

The Accomack County Board of Social Services met at its facility on Tuesday, May 17, 2022, at 9:30 A.M. Present in person were Ms. Reneta Major, Chairman; Mrs. Elsie Mackie, Vice-Chairman; Mr. David Whalen; Mr. Jackie H. Phillips; Mr. Robert Martin; and Mrs. Vicki J. Weakley, Secretary.

Ms. Major called the meeting to order and welcomed the Board Members. Mr. Phillips gave the Invocation.

Ms. Major proceeded to **Item 3 – Introduction of new employee: Crystal Williams, Fiscal Assistant III**. Mrs. Weakley introduced Mrs. Williams who was previously with the agency for 11 ½ years as a Family Services Specialist in the Child Welfare Unit and has returned to the agency as a Fiscal Assistant III in the Fiscal Unit. Ms. Major welcomed Mrs. Williams back to the agency. The Board in unison expressed the same.

Ms. Major continued to **Item 4 - Approve Minutes of April 19, 2022**. Mr. Whalen made a motion, seconded by Mr. Phillips, to approve the Minutes as written. Hearing no discussion, Ms. Major called a vote for all in favor to signify by Aye. The motion carried.

Ms. Major proceeded to **Item 5 – Fraud Report**. Ms. Linton expressed that the report previously presented to the Board by Mr. Stratton did not reflect actual revenue. The funds reported were funds he had intercepted. Mr. Stratton has since revised his report to the Board to reflect revenue funds.

Ms. Major continued to **Item 6 – Director’s Notes**. Mrs. Weakley stated that, since the last Board meeting, she attended a Civil Rights Training (annual requirement), Virtual Director’s Coffee Break, Network Table, Open Table poverty workgroup (through Healthy Communities, but that will change to the Health Department), Employment Interview (Fiscal Assistant), CSA (Children’s Services Act) Gap Survey Meeting (this is an annual meeting that identifies gaps in services within our community. Despite efforts, the gaps remain the same because providers do not wish to cross the Chesapeake Bay Bridge & Tunnel to provide services), VLSSE (Virginia League of Social Services Executives) Conference (in Roanoke) Adult Protective Services and Adult Services are becoming more prominent), Realignment, and Supervisor’s meeting.

Mrs. Weakley stated that she has not received verification that the Governor’s budget has been approved. It is uncertain if a 5% or 4% raise will occur in July. Ms. Major inquired if the budget had passed through both the Senate and the House. Mrs. Weakley responded that the Senate approved a 5% raise with a bonus for State employees which does include locally administered localities. The House changed it to 4% with at 1% one-time bonus. Ms. Major stated that Northampton County DSS employees have been notified that State and Local employees would receive the 5% raise. Ms. Linton interjected that when the State sent out the budget allotments, a 5% increase was included.

Preparation is still underway for when the Public Health Emergency (PHE) comes to a halt. It was anticipated that if the PHE was to end in mid-July, the State was required to send notification by April 18, 2022, if the PHE was going to end mid-July, but no notice has been received. Ms. Major stated that at the BPRO/POSSESS/VASWAP conference, the Commissioner stated that he believed the PHE was going to be pushed back further. Mrs. Weakley continued to say that the State continues preparation by encouraging workers to have all TANF recipients that are working to sign up for the VIEW program. As of May 25, 2022, the State will begin monthly calls in preparation for when the PHE ends.

When initially approved, the Families First prevention program, that began last year, had no local match. It is now going into the regular budget pool. The agency will be requesting a 15.5% match from the County for those services. If the agency needs to request additional funding it can be put through Pass-Through. This agency has not had to use Pass-Through for a number of years. Pass-Through has a higher contribution from the County, but up to this point we have been able to suffice through the budget. The Pass-Through amount has decreased recently as it is related to Random Moment Sampling (RMS). RMS is used to document the activities of staff. Periodically, the State sends out a RMS notice to the agency’s fiscal office and an email to the employee at the same time. The worker is to provide what they are doing at that moment. RMS is then used to

determine budgets and how much the Pass-Through will be. Because there has been little to no activity on Medicaid and all renewals and updates have ceased due to the pandemic, none or very few of the RMS's are pinged on Medicaid; therefore, the Pass-Through amount has decreased. Unfortunately, the agency has no control over that and it's just one of the unintended consequences of all the adjustments made during COVID. It is expected that once the PHE ends that the Pass-Through amount will increase. Ms. Linton stated that the percentage for Pass-Through is 34% Federal and 66% Local. The new Regional Area Manager (RAM) has stated that some agencies use Pass-Through monthly instead of at the end of the fiscal year. This agency's budget is running 17% below budget and the Pass-Through funds are not needed.

Mrs. Weakley continued that no word has been given on the mass release of prisoners that will occur in July and August of this year. A few agencies in the state have received notification of some of the releases, but this locality has not.

The agency has had multiple issues with bandwidth and it has created problems for staff with trainings and to hold full staff meetings. The system often is overloaded and workers will lose whatever they were working on at the time. It creates a great deal of frustration. Once the Governor's budget passes, \$70 million has been allotted to improve the bandwidth. With the approaching adjustments for Medicaid, we are hopeful it will solve the issues.

Ms. Major proceeded to **Item 7 – COVID Update**. Mrs. Weakley stated that staff have been working one day a week from home. There have been a few staff that are out because of COVID exposure or a positive result and but it has been manageable up to this point.

Ms. Major continued to **Item 8 – Certificate of Recognition for Foster Care Month & Adult Abuse Prevention Month**. Mrs. Weakley stated the purple pinwheels out in front of the agency are to bring awareness for Adult Abuse Prevention Month. The Child Welfare Unit will hold a Foster Care appreciation event for the foster parents, in recognition of Foster Care month.

Ms. Major proceeded to **Item 9 – Purge of BPS (Benefits Programs) Records and Fiscal Records**. Mrs. Weakley stated that Benefit records from January 1993 through December 2016 and Fiscal Records (Payables, County Warrant Registers and Reports, POSO Invoices, and Case Actions – Assistance) from January 2005 through December 2018 are ready to be purged according to State guidelines for destruction. Mr. Whalen made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Mackie, that the records, collectively, be purged. Hearing no discussion, Ms. Major called a vote for all in favor to signify by Aye. The motion carried.

Ms. Major continued to **Item 10 – Realignment Update**. Mrs. Weakley stated that the memo before the Board members is what will be sent to staff. Ms. Linton and she have spent numerous hours on the realignment and it has been completed. As stated previously, the raise to minimums created a stir amongst employees and hopefully the realignment has fixed those issues. Mr. Martin raised the question if it was because of the starting salary of new employees. Mrs. Weakley responded that when the State raised the minimum salaries, a lot of the new employees were making the same amount as those who worked in positions for 3 or 4 years. The Comp Plan was changed a year ago that would award a 5% raise to employees after completion of their probation, which seemed fair to reward for hard work; however, that complicated things even more with the raise to minimums. Employees

were told that the realignment was coming, but it would take time. Ms. Major inquired what the realignment percentages were. Mrs. Weakley stated that the lowest percentage was 2% and the highest was 10% which is the State maximum. According to the guidelines, there are some employees that are 25% to 40% below what they should be, but there is no way to compensate them, due to of the State's limitation and budget constrictions. A lot of consideration and criteria goes into the realignment to make it as fair as possible. The State and the RAM has approved the way the realignment was figured. It is anticipated that the realignment will be reflected in the last paycheck for the month of May. Ms. Major inquired if a letter would be sent to employees and if that letter would contain the percentage the employee received. Mrs. Weakley stated that she will send out a letter to each employee with their new salary, but it will not contain the

percentage. Mr. Phillips inquired how often a realignment is done. Mrs. Weakley responded that there is no timeframe or requirement to complete one. The Comp Plan states that if we decide we are going to do a realignment it must be brought before the Board for approval. Mr. Phillips asked when the last realignment occurred. Ms. Mackie stated that it was approximately 15 years ago. The Board commended Mrs. Weakley for taking the time to implement and complete the realignment for staff.

Ms. Major proceeded to **Item 11 – Financial Statement – Administrative Office Manager – Wendy Linton**. Ms. Linton stated the Local Budget was \$861,543.00. The Year-To-Date Local Expenditures is \$536,847.66 and the Total Local Balance-To-Date is \$324,695.34. Ms. Linton also stated that based on the total expenditures, we are running about 17% below budget. Ms. Linton stated she has asked the county for a week extension to close out the year in case there are some items outstanding because on the last day of May the County will retrieve the funds that have not been used.

**Closed Session** - On motion by Mr. Phillips, seconded by Mr. Martin, the Board went into Closed Session for the purpose of discussing items stated on the Agenda (foster care update, EPPE: Nadine Greenley and Gar Kellam, 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 (Mrs. Mackie – yes; Mr. Whalen – yes; Mr. Martin – yes; Mr. Phillips – yes; Ms. Major – yes). The motion has carried.

Mr. Phillips made a motion, seconded by Mr. Whalen, that the Board accept the EPPE's presented. Hearing no discussion, Ms. Major called a vote for all in favor to signify by Aye. The motion carried.

The next Board Meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, June 21, 2022, at 9:30 A.M.

On motion by Mr. Whalen seconded by Mr. Phillips, the meeting adjourned at 10:32 A.M.

APPROVED: **Cassandra Reneta Major** \_\_\_\_\_

ATTEST: **Vicki Weakley** \_\_\_\_\_