

October 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: Mrs. 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. Danae Pickard, Economic Services Division Director; Ms. Jamie Hamlett, DSS Attorney; Ms. Tabatha Brown, Child Welfare Program Manager; Ms. Leeshell Collier, Child Welfare SW; Ms. Hilary Weber, Child Welfare SW; 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

September 2025 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

	SEPTEMBER 2025	% OF BUDGET	PRIOR YTD	% OF BUDGET
REVENUES	\$2,561,130.00	18%	\$2,085,921.00	17%
EXPENDITURES	\$5,548,125.00	21%	\$5,193,857.00	22%

Ms. Virginia Hunker presented the FY26 – 1st Quarter Financial Report. As of September 30, 2025, DSS is trending slightly below the target expenditure rate of 25%. Revenues are currently at 18%, modestly exceeding the projected target of 17%. Staffing expenses are tracking just below forecasted levels, while operational costs remain under budget as the department concludes the first quarter and transitions into Quarter 2 of the fiscal year.

Ms. Hunker reported DSS presented Emergency Placement funds in September DSS Board meeting. These funds were approved by County Commissioners on October 5, 2025, meeting. DSS received from NCDHHS \$12,548.00 for FY26. These funds are already allocated in a budget line; this request was to amend the current budget. Emergency Placement funds are provided by NCDHHS to assist county departments of social services in meeting immediate placement needs for children in DSS custody who are awaiting Medicaid-level treatment placements. These funds

serve to bridge the gap in care by providing support while a suitable treatment facility is secured. These funds are specifically intended to prevent children from remaining in DSS offices by covering temporary placement-related costs during this interim period.

Beginning in October 2026, the federal reimbursement rate for Food & Nutrition Service administrative costs will be reduced from 50% to 25% per case. This change is expected to result in a projected revenue loss of approximately \$869,805.00. Director Gobble added we are seeking other areas where we can pull down other funds under MAC codes. The only uncapped service under DSS is Adult Services.

Fraud: See report –

Unit	September 2025	September 2024	Current YTD	Prior Fiscal Year
Fraud	\$19,123.70	\$14,699.48	\$82,020.91	\$136,185.36

Services: Lynette Wellons, Assistant Director of Services-

Ms. Wellons reported the following:

Child Welfare is gearing up for PATH NC to roll out November 3, 2025. Child Welfare staff have been attending training courses. DSS IT staff have obtained the proper equipment for staff to be successful as we roll out this new tool.

Effective Immediately, all reports of child or adult abuse or neglect must be made to the following:

- (336) 570-6532
- Press #2 to be directed to an intake social worker
- Press #1 to be directed if you are calling in a professional manner
- There is no change to the after-hours call number: (336) 570-6777

We were aware of some challenges that the old hotline presented with calls not rolling over. In the meantime, DSS IT has worked with County IT to come up with this solution.

Question: Does the other number still work?

Yes – but it will ring to an office number and staff will have to leave a message.

We have updated our website and DHHS website for this important change.

As a reminder, Blue Cross/Blue Shield (Healthy Blue) will launch the Children and Families Specialty Plan (CFSP) – a comprehensive Medicaid Managed Care health plan. The plan is designed to ensure timely and consistent access to quality services, including medical and physical healthcare, while maintaining continuity of service delivery for children and families across the State of NC. VAYA will no longer be the service provider for foster children in NC. This will be a huge change for Alamance Co. DSS.

Adoption Base Line – Hayley Billings, Adoptions SW continues to do a great job with adoptions for Alamance Co. DSS. We have already met the baseline in performance management goals. She continues to do the work of 2 social workers.

Federal FY just ended – Child Welfare Foster Home visits/contacts – we met the benchmark goal.

Federal CFSR review – the onsite review tool (90 pages). The State of NC was in round 4 and failed. The State of NC is on a performance improvement plan and continues to be monitored by the Children’s Bureau. Alamance Co. DSS met all the marks except for two due to the precise time frame for placement of two children regarding dates of placement.

The State has added a new platform for Adult Services data collection, and it is not available yet. The new platform has been added for form 5026 (2 pages), with the new data collection system increased to (13 pages).

We are in the process of updating our interior lobbies to continue to platform of Trauma Informed Care and safe space for children. Once completed, we will schedule tour.

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

Unit	September 2025	September 2024	Current YTD	Prior Fiscal Year
Child Support	\$926,669.33	\$951,771.36	\$2,740,779.03	\$2,738,387.96

No report.

Economic Support: Danae Pickard, Economic Services Division Director

Ms. Pickard reported the following:

Due to state budget impasse Medicaid reductions are in place. We were notified on 9/29/2025, that the NEMT (Non-Emergency Medical Transportation) provider reimbursement rates had to be reduced by 3% effective October 1, 2025. This change caused much anxiety when thinking would the NEMT provider accept the reduced rate change and still transport our Alamance Co. recipients. If not, the County would have to pay the 3% difference.

As of right now, there is only enough Energy funding for the LIEAP Phase I recipients (population of age 60 or older or disabled persons) from last year with auto payments to receive. The state reports they are ready to open the eligibility as normal, if additional funding is allocated. On average, this would mean the additional 2,200 applications we receive for heating assistance would all be denied due to no allocation of funds.

Operations – Director Candice J. Gobble

Administrative Support/Personnel: Candice J. Gobble

See Statistical Report – as of September 30, 2025

Vacancies	33
New Hires	8
Interagency Transfers	1
Resignations	2

Director Gobble announced we have not filled the HR Director position. We have two interviews scheduled. We continue to work through the HR process. Currently we have implemented tracking system for date of application, etc., to track the progress of the process.

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

Director Gobble reported on State Performance Improvement Plan. The State pulled out groups from regions 3 and 7 and Wake County. The State has noticed a lot of counties conduct services in different ways. We continue to follow the best practice.

Director Gobble reiterated on the CFSP reported by Assistant Director Wellons. The VAYA funds from 2021 Reinvestment Funds formerly from Cardinal Innovations – Alamance Co. will have to relinquish the unused remaining funds by January 2026. The total of \$3million dollars. There are several other counties impacted (Chatham, Stokes, Rowan and Alexander) who received the same funding which helps prevent children from staying in DSS buildings while finding placements. We are in conversation with County Attorney who is currently working with those counties’ legal representatives. We currently have meetings scheduled with Blue Cross/Blue Shield to work out the processes for foster children.

Question: Do they have legal grounds to stand on?

There were currently no words in the contract. There was a uniform approach with the other counties as well. We are working with those counties to be on one accord as we approach the issue.

Director Gobble reported on the suspension of November 2025 FNS Benefits. The State issued a suspension of issuance as of October 27, 2025, for November benefits. The suspension will affect approximately 1.4 million North Carolinians who need assistance with purchasing nutritional foods for families. This delay will also include \$1.1 million in nutrition benefits to approximately 2,000 NC households who filed expedited applications after October 15, 2025, due to their immediate risk of food insecurity. We will continue to keep you abreast of the changes. We are keeping the citizens updated on our website. We do know that Work First will continue through November but will be affected if it continues to December. This will be a huge impact for Alamance County economic development.

New Business: Foster Home Licensing

Ms. Tabatha Brown, Child Welfare program manager introduced the following social workers: Leeshell Collier and Hilary Weber who presented the following:

Ms. Weber gave brief background of the slogan “It Matters to this One” with the logo of the starfish.

Foster Care Needs in Alamance County:

- 100 children in care as of September 2025
- Need local foster homes to support children in their community of residence
- Greatest placement needs: older youth, infants & toddlers, sibling groups, only children and children with special needs.
- Long-term, respite, day respite & emergency care.

Need for Local Foster Homes:

- Due to a shortage of licensed foster families across the State, many children have been placed outside of Alamance County and outside of their county of residence
- Many children currently in foster care have a high level of needs requiring specialized placements in therapeutic homes and leveled group homes. Many of these placements can also be found outside of Alamance County.
- Across the State, there have been children who have had to be housed in DSS buildings, which is also due to the lack of licensed foster homes within the State.
- Approximately 70% of children in Alamance County foster care are currently in placements outside of Alamance County.

ACDSS Goals of Foster Home Licensing:

- To ensure quality-foster care for our children in healthy, stable and safe homes.
- To support efforts to strengthen and preserve the biological family so that children can safely return through Shared Parenting.
- To ensure a single, safe, and nurturing foster care placement by supporting foster families in the process and providing quality trauma informed training and monitoring.

We are Looking for Foster Families who...

- Treating the child as FAMILY
- Are an Advocate
- Ensure children receive medical/dental/mental health care
- Assist with transportation to visits & appointments, whenever possible
- Maintain In-Service training hours (minimum of 10 hours per year)

How do Prospective Families Hear About Fostering?

- For many, this is through word-of-mouth referrals from our existing licensed families
- Community recruitment events
- Billboards, website, fliers
- From life experiences

- Faith Community and faith-based groups

Initial Contact:

A prospective Foster Family connects with a licensing social worker who guides them through the initial steps, including:

1. Inquiry Form (2-page form) – questions asked such as criminal background check, employment and have you fostered before?
2. Interest Meeting (held the first Thursday of each month) – all are open to the public. We do provide them with virtual and in-person. The meetings are 1hr. long.

It is a requirement that prospective families must complete the Interest Form and Interest Meeting prior to beginning licensure training.

Next Step: Foster Parent Licensure Process

- Training (National Training & Development Curriculum for Foster & Adoptive Families) training 30 hours
- CPR/FA & Medical Administration
- Commit to at least 10 hours of continuing education training per year
- Interviews (couple, family and individual)
- Home safety assessment

NTDC for Foster & Adoptive Parents Training

- Meets one evening per week for 8-10 weeks (2 ½ hrs. training) – normally Tuesdays
- Hybrid (virtual and in-person options)
- Prepares families to parent children who have experienced trauma
- Inform families of policy and best practice
- Creates an opportunity for mutual selection (Important part to help prepare for court and CFST meetings)

Training for Foster Parents

- Child Development/Impact of Trauma
- Helping children form attachments
- Helping children manage behaviors
- Building & maintaining connections
- Cultural Connections
- Impact of providing Foster Care on families
- Trauma-Informed Parenting

Individual and Family Interviews

- Prospective foster parents must go through an interview process with the licensing social worker, which includes:
- Family background
- Employment and Financial Information (stability)
- Supports
- Self-Care strategies
- Religious and Cultural Considerations

- Mental Health and Physical Health
- Substance Use Past and Present
- Trauma History
- Discipline and Parenting Philosophy
- Pets

The State requires that we meet with prospective families twice.

Safe Home Inspections:

The licensing worker completes environment checks of the home, including:

- Water hazards – pools and lakes
- Room arrangements – child should have their own bed and own room
- Safe storage of firearms – separate location and proper locks
- Safe storage of medications – should be out of reach of children
- Pets – must be friendly – up to date shots at vet
- Fire Escape plan
- Smoke alarms
- Cell phone/landline in a centralized location
- Working utilities -Energy, water, etc.
- Fire Inspection by Local Fire Department

Additional Requirements for Licensure:

- Must be CPR First Aid Certified (2x a year for certification)
- Medication Administration Training
- Must submit three references
- RIL Checks for everyone in the home over 18
- Fingerprint checks for everyone in the home over 18
- Out of State background checks if you have lived outside of NC in the last 5 years – we will also run Adam Walsh checks
- Pet vaccination records
- Medical form completed by MD for everyone in the home (ongoing treatments, etc.)

How long will it take to get licensed?

- On average the licensing social worker has 35-40 contact hours with the family from the onset of contact to full licensure
- Once the training is completed along with all additional steps, the licensing social worker will submit the licensure packet for multilevel approval within the agency
- Once the agency has approved the packet, the licensing social worker submits the complete packet to the State for approvals (30 days from the State)
- Including training, licensing can take up to 4-6 months for the full process. Forms are time sensitive and cannot be over 180 days old prior to submission.

Ongoing Monitoring and Requirements for Re-licensure:

This happens every two years

- Submit quarterly reviews to ensure that the home is staying in compliance with the State regulations
- CPS/First Aid certified
- Each foster parent must complete at least 20 continuing education training hours
- Resubmit Medical forms, along with updated environmental safety checks
- Submit an updated Fire Inspection Check
- Updated Criminal Background/CPS History check

DSS Licensing Team:

Hilary Weber	(336) 792-0544	hilary.weber@alamancecountync.gov
Leeshell Collier	(336) 264-6583	leeshell.collier@alamancecountync.gov

Important Foster Care Link:

<https://www.alamance-nc.com/dss/programs-and-services/children-services/foster-care-information>

Recruitment Video Link:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=up2ek5DxUG8>

Foster Home Licensing staff distributed “It Matters to This One” Become a Foster Parent Today flyers for DSS Board members to distribute in the community.

Ms. Tyronna Hooker, DSS Board Vice-Chair, added she was a former foster care parent for 11 years and the children do become a part of your family. She still maintains contact with those children.

Announcements:

None

Adjournment -

The next board meeting is 12:00 noon **Tuesday, November 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 1:09pm. Motion was made by Dr. Darrell Warner, DSS Board Member and seconded by Candy Snyder, DSS Board Member, to adjourn the meeting.

Respectfully Submitted:

Carmen L. Morrow

Date Approved:
