

The Accomack County Board of Social Services met at its facility on Tuesday, August 20, 2019, at 9:30 A.M. Present were Mrs. Elsie B. Mackie, Vice-Chairman; Ms. Laura B. Gordy; Mr. Robert Crockett; Mr. John Sparkman; Mr. Robert Martin; and Mrs. Vicki J. Weakley, Director.

In the absence of Chairman Reneta Major, Vice-Chairman Elsie Mackie called the meeting to order. Mr. Crockett gave the Invocation.

Mrs. Mackie proceeded to **Item 3 – Approve Minutes of July 16, 2019.** On motion by Ms. Gordy, seconded by Mr. Crockett, the Minutes were approved as written. The motion carried.

Mrs. Mackie continued to **Item 4 – Introduction of Self Sufficiency Specialist III – Jodi Urban and Human Services Assistant II – Jonathan Tapman.** Mrs. Weakley introduced Ms. Urban as the new Self Sufficiency Specialist III. Ms. Urban stated in September 2019 she has been with ACDSS for 30 years. Mrs. Weakley then introduced Jonathan Tapman who is the new Human Services Assistant II in the Benefits Unit. The Board congratulated them on their new positions.

Mrs. Mackie proceeded to **Item 5 – Fraud Report.** Mrs. Mackie stated she saw in the newspaper where Fraud Investigator Frances Bailey went to court on a case. She further stated Mrs. Bailey is following through with all of her duties. Mr. Crockett stated Mrs. Bailey was doing a good job.

Mrs. Mackie continued to **Item 6 – Director’s Report.** Mrs. Weakley stated she met with Ms. Patti Kiger from Healthy Communities about bringing Bridges Out of Poverty to the Shore. The first planning meeting is scheduled for September.

Mrs. Weakley also attended the Chamber of Commerce Annual dinner; the DSS Directors’ training (Nuts and Bolts in Services) aka everything director’s need to know about every service program; a Healthy Communities Retreat; a Fatality Review Team meeting; and a CPMT (Community Policy and Management Team) meeting.

Mrs. Weakley further stated she had attended Fraud Training the previous week. She learned from the fraud training that Fraud funds have been disbursed according to benefit caseload sizes and the largest agencies are getting more money. However, some have only been doing one or two Fraud cases per year. They are going to relook at that and redistribute funds, taking into consideration caseload sizes, but also how many Fraud cases we have worked. This might increase our funding as we work a high volume of cases.

Mrs. Mackie asked whether most large agencies have fraud workers. Mrs. Weakley stated many of the agencies have a combination part benefits and part fraud worker. Whenever there is no dedicated fraud investigator, fraud takes a back seat. When this is done. At that time Mr. Crockett stated it would appear they were not serious about fraud.

Mrs. Weakley further stated some directors do not believe in fraud or don’t think people should be held accountable. This philosophy doesn’t encourage workers to make fraud referrals. Mr. Crockett stated it was not coming out of their pockets. One fraud worker stated her director and supervisor would nit-pick everything she did; i.e., this is not really fraud or we don’t want to hold that person accountable, etc., The fraud worker stated she became so discouraged, she moved onto something else.

Mrs. Weakley further stated she attended Psychotropic Medication Consenter training. The State now requires, anytime there is a child in our custody who is on

a psychotropic medication, the worker to go through a procedure to make sure it is appropriate. This includes having a person in the agency who reviews the decision and supports it as appropriate, or denies it. At the present time the two involved are Family Service Specialist Supervisor Sylvia Stanley and Mrs. Weakley.

Mrs. Weakley further stated the previous day Eastern Regional Director Joann Wilson-Harfst made a visit to our Agency. She is trying to visit each agency twice a year. Mrs. Weakley stated some of the information she presented will be discussed in Closed Session.

The other two things she discussed included restructuring at ACDSS. They talked about a couple of options; such as putting an Assistant Director in place. Our budget cannot afford that option at the present time. Mrs. Weakley stated she made some decisions when she became Director to use that money to add to the money the State gave us to put more positions in the APS (Adult Protective Services) and CPS (Child Protective Services) Units and the Benefit Units. Mrs. Wilson-Harfst felt like with the size of our agency we need to put something else in place.

At that time Mr. Crockett asked what was Regional Director Wilson-Harfst's suggestion. Mrs. Weakley stated another idea is to create two positions, previously called Chief of Services/Benefits and currently titled Manager, that would supervise the other supervisors. Mrs. Weakley stated it would not be difficult to do this in Benefits, with a little reshuffling, however, in Services, it would be more difficult. Mrs. Weakley stated this may be possible in the future.

Mrs. Weakley then stated there are some agencies that have a Manager in one section or the other, but not both. That is often funding related. We can possibly look at that. We also discussed creating something similar to an office manager position. Her hope is when the State completes the caseload study they will give the agencies additional funding to resolve staffing issues and we may have the ability to restructure at that time. Mr. Crockett stated all suggestions are accomplished with funding.

Mrs. Weakley stated she and Administrative Office Manager Shirley Harmon had discussed this at length the previous day to see if there was anything we could do. Part of the issue is that she cannot do everything that is being asked of her because of the revolving door leading to her office and the constant demands from the State. It doesn't allow Mrs. Weakley enough time to do planning and some of the reports the State wants completed. Mrs. Weakley further stated she and Mrs. Harmon would continue to talk and see if we can come up with a creative solution.

Mrs. Weakley continued by stating Mrs. Wilson-Harfst informed us that we had been doing our evaluations incorrectly. Mrs. Weakley informed the Board she would have to bring her evaluation back to the Board as well. Apparently, we are supposed to do two separate evaluations every year. One is intended to be a plan and expectations for the upcoming year, which workers are supposed to sign off on. This would include new employees when they first come into the agency. Then, an evaluation is completed at the end of the year assessing how well the employee accomplished those expectations. Workers sign this document as well.

Mrs. Weakley stated she would be bringing back her evaluation to the Board. The only question she would have is whether the Board wanted anything added to it for the next year. If not she can do a blank one to be signed and therefore bring us into compliance. Mr. Crockett stated that would be a good idea. Mrs.

Weakley stated she would have it at the September Board meeting for signatures.

At that time Mrs. Mackie inquired whether an evaluation has to be done for every employee when they are hired. Mrs. Weakley stated she had been giving new employees a copy of their EPPE to see what their job duties were; however, she was supposed to review it with them and have them sign off on the document. She will be redoing EPPE's to correct this.

Mrs. Weakley stated we had Attorney Teresa Bliss working with us on everything that happened in the APS Unit, especially with guardianships and determining whether a client was incapacitated. Ms. Bliss retired at the same time her license expired.

Mrs. Weakley stated we have had a terrible time trying to find someone to take her place, and since her license expired she cannot even help us temporarily. She also offered us a good financial deal and we have not found anyone who is willing to do that. We contacted the Hook law firm but they will not come here for less than \$5,000. Our total funding for the year is \$7,500.

Mr. Crockett inquired whether that was \$5,000 per trip and Mrs. Weakley stated yes it was. This is the same budget used to purchase heaters and groceries, etc., for our elderly population in need.

Mr. Crockett inquired about the workload and how often we used Ms. Bliss. Mrs. Weakley stated it varies. Unfortunately, we have some cases where workers might be in and out of court when cases are contentious. We also have guardianship cases where we need an attorney three or four times per year; whereas, another year you might only have one. It varies, so it is hard to predict, or guarantee an attorney a certain amount of work. We currently have a case that is very contentious and involves two different attorneys who are arguing over the same client. Every attorney we have contacted has a conflict of interest with this case.

Mr. Sparkman inquired about the Commonwealth's Attorney assisting. Mr. Crockett stated he cannot do it as his sole practice is criminal. Mrs. Weakley stated she had contacted Accomack County Attorney Cela Berge relative to our situation. Ms. Berge stated there is an attorney who might take the contentious case for us. He is originally from the Eastern Shore, but practices across the Bay. However, he comes to the Shore frequently. His roots are here and he is in and out of court here.

Mr. Crockett inquired whether it was Wayne Williams. Mrs. Weakley stated it was. He will handle this case; however, we will need someone to help us on a regular basis and charge a reasonable rate. Mrs. Weakley stated we can ask for additional funding; however, there is a limit on that, and no guarantee we would get it. The State gave us additional funds when G.F. Horne closed for the transition process and they gave us extra money last year for companion services. This is often contingent upon other agencies not using the money they were given, and returning it for someone else to use.

Mrs. Mackie said you need a community oriented attorney. Mr. Crockett stated let me know when you find one. Mr. Sparkman inquired whether attorneys here do pro bono work. Mr. Crockett stated they do to keep their Virginia Bar License up to date. He further stated Office Supervisor Linda Rew used to work for attorneys and would probably know about that. The pro bono would not work with this but you could get a retainer. Mrs. Weakley stated Ms. Berge had

provided a list of attorneys for us to contact and we will be exploring these options.

Mrs. Weakley stated elder law is becoming a specialty and we have to get someone who has experience or background in that as there are so many unique things in elder law. Mr. Crockett stated that makes it harder to find.

Mrs. Mackie continued to **Item 7 – Child Welfare Article**. Mrs. Weakley stated she included the Child Welfare article and **Item 8 – SNAP Article** so the Board would be made aware what is going on and the kinds of things showing up in the press. The SNAP error rate continues to be reported in the press.

Mrs. Mackie inquired whether Mrs. Weakley knew our current error percentage. She further stated when Mrs. Weakley handed out something a few months ago it was not near 9%. Mrs. Weakley stated the problem for us is, because of our caseloads compared to larger agencies, one mistake puts us over the State limit. The last time they reviewed us we had one error and we had to do a Corrective Action Plan. The State only allows a 4%-5% error rate, and one error put us at a 9% error rate. We have to be super-super diligent. Mrs. Weakley stated Mrs. Mackie probably remembered that. Mrs. Mackie stated she remembered the weekly telephone calls.

Mrs. Mackie proceeded to **Item 9 – Audits in Energy Assistance and LRT (Local Review Team) – Staff and Operations**. Mrs. Weakley stated we are currently being audited in Energy Assistance – Heating and Cooling Programs. We are also having a Local Review Team audit going on for staff and operations. We sent a lot of personnel records for the State to review. Mrs. Wilson-Harfst stated this will probably receive a mark for this, however, it will probably be an error for most other agencies as well.

Mrs. Weakley further stated we were informed we are being audited for funding for child welfare.

Mrs. Mackie continued to **Item 10 – Financial Report – Administrative Office Manager Shirley Harmon**. Mrs. Harmon stated for the month of July our Total Expenditures were \$343,224.20. Our Year-To-Date Total Local Adjustment was \$78,414.87 and our Total Local Balance to Date is \$737,884.13. Mr. Crockett stated the budget looks good. He further asked if there were any red flags or issue. Mrs. Harmon stated not at this time.

On motion by Mr. Crockett, seconded by Mr. Sparkman, the Board went into Closed Session for the purpose of discussing Foster Care Noncustodial –

Case #21126775; Demotion and Director's Consult, as permitted by the Code of Virginia Section 2.2.3712.

On motion by Mr. Crockett he moved that everything discussed in Closed Session were items listed on the Agenda and no further discussion took place.

The motion was seconded by Mr. Sparkman. Mrs. Mackie called a vote (Mr. Martin – yes; Ms. Gordy – yes; Mr. Crockett – yes; Mr. Sparkman – yes; and Mrs. Mackie – yes).

The next regular meeting will be held on Tuesday, September 17, 2019 at 9:30 A.M.

On motion by Mr. Crockett, seconded by Mr. Martin, the meeting adjourned at 10:43 A.M.

APPROVED: Elsie B. Mackie

ATTEST: Vicki J. Weakley