

The Accomack County Board of Social Services met at its facility on Tuesday, September 20, 2016, at 10:30 A.M. Present were Ms. Reneta Major, Chairman; Ms. Laura B. Gordy, Vice-Chairman; Mrs. Nicolette Hickman; Mr. Robert Crockett; Mr. John Sparkman; Mrs. Elsie B. Mackie; Mrs. Mary E. Parker, Secretary; and Mrs. Vicki J. Weakley, Assistant Director.

Ms. Major called the meeting to order and Ms. Gordy gave the Invocation.

Ms. Major proceeded to **Item 3 – Approve Minutes of August 16, 2016.** On motion by Ms. Gordy, seconded by Mr. Crockett, the Minutes were approved as written. The motion carried.

Ms. Major continued to **Item 4 – Welcome – New Member – Elsie Mackie.** Mrs. Parker introduced Mrs. Mackie to the Board Members and welcomed her as a new Board Member.

Ms. Major proceeded to **Item 5 – Welcome – New Employee – Terence J. Smith, Benefit Programs Specialist II.** Mrs. Parker stated while Office Supervisor Linda Rew was in the process of finding Mr. Smith, they could continue to **Item 6 – Fraud Update.**

Ms. Major continued to **Item 6 – Fraud Update.** Mrs. Parker stated Fraud Investigator Jack Thomas had done well with cooling season and had saved money through finding fraudulent applications for air conditioners. She further stated the heating season commences on Tuesday, October 11, 2016, the day after the Columbus Day holiday. Ms. Major stated Mr. Thomas had done well.

Ms. Major proceeded to **Item 7 – Director’s Update. Regular Meetings and Trainings:** Mrs. Parker stated Erica Lawson, Director of Court Services Unit, had conducted the regular CPMT meeting as Mrs. Parker had a conflict. Mrs. Parker further stated Mr. Jack Grey had been reappointed to serve on CPMT and they were glad to have him back.

At this point Ms. Major went back to **Item 5 – Welcome – New Employee – Terence J. Smith, Benefit Programs Specialist II.** Ms. Major welcomed Mr. Smith to ACDSS and she hoped his stay with us would be a pleasant one. She further hoped he brought his talents and skills to the agency.

Mrs. Parker then went back to **Item 7 – Director’s Update. Community Relations:** On September 7, 2016 Mrs. Parker met with Mimi Sedjat, Executive Director ESCSB, Mozella Francis, Director of Northampton County DSS, and Kathy O’Keefe of ESCSB to discuss EDCD Waiver which allows people to remain in their homes and receive care for whatever their disability is or whatever their issues are. They had been getting some information from some of their staff that local agencies like ACDSS and NCDSS didn’t want to go to individual homes and do interviews. Mrs. Parker stated we are required to go to the individual’s home. Mrs. Parker further stated between Mrs. Francis and herself they emailed Ms. Sedjat and Ms. O’Keefe copies of what our requirements are, what the forms look like and how they are to be completed. We do this in connection with the Health Department. They were not aware that if someone goes over \$1290 income; i.e., a parent with a child, the parent would have a copay for whatever the services are. They thought if you are eligible for Medicaid you are home free; however, it does not work that way in determining eligibility for the waiver and what the co-pay is. If you have two parents working fulltime and have good jobs, they are probably going to have a co-pay. We will meet again. Mrs. Parker further stated Ms. Sedjat is good about getting everyone together and discussing issues and finding solutions.

Regional/State Meetings: On September 12, 2016 Mrs. Parker and Mrs. Weakley attended the Eastern Regional Director’s quarterly meeting. Mrs. Parker stated

Mrs. Weakley would be going over some of the points when we got to **Item 10 – Assistant Director Notes**.

Mrs. Parker stated commencing next year Energy Assistance will not be sending out preprinted application forms to eligible clients. The clients will be asked to go online and file an application or apply through the toll-free number. Mrs. Parker stated we have two computers as you enter the reception area. Ms. Major asked if we had staff to assist clients and Mrs. Parker stated no; however, it is something we will have to review. Mrs. Parker further stated the State is also looking at agencies that have gotten computers for their waiting areas and are not using them; i.e., the public does not have access to them. They are looking at pulling those back as the State has to pay VITA on a monthly basis for those computers sitting in an agency. We have had public access computers in our lobby for over 10 years.

Mr. Crockett inquired about the rationale for doing away with the pre-printed forms. Mrs. Parker stated they want everyone to go online. Mrs. Parker stated there will be an 800 number they can call as well. However, we do not know whether the applications will be sent to us or the Central Processing Unit who process Medicaid applications will also process Energy Assistance applications placed via the toll free number. A lot of our elderly population receives Energy Assistance, and Mrs. Parker stated she felt it is a disservice to those individuals. She further stated the meeting was good and Mrs. Weakley had some additional information to share with the Board from the meeting.

Ms. Major proceeded to **Item 8 – Outstanding Employee Performance – Gail Walker and Amy Wilcox**. Mrs. Weakley stated the Board Members had a copy of the Broadcast recognizing 35 CPS staff who achieved 100% compliance with seeing the victim child in a CPS investigation or family assessment within the assigned response time during the months of April through June 2016. Accomack County DSS was recognized in the Broadcast showing CPS workers Gail Walker and Amy Wilcox. We were very proud of their accomplishment. Mrs. Weakley stated they usually try to go as soon as possible; however, it depends on the situation that is reported to us. Ms. Major stated there is not a week that goes by that there isn't a call in the middle of the night or on weekends. Ms. Weakley stated it is 24-48 hours and not just work days that are counted. Ms. Gordy inquired whether Mrs. Parker had recognized the two workers. Mrs. Parker stated she had sent the broadcast to ACDSS staff. Mrs. Weakley stated there is a large banner in their hallway.

Mrs. Parker said the State does this frequently. They will pick something and recognize people. We do not know they are going to do it, but it is great for agencies and employees when they receive recognition. The State looks at the numbers and they can check on worker visits, responses to CPS complaints and check on everything they do. It has to be documented in the system.

Ms. Major continued to **Item 9 – Destruction of Purged Child Care Provider Files**. Mrs. Parker stated we had a list of purged child care provider files which need to be shredded.

On motion by Mr. Crockett, seconded by Mr. Sparkman, Mrs. Parker was instructed to destroy the purged child care provider files. The motion carried.

Ms. Major proceeded to **Item 10 – Assistant Director Notes – Vicki Weakley, Assistant Director**. Mrs. Weakley stated she had some things to review that were covered at the Eastern Regional Director's quarterly meeting. The first thing is we have completed the IV-E Federal review. Three years ago the State was facing a \$20 million penalty for IV-E cases and all mistakes that were made in Virginia. They allow four mistakes across the State and we passed with only one mistake. Someone from the State comes out each time we get a IV-E case and those are children in foster care but came from a situation; i.e., one or both of

their parents is deceased or absent from the home. We have 60 days to complete the Service and Eligibility determination process. Then the State reviewer comes to our agency to review both the Service and Eligibility cases. August 25, 2016 was the last review and we passed at 100% and there were no concerns about the case. We are planning to continue to do that.

We have also completed the 2016 Child & Family Services review. They found a couple of things they suggested we needed to change. We are going to talk with them about the fact they do not seem to understand the Shore. Policy requires that you keep foster children as close to their homes as you possibly can. However, they thought moving a child from Parksley to Tasley was too far. They do not have a concept of how our little villages are and that is a pretty good accomplishment to keep the child on the Shore. We are going to have a discussion about this. When they did the Child & Family Services Review, the reviewer happened to be here on the day we had a group of migrants come for services. She wrote up a paragraph in her report about how impressed she was about the manner in which we handled the migrants, how organized it was and how respectful our workers were to the migrants as they came into the agency. It was a pretty busy day. We did not anticipate both of those things happening on the same day. She was impressed as most of the agencies she visits do not have to deal with the migrant population. The other two items we got high marks on were placement stability and our working relationship with the court system.

Mrs. Weakley then proceeded to the 2017 Child and Family Services Federal Review. She stated Mrs. Parker and she were present at the Eastern Regional meeting when they put every agency's name in a hat and they said we are going to do this across the State. In each region we are going to pull the names of two local agencies and they are the ones that will be used for the Federal review, and if the two agencies are small, a third agency would be chosen. The first one pulled was Accomack, the second one was Northampton and the third one was Williamsburg, which is smaller than both of ours. They then pulled a fourth one which was Matthews County, which is not big either. They need 17 cases collectively. We will represent the Eastern Region. Mrs. Parker stated it is very involved. Mrs. Weakley stated the review document itself is quite thick and that is just to go through one case. We will start preparing for that now.

Mrs. Weakley stated we have been approved for the Quality Initiative Grant in Child Care. The grant is for \$10,558 and we have done a workshop for child care providers, which focused on getting kids prepared for school and giving the teachers additional teaching skills. The rest of the grant money will be used to purchase materials for kids to use for preschool or kindergarten readiness.

Mrs. Weakley moved to Rockbridge as a "game change." She did not know whether any of the Board Members had seen any newspaper articles about what was happening in Rockbridge DSS – they are in a mess. Originally an issue occurred on an APS case which caused some attention to be placed on the agency and brought to light a number of inappropriate things that were happening in their Child Welfare Unit, including a supervisor who was shredding CPS complaints. There was a review of the agency and as a result, they identified two fatalities and four children who were sexually abused because of complaints that were shredded. They are anticipating there will be legislation passed to ensure this type of situation does not occur again. It will affect all of us in all program areas. They discussed a couple of ideas they had been considering. One of the things that is pretty clear is that the reviews we have been having for Child & Family Services and IV-E and we are getting ready to do a review in Adult Protective Services will probably increase. She stated she feels we have been reviewed every week since she has been here for something. They are going to try and have reviewers come and review all programs at the same time. Now they come and do IV-E this week, foster care next week and APS the following week. There is constant turmoil. They are going

to try and do all of them together. We are anticipating some changes and some legislation passed as a result of Rockbridge.

Mrs. Weakley moved to Fostering Futures. Legislation has been passed that covers foster care children from the ages of 18-21. Last year there was a lot of concern because Virginia has been providing services for children who were leaving foster care at the age of 18 or when they graduated from high school for a while. Someone discovered that the Code of Virginia does not allow that to occur. We had to do a lot of scrambling and exit some children out of foster care. She did not think it affected any kids in Accomack or Northampton Counties. A lot of agencies had to scramble and figure out how to help those kids and exit them from foster care. They have not passed legislation to correct that problem and now when a child turns 18 or graduates from high school, they can basically sign a document saying they want to stay in foster care. The biggest difference in fostering futures is it is going to become labor intensive for our staff. The previous program expected that if a child was not in an education or training program, they would no longer be eligible for foster care. Now they have the ability to come back in if that happens. We are concerned about a young man who would be very smart at playing the game. He would wait until the last minute and then get a job to stay in for the next three months, then quit and then start the process all over again. She stated she did not think that would happen with most of the kids but it is a little bit labor intensive the way it is set up, but it should be a very positive thing for all of the young people from 18-21. We could then get them stable and self-sufficient. Mr. Sparkman inquired whether that would include educational expenses. Mrs. Weakley stated there is a Federal form called FAFSA and there is a place on there for them to check if they have ever been in foster care, and if so, Federal government will cover their educational costs. They can pretty much go to college for free.

Mrs. Weakley then stated there are 96 days until Christmas. This is to let the Board know we are already getting phone calls for people who want to help through our Christmas projects. We are gearing up for the Christmas projects which are always labor intensive.

Mrs. Weakley then finalized her statements by stating the meetings she had attended since our last Board meeting were she had completed the Virginia League of Social Services Leadership Training, which was a four day event broken into two sections. She participated in the Rapid Response Team meeting which is a collaboration of community resources and they primarily talked about folks who are homeless and made recommendations on how to help them. She also attended a DMAS Magellan webinar on the changes being made for approvals we have to get before a child is placed in a residential facility and she is not looking forward to those changes. She also wanted the Board to know about the conversion into VaCMS, the new computer system. One of the final things they learned at the Eastern Regional Director's meeting was that those TANF cases that don't automatically get updated into the new system will have to be manually input by workers and the system will read them as new cases and probably duplicate their benefits. So, this will be a task for a little while.

Ms. Major continued to **Item 11 – Capped Child Policy for Child Care – Vicki Weakley, Assistant Director**. Mrs. Weakley stated this was some information for those who are not familiar with our history. Since our advent with the VIEW program, which is the Virginia Initiative for Employment not Welfare, we have had capped children. This means that at one point and time when someone applies for benefits at our agency, any children they have ten months or more after that date is considered capped children and will not increase the person's grant. That was part of welfare reform to discourage people from continuing to have children to get a larger welfare check. That also affects child care services. The State wanted us to have a policy on whether or not we would serve those children in child care, which would mean siblings would be in child care at this time. This is the proposed policy in recognition of the importance of

child care and helping families to become self-sufficient: **It shall be the policy of the Accomack County DSS to serve subsidy capped children born ten or more months after authorization as long as child care funds are available. In the event funds are not available the child will be placed on a waiting list until funds are available.** We currently do have a waiting list. This is the proposed policy for the Board's approval.

Mr. Crockett asked what happened before the welfare restrictions were put in place for capped children. Ms. Major stated she had been with child care since 2001 and she cannot recall whether they had a subsidy cap; however, she thinks it was fund based and if there was not funding, everyone was put on a waiting list. Mrs. Parker stated we have to have a policy and this is well stated. Mr. Crockett inquired about what we are doing now. Mrs. Weakley stated this is basically what we have been doing. We have not had a waiting list until recently and so we were able to serve the children when they came. We did not want a parent to quit his/her job if they had a baby and that one child not be covered in child care. In the past year we have had a waiting list. On motion by Mr. Crockett, seconded by Mrs. Hickman, the Capped Child Policy for Child Care was adopted. The motion carried.

Ms. Major proceeded to **Item 12 – Financial Statement – Administrative Office Manager Shirley Harmon.** Mrs. Harmon stated for the month of August, the third month of our Fiscal Year, our Total Expenditures were \$302,290.68. Our Year-To-Date Total Local Adjustment is \$123,599.88 and our Total Local Balance to Date is \$632,247.12. Mr. Crockett inquired about the Public Assistance Foster Care percentage being 32% and whether Mrs. Harmon had any concerns that it should have been around 22% this time of the FY. Mrs. Harmon stated the IV-E Foster Care Program, State Adoption Program and the Title IV-E Subsidized Program are mandated programs and when we get really low, we can go back to the State for a supplemental allocation.

Ms. Major continued to **Item 13 – Staff Recognition Luncheon – October 7, 2016.** Mrs. Parker stated ever since we have been in our new building we have had it catered and use our Pepsi machine refunds to help defray the cost. After the luncheon we recognize staff for their years of service and sometimes play jokes on people. Mrs. Parker stated Office Supervisor Linda Rew comes up with jokes and gag gifts on co-workers and we also give door prizes. Afterwards, staff gets the rest of the afternoon off and then they have off the following Monday to celebrate the Columbus Day holiday. Mrs. Parker stated the Board was also invited to our luncheon on October 7, 2016. On motion by Mr. Crockett, seconded by Mrs. Mackie, the Staff Recognition Luncheon was approved. The motion carried.

On motion by Mr. Crockett, seconded by Mrs. Hickman, the Board went into Closed Session for the purpose of discussing Personnel (Leave Without Pay); Acceptance of Custody (Foster Care Case #001054248004); and Consent to Adopt (Foster Care Case #001053015006 and Foster Care Case #001054179002), as permitted by the Code of Virginia Section 2.2-3712.

On motion by Ms. Gordy, seconded by Mr. Sparkman, the Board returned to Open Session. On motion by Mr. Crockett, seconded by Ms. Gordy, the Board confirmed the following Personnel matters discussed in Closed Session (Mrs. Hickman – yes; Mrs. Mackie – yes; Ms. Gordy – yes; Mr. Crockett – yes; Mr. Sparkman – yes):

- I. Personnel:
 1. Leave Without Pay:
 - A. Terence Smith, Benefit Program Specialist II – 5.25 Hours
 - B. Andrea Hunter, Office Associate II – 3.75 Hours

On motion by Ms. Gordy, seconded by Mrs. Hickman, the Board confirmed the following Acceptance of Custody and Consent to Adopt matters discussed in Closed Session (Mrs. Hickman – yes; Mrs. Mackie – yes; Ms. Gordy – yes; Mr. Crockett – yes; Mr. Sparkman – yes):

- II. Acceptance of Custody:
 - 1. Foster Care Case #001054248004

- III. Consent to Adopt:
 - 1. Foster Care Case #001053015006
 - 2. Foster Care Case #001054179002

At this time Mrs. Parker stated she needed to inform the Board Members that she planned to retire effective January 1, 2017. Mr. Crockett inquired how long she had been Director at ACDSS and she stated 22 years. She further stated she was going to contact Eastern Regional Director JoAnn Harfst and see if she could come and meet with the Board. Mrs. Harfst has a lot of experience in Human Resources. Mrs. Parker stated Assistant Director Vicki Weakley has been great to work with and they have really gotten along well together. She found it easy to discuss whatever needed to be done with Mrs. Weakley. She further stated the agency will be a lot better for the work Mrs. Weakley has done for the agency.

Mr. Crockett stated a good evaluation of a leader is not only what was done while he/she was working but when he/she left, how was the system working. Mrs. Parker stated she had thought many times about retiring but we got involved in VaCMS and she could not leave with the way things were. Benefit Program Specialist II Madonna Wessells will be retiring at the end of September 2016. We have had holes in the staffing and we had a large workload and fewer people to do the work.

Mrs. Parker stated you do the best you can but she hoped we will have the agency at least in a position of leadership from within that can move everyone forward. Ms. Major then stated her Mother Julia Major had been on our Board for years prior to her death and how much her Mother thought of Mrs. Parker. Mrs. Parker stated the feeling was mutual.

The next Board meeting will be held on Tuesday, October 18, 2016.

On motion by Mr. Crockett, seconded by Mr. Sparkman, the meeting adjourned at 10:40 A.M.

APPROVED: **Reneta Major** _____

ATTEST: **Mary E. Parker** _____