

The Accomack County Board of Social Services met at its facility on Tuesday, December 21, 2021, at 9:30 A.M. Present in person were Ms. Reneta Major, Chairman; Mr. David Whalen; Mr. Jackie H. Phillips; and Mrs. Vicki J. Weakley, Secretary.

Ms. Major called the meeting to order and welcomed the Board Members. Ms. Major stated that a quorum had not been met for this meeting; therefore, all voting matters will be continued to the next regularly scheduled meeting. Mr. Phillips gave the Invocation.

Ms. Major proceeded to **Item 3 - Approve Minutes of October 19, 2021**. No corrections are noted and the minutes will be approved at the next regular meeting.

Ms. Major continued to **Item 4 – Introduction of new Family Services Specialist I – Suzanne Reed; Fraud Investigator I – Antron Stratton; Office Associate II – Tamekia Veney**. Mrs. Weakley introduced the new staff as follows: Antron Stratton has been performing as an Emergency Fraud Investigator since the departure of Ms. Bailey and is now the full-time Fraud Investigator; Suzanne Reed is in the Adult Protective Services Unit performing investigations, screenings and ongoing, and Tamekia Veney is in the Clerical Unit. On behalf of the Board, Ms. Major welcomed the new employees to the agency. The Board in unison expressed the same.

Ms. Major proceeded to **Item 5 – Fraud Report**. As the new Fraud Investigator has just started, there is no monthly report this month.

Ms. Major continued to **Item 6 – Director’s Notes**. Mrs. Weakley stated that, since the last Board meeting, she attended Poverty work group, Deputy Commissioner meeting (Mrs. Weakley stated that we are trying to bring Network Tables to the Shore that will be a stopgap to provide emergency services to people so they do not fall into worse situations than they may already be in. Network Tables is a group of people from the community that come together and listen to situations and try to find solutions. It is hoped that funding will be found to help resolve issues. Network Tables comes from the Open Table Model discussed in previous meetings. Open Table group will work with one person at a time, for the period of one year. Network Tables work to resolve short-term issues, before they become larger issues. The State is also trying to do something similar having the responsibility lie with the benefit workers. Discussions have been held with the Deputy Commissioner for this agency to use Network Tables as a solution and then the responsibility will not fall solely on this agency and we would be providing the service to the entire community. Beginning the new year, Mrs. Weakley stated that she will be sitting on a Network Table that is through health insurance. Care coordinators are the only ones who can make referrals to this particular table. Mrs. Weakley stated that she, the Director of Northampton County DSS, and the Deputy Commissioner will sit on the table so that they will have a better understanding of how it performs and have a better handle on how to set it up here. The Open Table group will be doing the training and getting us acclimated.), CPMT (Community Policy & Management Team) retreat, CPMT regular monthly meeting, three scheduled employment interviews (One interview was a no show and the other two were introduced to the Board this morning.), Commissioner’s “coffee break”, Benefits Supervisor meeting (Discussions are being made on the workload, the new vacancies, and the possibility of restructuring to see if there is a more efficient way of doing things. The vacancies include one employee who is out on FMLA until sometime next year, a retirement, and a resignation. The newly hired staff have just completed their training and will be able to start obtaining a caseload.), Regional Director’s meeting including budget training, Member Helping Members meeting, County Board meeting.

Ms. Major proceeded to **Item 7 – COVID Update**. Mrs. Weakley stated that we are still struggling with the stress. She believes that the most stressful thing is the State telling agencies that the extended benefits are ending and then retracting it. Initially we were told that the end of December they were terminating the no interview rule for benefits and retracted to say that the no interview rule would be in effect until the end of March. We understand why clients may not believe us when we try to educate them on the upcoming changes; however, there will come a time that the extra benefits will end and we can only hope that the State will send out official notices to the clients.

Ms. Major continued to **Item 8 – Purge – Position Postings – ACTION; Item 9 – Purge – Foster Care Case – ACTION, Item 10 – Purge – Benefits Records - ACTION.** Ms. Major stated that no action could be taken until the next regular meeting.

Ms. Major proceeded to **Item 11 – Dashboard.** Mrs. Weakley stated that the benefits dashboard statistics are not bad with the exception of Medicaid. The State placed the statement on the dashboard that is supposed to inform people that the Medicaid figures include what is coming from CoverVA, the online application process. The applications from CoverVA are not received by the agency until they finish their part. Sometimes they will complete the application and approve it or deny it, other times they will send it to the agency half completed. We have 45 days to complete the applications and the State has transferred them to the agency incomplete on the 120th day. Once the transfer is made to the agency, it will count against the agency even though we had nothing to do with it nor had any control over the tardiness. The State says they have no way to correct the statistics once the application had been transferred to the agency. The State is trying to fix this issue. The Dashboard is on the public website and appears as though we are not in compliance. Although the report states that this figure is an “aggregate count”. The public is not going to be aware of what that means. Directors have been unsuccessful having the State word it in non-technical language.

The childcare statistics went down so the agency is out of compliance. Unfortunately, it only takes one case to put the agency in noncompliance and that is what occurred. The case was due on the day the system went down across the state. The State will not allow us to close a case early. The case is required to be closed on the 30th day with no allowances.

The Child Welfare statistics are not looking good. The unit currently has five vacancies. The advertisement for a Family Service Specialists has been running since July 2021 and we have not been able to find anyone who qualifies. An interview has been set up today for an applicant that looks good on paper. It has been a great challenge for the Child Welfare Unit to see children in the appropriate timeframe and have cases completed and closed on time. The supervisor has taken on the responsibility of adoption and interstate compact cases to assist her unit.

Ms. Major continued to **Item 6 – Financial Statement – Administrative Office Manager – Wendy Linton.** Ms. Linton stated the Local Budget was \$816,299.00. The Year-To-Date Local Expenditures is \$282,944.63, the Total Local Balance-To-Date is \$533,354.37 and we are running about 10% below our budget.

Closed Session - On motion by Mr. Phillips, seconded by Mr. Whalen, the Board went into Closed Session for the purpose of discussing Employee Separations: Alex Cruz, Camesha White, and Kathy Mason (retirement), and EPPE: Wendy Linton, Michelle Hart, and Sylvia Stanley, and Director’s Consult as permitted by the Code of Virginia, Section 2.2.3712.

On motion by Mr. Phillips, seconded by Mr. Whalen, 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. Whalen – yes; Mr. Phillips – yes; Ms. Major – yes). Due to lack of a Quorum, these matters will be revisited in January.

The next Board Meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, January 18, 2021, at 9:30 A.M.

On motion by Mr. Whalen seconded by Mr. Phillips, the meeting adjourned at 10:31 A.M.

APPROVED: **Cassandra Reneta Major** _____

ATTEST: **Vicki Weakley** _____