

The Accomack County Board of Social Services met at its facility on Tuesday, September 20, 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; 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 continued to **Item 3 - Approve Minutes of August 16, 2022**. Mr. Phillips made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Mackie, 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 4 – Fraud Report**. Mrs. Weakley stated that fraud has been very challenging. People became used to not paying bills during the pandemic including payments due to this agency. They continue to think they do not have to pay now. That has been a challenge for the last few months. There have been other unique situations where entries are not in the computer, and the Fraud worker has been spending a great deal of time tracking those down and trying to get them corrected. As the fraud cases are being sorted through, they are finding a lot of situations where cases were dropped. There were a significant amount of old files that had been listed as fraud, but were not actually fraud cases. Those cases had been referred to workers as fraud and investigated by the worker to confirm they were not fraud, but the file had been stamped as fraud. Those cases should have been purged some time ago, but in the process of trying to figure out what is and isn't okay to purge there were cases found that clients had stopped paying on. Some of the cases had been referred for tax interception, but it appears no funds were ever intercepted. Mrs. Mackie inquired if Mrs. Weakley thought that some of this occurred during a computer program change. Mrs. Weakley stated she and the supervisors were under the impression that all of the fraud cases were transferred, but we have learned that some were not transferred over to the new VACMS program. It appears the current cases were transferred, but older cases from 2017 and earlier did not. Mrs. Mackie stated that she recalls the older cases were having to be entered manually. Mrs. Weakley confirmed she was correct. The fraud investigator at the time of this change did not care for using the computer and cases before 2017 were not put into the system. Other cases are being found where persons were permanently disqualified and it was never entered into the system. Those clients are now receiving benefits again, because the system did not alert to the fraud case. The fraud investigator is working hard to straighten this out and to have clients begin paying again, as well as figuring out why tax intercepts for either the state or federal, did not produce any funds. It appears as if fraud is having to be recreated from the ground floor up. Mrs. Mackie voiced her concern that, as stated in the last meeting, funds need to be collected to supplement the fraud investigator's salary and it is a shame that this is happening. She recalls that the VACMS system was horrible in the beginning, but it must have been a computer glitch in part, because the disqualifications should have been put in by the worker, not the fraud investigator. It seems to be a circle of errors. Mrs. Weakley concurred. Ms. Major inquired if there was a moratorium for payments with the agency during the pandemic because some people may not know. Mrs. Weakley stated, no, clients were still required to pay. The mailbox in front of the building was always accessible for clients to drop off payments.

Ms. Major continued to **Item 5 – Director's Notes**. Mrs. Weakley stated that since the last Board meeting, she attended two virtual meetings with the Commissioner, a Network Table meeting, Open Table meeting, one CPS interview, one Clerical interview (a part-time worker who speaks Spanish was hired. We hope to make that a full-time position.), IV-E audit review (this is a combination of Child Welfare and Benefits. IV-E is part of the Social Security Act and it continues to operate on the 1970's rules of the old AFDC to make children eligible or not eligible if they come out of a single parent household when they are removed. The FEDS keep a close watch on this and we are audited constantly on how it is being done. The agency did very well on that audit.), CPMT (Community Planning and Management Team) meeting, a Supervisor's meeting, and multiple personnel interviews (to be discussed during closed session).

Ms. Major proceeded to **Item 6 – Child Welfare Workforce Month**. Mrs. Weakley stated that the resolution was placed in the board packets to make members aware of the recognition. Ms. Major inquired if the agency would be doing anything special for child welfare. Mrs. Weakley replied no, the agency acknowledges Child Welfare on other

occasions such as Social Worker month, child abuse prevention month and foster care month.

Ms. Major continued to **Item 7 COVID Update**. Mrs. Weakley stated that the PHE (Public Health Emergency) continues. Emergency allotments continue for the additional SNAP benefits so that everyone is receiving the maximum. The State will only approve the emergency allotments one month at a time, but the intention is continue it as long as the PHE lasts. The Commissioner stated that he is hearing rumors that it will be approved until April 2023, but there is no official word at this time. The P-EBT, SNAP benefits given to all of the children in Accomack County because of our poverty levels, went out to every child in Accomack County because they are all eligible for free lunch. This created a multitude of issues. The State issued what they called Summer P-EBT. All cards were not issued on the same day for fear of overloading the system. The public became aware by word of mouth and began calling. Those persons who did not receive their card, because they were not part of the first release, began demanding cards from staff. New cards were issued by the agency and then the State issued new cards cancelling out the first cards. This occurred at least three times and then the system went down as well. Some people had thrown away their cards from the year prior because they believed that the funds wouldn't be issued again and those people also required new cards. Mrs. Mackie asked confirming that each child in Accomack County received funds. Mrs. Weakley stated, yes, and added that this is probably a preview of what it will be like when the State finally shuts PEBT down.

Ms. Major proceeded to **Item 8 – Financial Statement – Administrative Office Manager – Wendy Linton**. Ms. Linton stated that the beginning budget was \$846,543.00. The Year-To-Date Local Expenditures were \$124,915.79, and the Total Local Balance-To-Date is \$739,627.21. Ms. Linton stated that to date, we are running about 6% below budget. The county just closed out the last fiscal year so we are catching up with this year, therefore, expenses will start rising.

Mrs. Weakley extended an invitation to the Board members to participate in the agency worker appreciation day on October 7th.

Closed Session - On motion by Mr. Phillips, seconded by Mr. Whalen, the Board went into Closed Session for the purpose of discussing items stated on the Agenda (Board acceptance – Foster Care Case #21199323, Employee Separations, 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. Phillips – yes; Ms. Major – yes). The motion carried.

Mr. Phillips made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Mackie, that the Board accept the proposed foster care case #21199323. Ms. Major called a vote for all in favor to signify by Aye. The motion carried.

The next Board Meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, October 18, 2022, at 9:30 A.M.

On motion by Mr. Phillips seconded by Mr. Whalen, the meeting adjourned at 11:17 A.M.

APPROVED: **Cassandra Reneta Major**

ATTEST: **Vicki Weakley**