date through February 28, 2026	Revenue Target Rate = 58%		
ACCOUNT DESCRIPTION	Budget FY 25-26	Expenditures	Spending %
FEDERAL	\$ 12,460,823.00	\$ 8,637,635.00	69%
STATE	\$ 1,397,026.00	\$ 945,426.00	68%
COUNTY	\$ 107,596.00	\$ 33,579.00	31%
TOTAL REVENUES	\$ 13,965,445.00	\$ 9,616,640.00	69%

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

Fraud: See report –

Unit	February 2026	February 2025	Current YTD	Prior Fiscal Year
Fraud	\$12,134.46	\$17,047.95	\$223,772.32	\$231,810.44
Fraud Referrals Received	44	47	215	156

Services: Lynette Wellons, Assistant Director of Services-

Child Welfare -

- We are wrapping up Social Work Appreciation month where we have extended appreciation out to DSS Social Workers.
- We are heading into Child Abuse Prevention Month – Blue pinwheel pins distributed to all DSS Board Members to wear during the month of April. There will be several Child Abuse Prevention events held throughout the county for the planting of the blue pinwheels. We will plant here at HSC (Petree location) on 4/1/2026 and will plant it at the Historic Courthouse at 3pm on same date. We will ask staff to “wear blue” on 4/10/2026 to show solidarity for Child Abuse Prevention.
- Child Welfare Intake and Assessment staff are enjoying PATHNC overall. The system keeps the staff organized and case progress focused. The app remains to present issues and tickets have been logged at the State level. There continue to be glitches in the system around data collection which is an hinderance on the ability to identify trends accurately.

Child Support –

Unit	February 2026	February 2025	Current YTD	Prior Fiscal Year
Child Support Collections	\$827,648.61	\$808,313.08	\$7,095,686.10	\$7,147,029.36

Adult Services -

Increase in Special Assistance In-Home cases, this is a program that originates from Medicaid referrals supports individuals staying in their home safely, who without this support may need placement in an adult care home. In Alamance, the high needs to support individuals go towards rent, utilities and food.

There are currently 78 participants. The average financial support is \$500 a month, which is provided by the State to the recipient. DSS role is the assure that the need is present, and once approved, monitor to be sure the person’s needs are met and there is adequate support to keep them safe. Individuals only come off this list if they leave the area, are placed in a care home, or pass

away. In 2025, there was a 66% increase in recipients, as 30 new individuals joined the program with having lost 13 participants.

Economic Support: Danae Pickard, Economic Services Division Director

- No report.

Operations – Director Candice J. Gobble

Administrative Support/Personnel: Whitney Lipscomb

Ms. Lipscomb reported the following:

Metric	Current Month
Total Filled Positions	199
Total Vacancies	39
New Hires	4
Separations	3
Internal Transfers	1

Ms. Lipscomb reported recently attended job fair on 4/1/2026 at Alamance Community College. We have 6 new hires to start in April and 5 potential candidates in the hiring process.

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

Director Gobble provided the following updates:

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) has released guidance to states on implementing Medicaid community engagement requirements, also known as work requirements. These requirements are set to take effect January 1, 2027. The guidance also applies to recertifications after January 2027.

Director Gobble reported NCACDSS Legislative Priorities for 2026.

They are as follows:

1. State funding to support the 25% FNS Administrative reduction on an ongoing basis.
2. Maintaining SNAP/FNS in NC –
 - a. Fund any cost related to the payment error rate – for FY25 – $7.01\% = 5\%$ cost share = \$151 million.
 - b. Invest in modernization to improve timeliness, accuracy and reducing the PER.
3. Funding for Guardianship and APS – these programs are largely funded at the County level. This department has the following staff:

- a. 19 staff positions (1 Trainer, 3 Supervisors and 1 Program Manager) – (7 APS SW, 6 Guardianship SW, 2 AHS, 2 CAP and 1 Placement, unclaimed)
 - b. FY24 = \$306,661.30; FY25 = \$283,527.21; FY26 = \$239,848.82 = A little over \$500k for allocations.
 - c. 81 Persons Under Guardianship are under the age of 60 – 54% of the population are between the ages of 18-39.
 - d. The cases are more complex involving severe mental illness and substance use disorders.
4. Child Welfare Workload Study – The caseload standards were adopted over 20 years ago. The study was conducted in 2023.
 - a. Association is asking to provide recurring funding for increased social worker staff based on the study.
 - b. Also to conduct these workload studies every 10 years.
 - c. Alamance County DSS Child Welfare =
 - i. Assessments = currently 19 staff – caseload study calls for 31 staff. (12 staff + 2 supervisors = \$1,129,049.
 - ii. In-Home = currently 4 staff – caseload study calls for 7. (3 new staff = \$328,940)
 - iii. Permanency Planning – currently 6.5 staff – workload study calls for 15. (9 new staff + 2 supervisors + 1 Program Manager = \$991,000)
5. NC FAST Technology Enhancements – We continue to face systemic issues with the platform. With H.R.1 implementation, I am not sure the platform will be able to handle.
6. APS/Guardianship Workload Study
7. DHHS to assume family care homes and assisted living investigations
8. Legislative solutions for refusal-to-parent cases.
 - a. Parents abandoning care & responsibilities of their children
 - b. Typically involve children with severe and/or acute behavioral needs that put others in the home or at serious risk of harm
 - c. Limited treatment options to address behaviors
 - d. DSS becomes the placement of last resort without finding of abuse or neglect.
 - e. County DSS agencies are not behavioral health providers.
 - f. The request is to create a legislative framework around these cases and expand funding for youth behavioral services and increase residential treatment capacity and crisis services.

Director Gobble reported VAYA plan has been submitted by County Attorney Stevens. We are waiting for your response.

Question: What is the consequence if we send back to LME?

- The children will continue to be served under the tailored plan they are eligible for.

We still have some children who continue to use VAYA funds, but we are strategic in how we use them and we would like to expand these funds to Adult Services.

New Business: FY27 Proposed DSS Budget

Ms. Virginia Hunker, Business Officer, presented FY27 Proposed DSS Budget. Ms. Hunker expressed this year the County has requested that all departments operate within existing budget levels. Any new request must have either an outside source of revenue or be funded through reallocation of the existing budget and revenues should be budgeted conservatively.

As we know, costs for services continue to increase annually so meeting these requirements has been challenging. Preparing this budget required careful review and some difficult decisions to avoid increasing our overall budget.

Summary of Services:

The overall objectives of the Alamance County Department of Social Services are that of protective, preventive, and rehabilitative services, as well as reinforcing and sustaining the normal standard of living, whenever possible. The department promotes the general welfare and safeguarding of children, the elderly and disabled adults from abuse and neglect. Through our services, the department works to encourage self-sufficiency and promote personal responsibility.

Alamance County DSS is a Level II agency with responsibilities for the following:

- Child and Adult Protective Services
- Child Support Administration
- Services to Adult and Families
- Eligibility for Public Assistance Programs to include Work First, Medicaid, Special Assistance, Food & Nutrition Services, Energy and Subsidized Child Care
- Community sheltering in the event of natural or man-made disasters

Question: What is a Level II Agency?

- Level II means Alamance Co. DSS is a medium-sized county based on caseload sizes, staffing and combination of service applications.

FY27 Initiatives:

- Continued focus on meeting NC DHHS MOU requirements to promote efficiency and accuracy in service processes, directly contributing to better safety, stability and support for vulnerable populations.
- Strengthen agency readiness for H.R.1 by reviewing program operations, training staff, and implementing process improvements to ensure smooth transition and minimal disruption to clients and services.
- Support staff retention to maintain a stable and experienced workforce that provides consistent, high-quality services to the community.

FY26 – 27 Performance Management Goals:

These goals will be presented to County Management and included with the MOU required goals. The County Management goals are “public facing” goals. These are pending approval from County Management.

Goal 1:	Ensure timely response to Adult Protective Services reports to support the safety and well-being of vulnerable adults & maintain compliance with program requirements.
Objective:	Adult Protective Services staff will initiate evaluations within required timeframes for at least 90% of Adult Protective Services reports received.

Goal 2:	Ensure Economic Services applications are processed within required timeframes to provide timely access to benefits for eligible individuals and families.
Objective:	Process 95% of Economic Services applications within state and federal require timeframes to ensure eligible individuals & families receive timely access to benefits.

Goal 3:	Reduce customer wait times by ensuring that 90% of customers are served within 30 minutes or less through process improvements and staff development.
Objective:	Enhance the efficiency of front & customer service operations to consistently deliver shorter wait times and provide a faster, more positive customer experience.

Budget Summary:

Expenditure	FY27	Revenues	FY27
Personnel	\$19,568,824	Federal	\$10,464,077
Operations	\$ 2,067,740	State	\$ 1,380,133
Services/Programs	\$ 4,982,106	County	\$ 69,468
Total Expenditures	\$26,618,670	Total Revenues	\$11,913,856

Ms. Hunker reported with the FY27 request – the percentages are as follows:

Percentages	FY27
Personnel	73.5%
Operations	7.8%
Services/Programs	18.7%

The County share would be \$14.7m = 55% increase.

Expenditure Budget Comparisons:

FY23	\$21,448,085
FY24	\$22,100,791
FY25	\$23,352,245
FY26	\$24,957,348

FY27	\$26,618,670
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These are figures that have been approved over the past few budget cycles. 6% overall increase, but Operational/Services Budget only grew less than 1%.

DSS Budget Components:

1. Staffing
2. Operations
3. Capital Improvements
4. Services
5. Revenues

Staffing:

Staffing Totals for FY27 = \$19,568,824

- Personnel Salaries
 - Includes new position requests
- Non-Permanent Salaries
 - Retain all current part-time positions
 - (7) Direct Contractors
 - Retain contract with Vanguard
- Fringe, Retirement, 401K, Health and Dental
- Per Diem (DSS Board)
- Worker's Compensation

Staffing Requests:

- **SW I:** Child Welfare (requested last year) – this position would make required visits to Foster Children who are out-of-county. Currently staff transport and travel at least 35 hours weekly to make those visits. This position will not carry a case load.
- **SW III:** Adult Services – 63% increase in SA In-Home Cases – Adult Guardianship caseload is currently above the state requirement.
- **Program Integrity:** Growing oversight for fraud cases – focus on mandatory
- **Economic Services:** Transition (4) IMC II Time-Limited Positions to Permanent – Medicaid enrollment increased by 13% for cases from April 2025 to January 2026 – 11,501 cases in Alamance County.

Operations:

Operational Totals for FY27 = \$2,067,740

- Building operations (utilities, telephone, postage, printing, maintenance)
- Travel

- Supplies
- Training
- Contracts
- Advertising
- Capital improvement projects –
 - Signage Installation/Painting – Access design and implement and effective directional & room numbering signage for HSC. Update paint in hallways & areas where new signage has been installed including entry points, hallways, restrooms, stairwells and emergency exit areas.
 - Multi-year project to be completed by FY29
 - \$70,000 budgeted for FY27
 - Carpet Removal/Painting – Implementing phases for carpet removal in offices & conference spacing through HSC. Offices identified would also be painted during the floor replacement.
 - Requested as ongoing project – each phase will include around 20 offices and/or conference spaces.
 - \$40,000 budgeted for FY27
 - Northwoods Traverse – Modernize current document management by transitioning to a secure, cloud-based platform that reduces long-term operational costs and maintenance responsibilities and improves system reliability and accessibility.
 - Initial Transition to Traverse (Year 1) = \$285,000
 - Annual Operating Cost (Year 2+) = \$175,000
- Insurance & Bonds
- Health Insurance – Retirees

Question: Does moving data to cloud based puts the data at risk?

- No, cloud-based is safer. The county uses multifactor IT system. The new system will allow us to get rid of 3 servers. This will save us at least \$8k - \$16k each for the servers.

Services:

Services Totals for FY27 = \$4,982,106

- Foster care maintenance payments – we will need to increase due to not having access to VAYA funds
- Court filing fees
- IVD paternity fees
- Child Welfare drug screens
- Adult Services – Essential needs for clothing, In-Home Aide contracts to care for adult before placement is found and payment for Assisted Living facilities until Medicaid approved
- Energy vendor payments
- Medicaid Transportation
- Building security

Revenues:

Revenue Totals for FY27 = \$11,913,856

Revenue Budget Comparisons:

FY23	\$11,806,708
FY24	\$11,065,375
FY25	\$12,479,188
FY26	\$13,952,897
FY27	\$11,913,856

All revenues were budgeted based on State recommendations. Total revenues reflect a \$2million decrease from the current fiscal year, primarily due to changes in FNS reimbursement and other State guidance.

The State continues with Bridge Funding – there is no official announcement that it will end, but the situation is highly uncertain due to ongoing Medicaid funding shortfalls. The General Assembly still has not passed a budget, so the funds remain in place. Bridge funding is typically temporary money used to cover urgent expenses or program gaps until a permanent solution in in place -Emergency Placement funds.

Alamance Co. DSS typically draws down more than 95% of revenue. With State mandated services, 17% decrease from last year due to H.R.1.

Next Steps:

1. DSS will meet with County Manager on 4/23/2026
2. County Manager will deliver recommended budget to Alamance County Commissioners
3. Alamance County Commissioners will vote on budget in June

Question: Where are we in comparison to last year's budget?

- We are requesting 6% more due to turnover rate.

Question: Does the Budget Proposal account for the vacant positions?

- Yes – the proposal counts for all DSS positions.

Question: If we must pay back VAYA funds? Is that included in budget?

- No – VAYA funds are not included in the budget.

Action: Motion made by Dr. Darrell Warner and seconded by Tyronna Hooker to move forward with budget presentation to County Manager.

Announcements:

None

Adjournment -

The next board meeting is 12:00 pm **Tuesday, April 28, 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 Tyronna Hooker, DSS Vice-Chair and seconded by Ms. Candy Snyder, DSS Board Member, to adjourn the meeting.

Respectfully Submitted:

Carmen L. Morrow

Date Approved: _____