

On motion by Mr. Crockett, seconded by Mr. Hart, the meeting adjourned at The Accomack County Board of Social Services met at its facility on Tuesday, June 16, 2020, at 9:30 A.M. The meeting was held by teleconference due to the COVID 19 pandemic. Present were Ms. Reneta Major, Chairman; Mr. Robert Crockett; Mr. John Sparkman; Mr. Donald L. Hart, Jr.; Mrs. Elsie Mackie; and Mrs. Vicki J. Weakley, Secretary.

Ms. Major called the meeting to order. Mr. Sparkman gave the Invocation. Ms. Major stated Mr. Crockett was driving and she wanted him to drive safely.

Ms. Major welcomed everyone. She stated she hoped by the July meeting we will be able to get together and practice social distancing and wear a mask.

Ms. Major proceeded to **Item 3 – Minutes of May 19, 2020**. On motion by Mr. Hart, seconded by Mr. Crockett, the Minutes of May 19, 2020 were approved as written. Ms. Major stated there had to be a roll call of votes. Mr. Crockett – Aye; Mr. Hart – Aye; Mr. Sparkman –Aye; Mrs. Mackie abstained as she was not present at the May 19, 2020 meeting; Ms. Major Aye.

Ms. Major continued to **Item 4 – Fraud Report**. Ms. Major stated she hoped everyone had looked over the report. Ms. Major further stated our Fraud Investigator Frances Bailey continued to do a good job.

At that time Mrs. Weakley requested Chairman Major to add a new item to the Agenda. It is the purging of cases for the Benefits Unit.

Ms. Major proceeded to **Item 5 – Director’s Report**. First of all, Mrs. Weakley stated we had the incorrect date on our Agenda; i.e., June 19th instead of June 16th and she apologized for the error. Mrs. Weakley stated we also need to add to the Agenda an Action item relative to the purging of Benefit cases. Ms. Major was asked to add it to the Agenda.

She further stated our Agency doors remain closed to the public; most of the benefits work is being done from home. Two of the Benefit Supervisors come to the Agency half of the week and services is in once a week. We have discussed the idea of opening up by appointment only. However, with the warmer weather some people are not wearing masks or doing social distancing so she is a little leery of conducting appointments at that time.

Mrs. Weakley stated her meetings for the month included a Budget Guidance Webinar; two Commissioner bi-weekly meetings; four weekly student supervision meetings with an employee at the Agency who is working on her Bachelor’s Degree; two Building Bridges Poverty Summit meetings – the Attachment was added as **Item 14** on the Agenda so she was going to review it now. We have discussed this a couple of times. If Board Members were interested in attending, they could sign up as the first meeting was the following day - June 17, 2020. If anyone was unable to attend, the sessions are being recorded and, you will be able to review it on the afternoon of the day it was broadcast. Ms. Major inquired whether it was too late to register. Mrs. Weakley stated it was not. The email address to register is on the Building Bridges attachment given to the Board Members.

Mrs. Weakley stated she had attended four ACDSS Supervisor’s weekly meetings; Virtual VLSSE (Virginia League of Social Services Executives) Professional Development Committee meeting did not occur as it was cancelled after the Agenda was prepared; CPMT (Community Policy and Management Team); and Regional Local Director’s meeting.

Mrs. Weakley stated she wanted to inform the Board about the Budget Guidance Webinar. She stated shortly after the webinar she received the final budget allocations. The State has not reduced our budget except for additional items they had added; i.e., raises, bonuses and range revision changes they had proposed, as well as Families First. Those items were "unallotted" but the rest of the budget remains the same. There was a note at the end stating Governor Northam could change his mind later. At this moment we will start with what we had last year. We are not looking at trying to make any changes in the Comp Plan until later in the year.

Ms. Major continued to **Item 6. Report on Response to COVID-19 Pandemic.** In terms of COVID 19 Pandemic we are continuing business pretty much as usual. We might start opening to the public the first of August.

Mrs. Weakley then proceeded to **Item 7 – Benefits Update.** She stated the Board had the SNAP Certification Interview for Applications Tracking List. She informed the Board that last year, for the entire year, benefits intake did 565 applications for benefits. This year by end of May they had already done 504. They have almost reached what they did for the entire year last year. They are extremely busy, but they are keeping up and we are on target.

Mrs. Weakley then commented on P-EBT which is the SNAP payment that is going out to children who received free lunches, at school. For Accomack County that is every child in public school. These benefits have started going out. The State has run into a couple of glitches; such as., parents who are separated and arguing over who gets the card, and it has taken longer to get the benefits out than anticipated. The State is planning to do a final emergency allotment of SNAP commencing June 17, 2020 and as far as we know, starting in July they will not receive extra SNAP benefits. That could change but there is no plan for additional benefits at this time.

Mrs. Weakley then continued to **Item 8 – Services Update.** CPS and APS complaints are starting to pick up. This is sooner than we had anticipated. She further stated we have recently hired a new Human Services Assistant III in the Adult Services Unit. We will wait until the next meeting when we have everyone here to introduce her to the Board. She is being trained so she can start doing prescreening for nursing homes and personal care services, and scheduling those screenings.

Ms. Major then proceeded to the new Agenda ACTION item – purging of Benefit cases. Mrs. Weakley stated there were 202 benefit cases that are ready to be purged. On motion by Mr. Sparkman, seconded by Mrs. Mackie, the benefit files were ordered to be purged. Ms. Major called a vote – Mr. Crockett – Aye; Mr. Hart – Aye; Mr. Sparkman – Aye; Mrs. Mackie – Aye; and Ms. Major – Aye. The motion carried.

Ms. Major proceeded to **Item 9 – LRT (Local Review Team) Audit.** Mrs. Weakley stated we have just completed another audit. The only issue the auditors cited dealt with the way we did our EPPE's (evaluations). We were unaware we had to complete a Performance Plan for the coming year at the same time we completed the EPPE. We have corrected this error. The other items noted were just verbal comments, requesting us to do better next time. This mostly consisted of minor discrepancies relative to reimbursing people at an incorrect rate. This amount was under \$1.00, and we will be more careful in the future to make sure these amounts are accurate.

Ms. Major continued to **Items 10 – May Adult Abuse Awareness Month and 11 – Foster Care Month.** Mrs. Weakley stated the State did not do the Proclamation

for Foster Care Month until the 22nd of May which is the reason it did not appear on the last Agenda. She wanted to include it and she would be remiss if she did not mention it was also Foster Care Month.

Ms. Major proceeded to **Item 12 – Foster Care Federal IV-E Results**. Mrs. Weakley stated we had discussed several things about the JLAC study and how poorly Virginia had done on the Federal IV-E evaluations. This is the funding for some of our foster children who come out of deprivation – defined as single parent homes, below a certain income. Virginia had never passed that Federal IV-E Review. We have worked very hard and according to the notice we finally passed.

Ms. Major continued to **Item 13 – FPM (Family Partnership Meeting) Award Letter**. Mrs. Weakley stated she had included this after we received a Partnership Reward added to our budget. We are only allowed to use the money for more Family Partnership Meetings. Of course, with the COVID-19 pandemic, we will be unable to have any meetings in the near future because the whole family has to be involved in the meeting. The State will only allow us to use doxie.me because it is the only platform they consider to be secure and most of our clientele do not want to use it.

Ms. Major proceeded to **Item 14 – Building Bridges Summit**. Mrs. Weakley stated we had already discussed this. Ms. Major encouraged all Board Members to register. It is something all of us could avail ourselves of and make ourselves more knowledgeable, especially in these times of unrest with COVID, racial disparities and social economic disparities. She thinks it would be prudent upon us to listen. Sometimes we can form judgments about people living in poverty, because we do not understand its dynamics. This leads to further misunderstandings and making decisions that are not helpful. Ms. Major was encouraging as many Board Members as possible to sign up for the Building Bridges Summit.

Mrs. Weakley stated she wanted to add one thing. There is a connection between poverty and racial disparities. She believes anyone who comes and participates in the Summit will learn to see things from a different perspective. It gives some ideas about what we can do in our community to make things better and understand things in a different way. She has been surprised by attitudes of people, such as the person told her “people are poor because they want to be.” Mrs. Weakley stated she did not know anyone who wanted to be poor. If we can’t understand, we will not find our way out of it. 20% of Accomack County’s population lives in poverty and it affects everything including attitude towards police and local government.

Ms. Major continued to **Item 15 – Financial Statement – Administrative Office Manager Shirley Harmon**. Ms. Harmon stated we have gone through the month of May which was the last month of the State’s Fiscal Year. Our Total Expenditures were \$336,231.53. Our Year-To-Date Total Local Adjustment was \$553,883.57 and our Total Local Balance to Date is \$262,415.43. We have one more month in the County’s Fiscal Year.

Mr. Crockett stated we have closed out the budget year with a 10% surplus. When will our books be closed out to show all receivables and expenses paid which will enable us to know the surplus amount. Ms. Harmon stated for the State we are done. The County gives us until the end of August to pay any bills incurred during the month of June. Mr. Crockett then asked if there were any red flags to which Ms. Harmon stated there were none.

Ms. Major stated while they were in Open Session she wanted to wish Mrs. Weakley a Happy Birthday. She stated they hoped she would have many more years with us at Accomack County DSS and in life.

At that time Mrs. Mackie stated Mrs. Weakley had previously mentioned reopening the Agency in August. Are these guidelines based on how each agency does reopening and does it matter if the County does it differently? Mrs. Weakley stated she had contacted Accomack County Administrator Mike Mason a couple of times to see what the County is doing. She did not want to be totally out of sync with the County, but she has a number of people on staff who are vulnerable and are concerned about coming back to the agency. We might have some people not come back as soon as everyone else does. We are trying to make alterations to front area so workers will have a separation between the benefit worker or service worker and client. She is worried about a possible resurgence. If someone here gets COVID 19, the agency will shut down. We are trying to balance all of it and pay attention to what the County is doing at the same time.

Mr. Crockett stated as he had discussed with Ms. Major the previous day, he was going to sign off for the Closed Session as he was not in a secure location. Ms. Major stated she understood.

At that time Mr. Sparkman stated to Mr. Crockett this was his last meeting and he wanted Robert to know he had been a pleasure and honor to serve with him. Mr. Crockett stated he was sorry he had forgotten it was his last meeting. He stated it had been a pleasure to serve with him as well and he had been a benefit to the ACDSS Board. Mr. Crockett further stated he thoroughly enjoyed their conversations about honeybees. He said he knew more about honeybees now since he and Mr. Sparkman had gotten to know each other. Mr. Sparkman stated he hoped Mr. Crockett had a nice day and was safe wherever he was driving.

On motion by Mr. Hart, seconded by Mr. Sparkman, the Board went into Closed Session for the purpose of discussing EPPE – Shirley Harmon; and Director’s Consult, as permitted by the Code of Virginia Section 2.2.3712.

On motion by Ms. Mackie, seconded by Mr. Sparkman, the Board returned from Closed Session and confirmed the only items discussed were the ones listed on the Board Members’ Agenda. Ms. Major called a vote (Mr. Hart – yes; Mr. Sparkman – yes; Mrs. Mackie – yes; and Ms. Major – yes.)

On motion by Mr. Sparkman, seconded by Mrs. Mackie, the EPPE – Shirley Harmon – was approved. Ms. Major called a vote (Mr. Hart – yes; Mr. Sparkman – yes; Mrs. Mackie – yes; and Ms. Major – yes.)

At that time Mr. Sparkman asked if he could speak to the Board Members. He stated it had been a pleasure to serve with everyone. He wished everyone the best. He further stated Ms. Major was the only one left when he came on the Board eight years ago and she was the only one left when he leaves the Board.

Ms. Major stated the Board wished him the best of luck and it had also been a pleasure to serve with him. She further stated he had brought a lot of expertise and wisdom to the Board.

Ms. Major stated the next meeting would be held on July 21, 2020 at 9:30 A.M. She also hoped and if the Lord says the same, the Board can meet in person on July 21, 2002.

On motion by Mr. Sparkman, seconded by Mrs. Mackie, the meeting adjourned at 10:10 A.M.

APPROVED: C, Reneta Major

ATTEST: Vicki J. Weakley