

The Accomack County Board of Social Services met at its facility on Tuesday, November 19, 2013, at 9:30 A.M. Present were Mr. R. Dodd Obenshain, Chairman; Ms. Kay W. Lewis, Vice-Chairman; Ms. Betty Wood; Ms. Reneta Major; Ms. Laura B. Gordy; Mr. John Sparkman; and Mrs. Mary E. Parker, Secretary.

Mr. Obenshain called the meeting to order. Ms. Major gave the Invocation.

Mr. Obenshain proceeded to **Item 3 – Approve Minutes of October 15, 2013.** On motion by Ms. Major, seconded by Ms. Lewis, the Minutes of October 15, 2013 were approved as written.

Mr. Obenshain continued to **Item 4 – Fraud Update.** Ms. Wood stated she is always amazed at how much Fraud Investigator Jack Thomas does.

Mr. Obenshain proceeded to **Item 5 – Director's Update. Community Relations:** On November 14, 2013 Mrs. Parker attended the annual ESCC Advisory Committee meeting as she is on the Workforce Advisory Committee. They provided dinner and had a video of different students and why they decided to go to the ESCC. Mrs. Parker's committee got together and talked about the needs in our workforce, our agency and the people we serve. Mrs. Parker stated they meet annually.

Regular Meetings: On October 24, 2013 Mrs. Parker attended a Disaster Preparedness Coalition meeting.

On November 12, 2013 Mrs. Parker attended a regular CPMT meeting.

On November 14, 2013 Mrs. Parker attended a Community Partners of the Eastern Shore meeting. This was with their rapid response group trying to help people with mental health issues and people who do not have a place to live.

Regional/State: On November 6-8/2013 Mrs. Parker attended the League of Social Services Fall Conference in Glen Allen, VA.

Mr. Obenshain continued to **Item 6 – Follow-up Information Regarding Health Insurance – Family Services Supervisor Elizabeth Beasley.** Mrs. Beasley stated they had a quick meeting the previous week about the actuarial study which showed the County could save a considerable amount of money by proceeding with the County's idea previously discussed relative to payment of retirees' medical insurance premiums. They stated the County would need approximately \$699,000 in a fund to continue the premium coverage going forward. Mrs. Beasley stated according to Finance Director Mike Mason the County has put no money aside to do this. In the future they want to not pay a retiree's benefit and not let retirees stay on the plan after July 1, 2017. That would bring down the amount of money the County should have to put aside to \$177,000. It will lower it based on that study because we would not get an explanation of what went into the study or how it was done. There is some explanation in the back of the health package.

Mrs. Beasley stated they discussed what other neighboring areas do. They had looked at the Town of Chincoteague, Ocean City, Salisbury, Worcester County and Wallops to get general ideas. The Town of Chincoteague has been paying 100% of the Blue Cross-Blue Shield extended. Ocean City has been paying 50% and the County of Worcester has been paying 90% of the Medicare supplement for retirees and spouses. Mrs. Beasley stated this is probably why teachers are leaving Accomack County schools and going north to Pocomoke, Maryland for the larger salaries and benefit packages.

An extensive discussion followed relative to the issues at hand. Mr. Obenshain inquired why a fund of \$699,000 had not been set up by Accomack County to cover the pending situation. Mrs. Beasley stated it was her understanding when the Blue Cross-Blue Shield went public Accomack County got a large chunk of money. She further stated if they had put that money aside we would not have these issues at the present time. Mr. Obenshain inquired after all of these years how many retirees would this actually affect. Mrs. Beasley stated there are approximately nine retirees on the plan, seven of which are DSS former employees. Mrs. Beasley stated they took a vote and she was the only nay vote on the committee.

Ms. Gordy inquired who was on the committee. Ms. Beasley stated Mike Mason, Amy Ford and Dot Marshall of Accomack County Central Accounting; Jeb Wilson of Accomack County Public Works; Billie Jean Miles of Accomack County Public Safety; and normally Todd Wessells from Accomack County Sheriff's Office. Mrs. Beasley stated from the beginning Mike Mason had wanted to lower the cost of insurance as he stated the County did not have the money to pay for it. He also wants to encourage people who are 55 to retire. Mr. Obenshain stated it did not seem like a legal policy to try and push someone out of a job.

Mr. Obenshain then stated it would seem there should be other options for us to take on this. Mrs. Parker stated there would be a public hearing and retirees could attend and voice his/her opinion. Mr. Obenshain stated he would hope they would let the voices of people who are in favor of the present plan be heard. Mrs. Parker stated there was a bill before the General Assembly last year that requested localities be allowed to join the State health care plan. She did not know whether that had been withdrawn or defeated. Mr. Obenshain requested Mrs. Beasley to let the ACDSS Board know when the public hearing would be held.

Mr. Obenshain thanked Mrs. Beasley for her presentation.

Mr. Obenshain continued to **Item 7 – Report on VaCMS and MAGI**. Mrs. Parker introduced Benefit Program Specialist II Tammy Bennett, Benefit Program Specialists III Mary Beasley and Elsie Mackie and Benefit Program Supervisor Linda Spence to the Board. She further stated they are our VaCMS Ambassadors. Benefit Program Supervisor Linda Spence stated we have frustrated workers and no one to help them. People are passing the buck when you are trying to get an answer to an issue. They tell you they cannot help you and there is no written manual; however, they say one is forthcoming but no indication of when it will be provided. They had a good notice of action system for the SNAP program and they designed their own notice system; however, there are three or four systems we have to go into to serve one client with multiple programs; i.e., TANF, SNAP and Medicaid. We have had several issues where we cannot get the client on Medicaid without circumventing the new system and putting it in the back door in order to get the client services they are eligible to receive. It is a cumbersome system. VaCMS Ambassadors attended a one-day hands on training and proctored the one-day webinar attended by the rest of our Benefit Program staff but when they were sitting in the training, the system kept going down. The training ended at 4 P.M. each day, so whether you were finished with the hands on training or waiting for the system to come back up to complete the webinar, and there was no way to complete it after 4 p.m.

Ms. Beasley stated the training they received across the Bay was sketchy at best and she did not think it was the trainer's fault. There was a loss of communication between what the people who made the system had to do and us as to what we had to do on a daily basis. At future trainings we received

extra tidbits of information that popped up which had not been explained at the previous trainings. We have a small handbook that tells us the basics; i.e., whether they are self employed, etc. for normal every day applications. However, when you have to break it up between the siblings, this parent and this income, it is not laid out and you are not shown how to do it. There is a lot of repetition with it. The most irritating factor is you are going along and a window pops up and says "we are going to time you out." If you do not hit the button and go back through it you are completely knocked out and you have to go back and do it again. The other issue is she was able to get through three applications and have Supervisor Spence approve them. The next day she had an alert stating resolve manually in MMIS, which meant the systems were not talking so she had to go in the back door and redo it after she had spent approximately three hours on the application. There is a lot of repetition and it does not have a good flow. You put in a help ticket and it sometimes takes three weeks to get a response.

Ms. Mackie stated it is a time consuming system. You can spend as much as two hours putting in an application and when you get done you cannot approve it because it had not connected with the Federal hub. At that point it states the application is pending for verifications for policy; i.e., identification for children under the age of 16. She has a case with one 10 year old and one 12 year old that she cannot get Medicaid for because the Hub will not interact to connect and it leaves it pending and we cannot do an override in the system. She sent a ticket yesterday and got a response that morning stating it was a Federal Government issue and they could not help. We have nowhere to go to get it fixed. This is time consuming and we cannot get anything completed. Mr. Obenshain inquired whether they were keeping clients sitting in front of them the entire time. Ms. Mackie stated they were not. Mrs. Parker stated the workers cannot get their work done now and how are they going to find the time and the capacity to go back and keep a record of what they have done and how they did it so a worker can go back and work on it one more time in a system that has previously failed you. Ms. Spence stated they are talking about doing a training to put the recerts into the system which is meaningless as we cannot even get the applications to process correctly.

Mr. Obenshain inquired whether there was anyone we could contact at the State level to assist us with the issues. Mrs. Parker stated we can call the State and ask for someone to come and look at it. DeLoitte is the third party of the system. We also have VITA which is where we call when we have trouble getting something through the system. They are saying it is not a system problem here there is a problem with the software. Mrs. Parker stated there has not been enough training and it was too rushed. A group of people are saying we need to go forward; however, there has to be a line where someone says we have to stop here and gather our wits about us and request our contractor get in there and do what needs to be done. They cannot continue to load it on the local agencies and staff and expect us to pick up the pieces. Mr. Obenshain inquired whether the Commissioner is aware of these issues and Mrs. Parker stated she is.

On motion by Ms. Major, seconded by Mr. Sparkman, Mrs. Parker was requested to send a letter to the DSS Commissioner asking for help and notifying them of the situation at hand. On behalf of the Board Mr. Obenshain thanked Ms. Spence and her staff for the presentation.

Mr. Obenshain proceeded to **Item 8 – Virginia Local Disability Program (VDLP)**. Mrs. Parker stated effective January 1, 2014 any employee who is hired will participate in a hybrid VRS retirement plan. They will have a lesser plan than Plan 1 and 2 VRS members. The hybrid plan will set aside 4% to VRS for the amount that will be put in for the employee each month and 1% will go into a

defined IRA that the employee will choose. Along with that they will have coverage through short and long disability programs; i.e., they will no longer have VRS disability but rather a Short and Long Term Disability Program.

With the Mandated Short and Long Term Disability Benefit for Hybrid Retirement Plan participants the State Board of Social Services will be providing options for Local Social Service Boards to choose regarding Sick Leave. Those options are:

- 1) Allow all employees to accrue sick leave at the current rate in the Administrative/HR Manual.
- 2) If passed by the State Board on December 12, allow hybrid employees to follow the provisions of the Disability Leave Program (sick leave and family and personal leave credits instead of accrued sick leave).
- 3) Deviate to Accomack County's leave policies for all employees.

Mrs. Parker stated she would recommend option #2. The hybrids use the new leave plan. She has spoken with Administrative Office Manager Shirley Harmon about how it will be managed and for everyone else to leave it to accrued leave.

Mr. Obenshain inquired what happens when someone who is out on short term disability. Could their job be in jeopardy? Mrs. Parker stated yes. He further inquired as to the period of time a worker has to be out before an issue occurs. Mrs. Parker stated we hold positions for short term employees for six months. Then it goes to long term and if the worker does not return he/she would be fired.

On motion by Mr. Sparkman, seconded by Ms. Lewis, the Board accepted the second recommendation **"If passed by the State Board on December 12, allow hybrid employees to follow the provisions of the Disability Leave Program (sick leave and family and personal leave credits instead of accrued sick leave)."**

Mr. Obenshain continued to **Item 9 – Financial Statement – Administrative Office Manager Shirley Harmon**. Ms. Harmon stated for the month of October our Total Expenditures were \$297,468.59. Our Year-to-Date Total Local Adjustment was \$217,595.95 and our Total Local Balance to Date is \$506,515.05.

Mr. Sparkman asked Ms. Harmon whether we were on track and Ms. Harmon stated we are good.

Mrs. Parker informed the Board she had received the spread sheet from the State relative to the internal realignment. She further stated she had tried to reach someone at the State level the prior day; however, no one had returned her call.

On motion by Ms. Major, seconded by Ms. Lewis, the Board went into Closed Session for the purpose of discussing Personnel (Leave Without Pay and Employment) and Release of Custody (#001-051959007 and #0011051958007), as permitted by the Code of Virginia Section 2.2-3712.

On motion by Mrs. Wood, seconded by Ms. Lewis, the Board returned to Open Session. On motion by Ms. Wood, seconded by Mr. Sparkman, the Board confirmed the matters discussed in Closed Session (Ms. Wood – yes; Ms. Major – yes; Ms. Gordy – yes; Ms. Lewis – yes; and Mr. Sparkman – yes).

On motion by Ms. Wood, seconded by Ms. Major, the Board was polled (Ms. Wood – yes; Ms. Major – yes; Ms. Gordy – yes; Ms. Lewis – yes; Mr. Sparkman – yes) and approved the following:

- I. Personnel:
 1. Leave Without Pay:
 - a. Theresa Franklin – Benefit Program Specialist II – 36 Hrs. (10/2, 22, 23, 24/13)
 2. Employment:
 - a. Fabiola Perez-Torres – Emergency Office Associate II – eff. 10/15/13
 - b. Jane Wyatt – Emergency Office Associate II – eff. 10/22/13

On motion by Ms. Wood, seconded by Ms. Lewis, the Board was polled (Ms. Wood – yes; Ms. Major – yes; Ms. Gordy – yes; Ms. Lewis – yes; Mr. Sparkman – yes) and approved the following:

- II Release of Custody:
 - a. Foster Care Case #001-051959007
 - b. Foster Care Case #001051958007

Mr. Sparkman inquired whether we would be having a Christmas luncheon for staff. Mrs. Parker stated we would probably have it on the December 17, 2013 Board date. She further stated she would notify them of the definite date and time.

The meeting adjourned at 11:10 A.M.

APPROVED: **R. Dodd Obenshain** _____

ATTEST: **Mary E. Parker** _____