

March 25, 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; Mrs. Tyronna Hooker, DSS Board Vice-Chair; Dr. Darrell “Bud” Warner, DSS Board Member; Commissioner Ed Priola, DSS Board Member; Ms. Candy Snyder, DSS Board Member; Ms. Candice J. Gobble, DSS Director; Ms. Virginia Hunker, DSS Business Officer; Mr. Robert Ring, DSS HR Director; Ms. Lynette Wellons, DSS Assistant Director of Services; Ms. Danae Pickard, Economic Services Division Director and Ms. Heidi York, County Manager were present.

Director Candice Gobble, DSS Director opened the meeting due to no board quorum.

Public Comment:

None

Consent Agenda: Timothy Britt, DSS Board Chair

January 2025 and February 2025 items on the consent agenda approved. Dr. Darrell Warner made motion to approve and seconded by Candy Snyder.

Staff Reports:

Fiscal: Virginia Hunker

	FEBRUARY 2025	% OF BUDGET	PRIOR YTD	% OF BUDGET
REVENUES	\$6,601,589.00	55%	\$7,129,284.00	74%
EXPENDITURES	\$12,343,306.00	53%	\$12,020,477.00	55%

Ms. Hunker distributed the handouts to help Board Members with revenues and expenditures as discussed last board meeting. They are as follows: Account Key (Revenue Classification); Account Key (Expenditure Classification); and Account Key (Revenues and Expenditures with Descriptions).

Fraud: See report –

Unit	February 2025	February 2024	Current YTD	Prior Fiscal Year
Fraud	\$17,047.95	\$19,552.21	\$231,810.44	\$158,447.47

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

- April is Child Abuse Awareness Month. Ms. Wellons distributed flyers and pens for board members.
- Continue to attend College Job Fairs for Social Workers – UNCG, A&T and UNC-Chapel Hill

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

Unit	February 2025	February 2024	Current YTD	Prior Fiscal Year
Child Support	\$808,313.08	\$1,001,230.70	\$7,147,029.36	\$7,163,582.99

Economic Support: Ms. Danae Pickard

- Recently participated in Work First Audit – DSS had no findings or paybacks. This is huge accomplishment.
- Three staff participated in NC Works Job Fair for Alamance County HR. We received several qualified applicants.

Operations – Director Candice J. Gobble

Administrative Support/Personnel: Robert Ring

See Statistical Report – as of February 28, 2025

Vacancies	30
New Hires	7
Interagency Transfers	1
Resignations	3

Mr. Ring reported the following:

February 2025

# Applications Received	208
# Rejected Applications	86
# Forwarded to Hiring Manager	122
# Applicants Interviewed	13
# Applicants Hired	6

Social Workers

# Applications Received	82
# Rejected Applications	23
# Forwarded to Hiring Manager	59
# Applicants Interviewed	2
# Applicants Hired	2

February 2024

# Applicants Hired	7
# Still Employed	3

Mr. Ring reported currently we have 11 applicants in the hiring process, which will make DSS fall below the 26 unfunded positions as we fall to 25.

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

Director Gobble reported we continue with DSS Strategic Plan process. We have developed stakeholder survey that will go out to DSS Board Members, Community Partners, County Management and Staff. The survey is scheduled for release during March 26 – April 1, 2025. Please be on the lookout for survey.

We will compile results and move forward with some focus groups and the process. We have a separate steering committee who will compile data.

New Business: DSS Budget Presentation

Director Gobble expressed to DSS Board Members about the new budget process for the County. This year the budget is “zero” based which means we are to justify each line item and build the line items. For DSS, this process will be difficult due to how we receive revenues and expenditures.

Ms. Virginia Hunker presented DSS Budget to Board Members. This version will be presented to County Manager to be included in the recommended budget for FY 2025 – 2026. DSS meeting is scheduled for Monday, April 14, 2025, with County Management.

The budget process is a lengthy process where we meet with all DSS Departments to assess their current needs and how those needs align with financial requirements as requested by County Management.

Summary of Services:

The overall objectives of Alamance County DSS are that of protective, preventive and rehabilitative services, as well as reinforcing and sustaining the normal pattern 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:

- 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

FY 26' Initiatives:

1. **Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) Framework:** We aim to develop and begin implementing (CQI) framework to assess and improve service delivery. This will ensure efficiency, effectiveness and client satisfaction.
2. **Trauma-Informed Practices:** We will strengthen DSS's commitment to trauma-informed practices to improve service delivery and provide better support for both individuals and families served, as well as DSS staff.
3. **Recruitment and Retention:** We will continue to focus on building a stable, skilled workforce through improved recruitment and retention efforts.

Performance Management Goals:

Director Gobble expressed Alamance County Management has requested SMART Goals (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time Bound) for departments. (These goals have not been approved yet).

They are as follows:

Goal One:	DSS will conduct quarterly leadership training sessions with at least 90% participation from supervisors and managers, focusing on effective communication, conflict resolution and team performance management.
Objective:	Strengthen leadership skills among managers and supervisors to enhance team performance, communication and improve employee retention.
Goal Two:	Maintain an average transaction time of 30 minutes or less for 90% of customer interactions through process optimization, staff training and effective resource allocation over the next 12 months.
Objective:	Ensure customer transactions are completed efficiently by reducing wait times and maintaining service spread, aiming to enhance overall customer satisfaction.
Goal Three:	Implement strategies to utilize resource allocation effectively, ensuring the pull down of 95% or more available funding by the end of FY 26', through planning, tracking and communication within departments. Evaluation will occur on a quarterly basis.
Objective:	Utilize resource allocation processes to ensure that 95% or more of available allocations are fully utilized by the end of FY 26'.

Overview of Revenues and Expenditures:

Expenditures	FY26	Revenues	FY26
Personnel	\$19,630,499	Federal	\$12,294,514
Operations	\$1,672,599	State	\$1,384,478
Mandated Services/Programs	\$5,085,619	County	\$107,596
Total Expenditures	\$26,388,717	Total Revenues	\$13,786,588

Question: Do you see any changes coming from the Administration regarding Federal benefits?

Director Gobble reported not yet. The State works with the Federal Government and Federal Delegates regarding any service cuts. Currently there is a bill which would place a work requirement for Medicaid. Currently no cuts to any protective services.

Question: Will that affect the positions you have for Medicaid Expansion?

No – We are very close to the unfunded positions. We have hired 11 new positions. If we get to the threshold of those unfunded positions, we will meet with County Manager.

Budget Comparisons:

We are requesting for FY26 - \$26,388,717.00. Typically, the approved budget each year is less than the requested amount due to adjustments such as salary reductions or position freezes. As a reminder from last year, we had some positions that were left unfunded, but we had the option to request funding, if we approached hiring a position that was needed.

The expenditure increases between the fiscal years include:

Fiscal Year	Requested Budgeted Amount	Percentage Increase
FY23	\$21,448,085	3% Increase from FY24 to FY24
FY24	\$22,100,791	5% Increase from FY24 to FY25
FY25	\$23,352,245	11% Increase from FY25 to FY26

Budget Components:

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

Staffing: Staffing Totals for FY26 = \$19,630,499 -

Staffing is our largest expenditure. This includes the following:

- Personnel Salaries
 - Includes new position requests
- Non-Permanent Salaries
- Fringe, Retirement, 401K, Health & Dental
- Per-Diem (DSS Board)
- Worker's Compensations

Staffing Requests:

We have requested 8 new positions and 1 re-class position in this budget.

These requests are as follows:

Adult Services:

➤ **APS Social Worker III (On-Call Full Time Position)**

Currently this need is being met by part-time SW III. There is a critical demand for On-Call SW III due to the high volume of Adult Protective Services (APS) reports received after normal business hours. Since January 2024, DSS received 136 APS reports outside of normal business hours, and of those 136, 64 were completed by the on-call after-hours Social Worker. By approving this position, we can significantly reduce the need for APS Social Workers to work after-hours, which would reduce the amount of compensatory time earned. Additionally, the new position would allow staff working during normal business hours to allocate more time for case documentation, case evaluations and interactions with clients, families and service providers thereby improving the overall quality and care of citizens of Alamance County.

Furthermore, this position is eligible to pull down Medicaid Administrative Claiming (MAC) funds, which is the only source of uncapped funding for our protective services staff serving both Adults and Children. We project this position will bring in \$26,962.00 in additional funding. The ability to access this funding will be further enhanced by new coding allowances for SA-In Home clients.

Economic Services:

We are requesting 6 IMC positions within Economic Services Unit. They are Income Maintenance (IMC) caseworkers who will determine eligibility for Medicaid. Each application processed DSS is reimbursed at a rate of 75% from Federal funds. Additionally, workers who determine eligibility for Food & Nutrition (FNS) services, DSS receives 50% reimbursement for their work.

➤ **4 Temporary IMC II positions to Permanent positions –**

We have four temporary staff positions (Medicaid Expansion) staff that are set to conclude at the end of this fiscal year. These positions were initially approved by Alamance County Commissioners in anticipation of Medicaid Expansion. As we approach a significant change in how the State handles Medicaid case rollovers, it is crucial that we address the existing backlog of applications before this transition. By the end of June, Medicaid will discontinue its monthly case rollover process. This will directly impact the processing of 5,476 re-certifications that are due. All these re-certifications must be processed and completed by June 30, 2025, to remain in compliance with State guidelines.

Without the additional support, we risk falling behind, which could jeopardize the county's ability to comply with State regulations. The positions we are seeking to fill are vital to completing this essential work within the required timeframe, ensuring the continued quality and timeliness of Medicaid services in our community.

Additionally, the State's staffing template, which determines the necessary number of caseworkers based on case volume, recommends a Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) target of between 21.0 FTE and 32.8 FTE for our department. By approving these time-limited positions, we will meet the State's minimum FTE requirement, bringing our current team of 17 staff members up to 21 fully staffed. This adjustment is crucial for maintaining our mandated performance standards and ensuring ongoing compliance with State guidelines.

➤ **2 New IMC II positions for Food & Nutrition Services (FNS) –**

This request for new IMC II positions is aimed at strengthening our FNS area within Economic Services. According to the State's staffing template, the recommended FTE target for the FNS Intake Department is between 10.1 FTE and 12.9 FTE's to effectively manage the workload. Currently in the FNS Intake Unit, we have 8 IMC caseworkers, we are unable to meet the growing demand which results in delays, backlogs and diminished client support.

With the addition of new IMC caseworkers, it will alleviate the challenges, ensuring that we can maintain compliance with FNS policies and provide better service delivery. This is important as the community continues to grow and faces increasing economic pressures.

➤ **Reclassification of IMC II to IMC III –**

We are requesting to re-classify current IMC II PACE position to IMC II. PACE (*Program of All-Inclusive Care for the Elderly*) which is a care delivery and financing model for adults over age of 55 who are assessed & certified by the State of NC as needing a nursing home level of care. The reclass is necessary to align with the requirement that IMC II performing 2 or more functions within the Long-Term Care program must be classified as an IMC III. This is essential for effectively managing the complex tasks in Medicaid, particularly with long-term care programs. The IMC III position will take on critical responsibilities, including determining client eligibility, processing applications, and providing expert guidance to medical institutions.

Given the immediate needs of the frail PACE population, policy mandates expedited processing of this type of Medicaid applications. This reclassification will ensure timely entry of PACE evidence, allowing payments to begin the next calendar month. The IMC III position will be vital in maintaining efficiency, accuracy and support for both clients and healthcare providers.

Question: What is an IMC?

Income Maintenance Caseworker

Child Welfare:

➤ **Social Worker I: Permanency Planning Position–**

We are requesting an addition of a FT SWI position to support the Child Welfare team, specifically the Permanency Planning Team. Due to high caseloads, staff shortages and increased demands for visitation, this position is needed. Currently, 82 of the 117 children in Alamance County DSS Foster Care are placed outside of the county which requires extensive travel for Social Workers. With 19 of the Foster Care cases that require regular visitation (including sibling visits), social workers are spending up to 120 hours per week on visits, often exceeding 40-hour work weeks and accruing compensatory time.

This new position is essential for ensuring timely and quality work with families, reducing strain on staff and ensuring that we maintain the high standards of care required for the children and families we serve.

Operations: Operational Totals for FY 26 = \$1,672,599 -

Operational Expenses include basic agency expenses such as:

- Building operations (utilities, telephone, postage, printing and maintenance)
- Travel
- Supplies
- Training
- Contracts
- Advertising
- Capital Improvement Projects

There is an 8% increase totaling an additional \$128,478.00 from the approved budget for the current fiscal year.

Capital Improvement Plans:

Signage Installation/Painting – Assess, design and implementation of an effective directional and room numbering signage for HSC. *The plan does include Alamance County Health Department due both departments share HSC.* We plan to update paint in the hallways and 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 FY26

This initiative aims to make all signage within the building, ADA compliant, improving the overall experience and ease of navigation for the community we serve. This project will require ongoing commitments over the next few fiscal years to complete.

Carpet Removal/Painting – We plan to implement phases for carpet removal in offices and 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 FY26

This work is a part of larger plan to replace carpet in areas affected by water damage, which occurred during HVAC renovations, as well as in offices where the carpet has never been replaced. This effort will help maintain the County building in optimal condition while improving the work environment for staff and visitors.

Services: Services Totals for FY26 = \$5,085,619 -

The services accounts reflect a modest increase of 3.4% in the requested budget for FY26' compared to the approved budget for the current FY, equating to an increase of \$167,999.

The areas with the most significant increases including the following:

- Foster Care maintenance payment
- Court filing fees
- IVD paternity fees
- Child Welfare Drug Screens
- Adult Services
- Energy vendor payments
- Medicaid Transportation
- Building Security

Question: What are court filing fees?

These are E-Court fees that DSS must pay for child support fees and adult service fees when filing petitions for court.

Revenues: Revenue Totals for FY26 = \$13,786,588 -

As previously mentioned, requested Expenditures are \$26,160,747, while projected Revenues are \$13,768,588. This means the County will need to fund \$12,374,159 or 47% of the requested Expenditures.

Projected Revenues:

- DSS receives revenue reimbursement from Federal and State sources for mandated services that we provide to the community. Some of the revenue is from capped funding sources while other funding is an uncapped funding source. All the revenues are budgeted with this in mind pulling information from the State budget narrative as well as looking at trends and historic reimbursement data. This is a percentage increase of 10.5% from projected revenues for current FY.

Revenue Comparisons:

We do have numbers from FY23 and FY24 that have been received:

- FY23 – FY24 decreased by 6% due to majority of Energy payments being changed from agency passthrough funds to them being paid directly to the State through NC FAST.
- FY24 – FY25 is potentially going to increase by 13%.

All revenues are received from DHHS and are funneled to the County through one of the two following ways:

- **1571 Report** - Revenue allocations are primarily tracked through the monthly State fiscal 1571 report. This report includes all DSS payments, salaries and professional services expenses. This report also tracks all on-time tracking of front-line staff who report 100% of their work hours (Day Sheet Coding). After calculating staff salaries and applying funding from the 411 reports, the data is entered into the “spread”, which accounts for overhead costs like administrative staff and operational expenses.
 - For example, DSS may receive more revenues at the beginning of the quarter if capped funding has not been exhausted. This makes it difficult to predict revenue for certain positions or costs, such as the Capital Improvement Plan due to staffing and coding all significantly affect reimbursement totals.
- **Electronic Funds Transfer** – We receive some reimbursement for Foster Care maintenance payments that are paid through the county and reimbursed monthly by an Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT). There are two other revenue accounts that we are reimbursed in a similar manner that are Medicaid Transportation and House Bill 405, which relates to Community Alternatives Program (CAP) case management costs.

When looking at FY23 and FY24, we reached 96% of projected revenues received and pulled down 99% of funding allocations on the 411 report that shows the revenues pulled down for the 1571 report. Funding allocations are actively monitored every month to ensure funding maximization and reducing the county share.

Some changes that may affect revenues:

- Potential cuts to Medicaid
- Capped allocations are stagnant and have not changed per the State budget estimates provided to Alamance County
- Implementation of PATH NC that will affect Child Welfare has been pushed out to November for our region; we are unsure of the additional resources needed
- Change from VAYA to Blue Cross/Blue Shield for foster care population. VAYA funds that we receive assist with paying enhanced rates that without will come from County funds
- Bridge funding will end for Family Prevention Services Act (FFPSA)
- Emergency Placement Funds end

Question: The timetable you gave for the budget – will you be able to see the Managers requested budget?

Yes – We will meet with the County Manager, and we will be able to see the budget once recommended budget has been approved.

Question: How will manage the vacancies? Do you keep up with the unfunded positions?

We will continue to manage vacancies and caseload numbers for Social Work staff. We continue to keep County Manager in the loop regarding vacancies.

Director Gobble expressed to Board Members that Social Services budget is a part of the County budget under the Local Government Budget and Fiscal Control Act; therefore, no board vote is required.

Director Gobble added we present budget to board in March every year to provide the DSS proposed budget before the April 30 deadline to County Budget officer.

Chair Tim Britt asked board members to make motion to move forward with proposed budget to County Budget officer.

***Action:** Motion made by Dr. Darrell Warner and seconded by Tyronna Hooker. All board members approved except for Commissioner Ed Priola who recused his vote.*

Announcements:

None

Adjournment -

The next board meeting is 12:00 noon **Tuesday, April 22, 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 1:45pm.

Respectfully Submitted:

Carmen L. Morrow

Date Approved: _____