

The Accomack County Board of Social Services met at its facility on Tuesday, March 21, 2017, at 9:30 AM. Present were Ms. C. Reneta Major, Chairman; Ms. Laura B. Gordy, Vice-Chairman; Mr. Robert D. Crockett; Mr. John Sparkman; Mrs. Nicolette Hickman; Mrs. Elsie Mackie; and Mrs. Vicki J. Weakley, Director.

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

Ms. Major proceeded to **Item 3 – Approve Minutes of February 21, 2017.** On motion by Mr. Crockett, seconded by Ms. Gordy, the Minutes were approved as written. The motion carried.

Ms. Major continued to **Item 4 – Introduction of New Employee: Robin Bryan – Benefit Program Specialist II – Effective 3/6/17.** Mrs. Weakley introduced Mrs. Bryan to the Board Members. She stated Mrs. Bryan was originally from the Shore and had now come back from a social services agency in CA. Mrs. Bryan stated she was glad to be back home and doing the work that she loved. She enjoyed uplifting and helping people in the community. She further stated she had been in CA since 1993 and then this opportunity had presented itself to her. The Board welcomed her to ACDSS.

Ms. Major proceeded to **Item 5 – Fraud Update.** The Board reviewed the Fraud Report prepared by Fraud Investigator Jack Thomas and stated he continued to do a good job.

Ms. Major continued to **Item 6 – Director's Update.** Mrs. Weakley stated she attended the following meetings: Two Healthy Communities Executive Committee meetings; two truancy; CPMT; Community Partners on the Eastern Shore and Eastern Regional Directors. Mrs. Weakley reported that at the Eastern Regional Directors' meeting they discussed board member training related to the deficits identified as a result of the Rockbridge DSS investigation. The investigation revealed that board members had not been trained, and some members were not attending meetings, or meetings were cancelled so the director did not have a way to communicate information. The State is pushing Board member training, within four months of joining the board. If the member does not attend meetings, the director is to recommend the board member be replaced.

The second item of interest for Board Members is Recruitment and Retention. The recommendation coming from the State is to do a 4.4% salary increase across the Board; however, the State has only approved 2%. They are considering raising salaries for new workers by 10%; however, the issue of compression needs to be addressed. At this time funding is not available, for all these changes. The state committee continues to study this.

Ms. Major stated she remembered when she started at DSS around 25 years ago they had steps but they did away with that. Mr. Crockett stated it was replaced with everyone getting a raise at the same time. They discussed that a 2% raise is much better than getting a 2% bonus, as workers receive credit towards their retirement. Ms. Major stated retention is going to be an ongoing problem unless something is done with the salaries.

In reference to retention, VDSS is looking at training, as in interviews they have learned some employees left positions because they felt they were not properly trained. State trainers are complaining, as they say workers are being pulled out during trainings, because of issues back at their offices. In CPS, the state is requiring all existing workers to go back and complete training that was required of new workers hired at a later date. Initially all CPS training was to be

completed by June 2017. They have now extended that date to December 2017.

Mrs. Weakley also shared a newspaper article from the Roanoke Times, which reported that effective July 1, 2017 the Attorney General will be in charge of looking into any future incidents of misconduct with local DSS agencies.

Ms. Major continued to **Item 7 – Agency Profile (Corrected)**. Mrs. Weakley stated she had placed this on the Agenda as Page 4, of the previous Agency Profile, had two corrections. In Child Protective Services – the previous profile had a total of 353 children; whereas, the actual number is 373. Under Adult Protective Services the previous profile showed 72 total reports; however, the actual number was 76. She wanted the Board Members to have the updated information.

Ms. Major proceeded to **Item 8 – Child Welfare Family Partnership Funds Earned**. Mrs. Weakley stated we have earned \$1200 from having Family Partnership meetings. In Child Welfare we try to get every member of the family involved with a child, or a situation, to come together and develop a solution, in the best interest of the child. Sometimes this is a little challenging. A trained mediator facilitates the meeting and helps guide the family to develop a plan to provide for the child and keep him/her out of foster care, or if in foster care, back home with the family.

Ms. Major continued to **Item 9 – Broadcast 10278 – CPS Workers Recognized**. Mrs. Weakley stated there were 59 CPS workers across the state who achieved 100% compliance, by seeing the victim child in a CPS investigation or family assessment within the assigned response time during the months of October through December 2016. The first two workers on the list were Mr. Whitesy Banks and Ms. Amy Wilcox of ACDSS. The Board Members congratulated them on their accomplishment.

Ms. Major proceeded to **Item 10 - Refugee Case Closure**. Mrs. Weakley stated this information has been reported to the Governor's Office. For the months of February and March we have had 10 families request their cases be closed and last month we had four no shows and this month we had 12 no shows, amongst the refugee/immigration population. Clients are expressing concern about their cases calling them to the attention of ICE. In addition, there is a radio station in Salisbury which is recommending clients close their cases and telling them not open their doors, even to the police." Workers have been advising clients their children still qualify for services and encouraging them to reconsider; however, they are too afraid to keep their cases open.

The State had planned to send out a broadcast, assuring clients our records were confidential and would not be shared with ICE, however the DSS Commissioner, at the last Eastern Regional Directors' meeting, stated the broadcast could not go out, as the legal staff informed them there were situations where ICE could compel DSS to share information with them. They were requesting people to contact Legal Aid, but the Belle Haven office was not staffed. At the recent Community Partners meeting, it was reported they had just hired someone, so they are now staffed. They will not take walk-ins but will make appointments by phone or computer.

There is going to be a webinar at the end of March that staff will attend, relating to this issue under our current administration. Mr. Crockett inquired how this was going to affect our budget if that continues. Mrs. Weakley stated she did not know. Ten cases would not affect the budget, but part of the funding formula is

caseload sizes so if it continues, it could impact budget allocations. Ms. Major stated if you do not spend your allocation, the following year they will lower it.

Ms. Major proceeded to **Item 11 – March is Family Services Specialist Month & February was Benefit Program Specialist Month.** Mrs. Weakley stated March is Family Services Specialist Month, formerly known as Social Worker Month. The Benefit Program Specialist Month was February and the workers went to Market Street Grill, on the agency, to show appreciation for their hard work. The Family Services Specialists will be going to lunch during the month of March.

Ms. Major continued to **Item 12 – Financial Statement – Administrative Office Manager Shirley Harmon.** For the month of February our Total Local Expenditures were \$307,990.24. Our Year-to-Date Total Local Adjustment was \$413,465.50 and our Total Local Balance to Date is \$348,607.50. Ms. Harmon further stated we have two months left in our Fiscal Year for the State and three months left for the County. Mr. Sparkman stated we were ahead of the game. Ms. Harmon stated we are doing good; however, there are a couple of foster care programs we are watching and we might have to go back to the State and ask for more funding. Mr. Crockett stated our bottom line is good with our expenditures to date at 65%.

On motion by Ms. Gordy, seconded by Mr. Crockett, the Board went into Closed Session for the purpose of discussing Personnel (Resignation; New Employees; and Retirement); Acceptance of Custody – Foster Care Case #001-054480004; and Director’s Evaluation, as permitted by the Code of Virginia Section 2.2-3712.

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

On motion by Mr. Crockett, seconded by Ms. Gordy, the Board approved the following Personnel matters (Mrs. Hickman – yes; Mrs. Mackie – yes; Ms. Gordy – yes; Mr. Crockett – yes; Mr. Sparkman – yes):

- I. Personnel:
 - A. Resignation:
 - 1. Meg DeMay, Family Services Specialist II – Effective 2/24/2017
 - B. New Employees:
 - 1. Robin Bryan – Benefit Program Specialist II – Effective 3/6/2017
 - 2. Chelsea Small, Emergency Office Associate II, Effective 3/13/2017
 - C. Retirement:
 - 1. Brenda Donaldson – Benefit Program Specialist II, Effective 5/31/2017

On motion by Mr. Crockett, seconded by Mrs. Hickman, the Board approved the following Acceptance of Custody:

- II. Acceptance of Custody:
 - 1. Foster Care Case #001-054480004

On motion by Mr. Crockett, seconded by Mr. Sparkman, the Board approved the following:

- III. Director’s Evaluation

The next regular Board meeting will be held Tuesday, April 18, 2017 at 9:30 A.M.

Ms. Major informed the Board Members she would be traveling with Director Vicki Weakley to the Eastern Regional Office relative to the State of the Agency Report.

On motion by Mr. Crockett, seconded by Ms. Gordy, the meeting adjourned at 11:00 A.M.

APPROVED: C. Reneta Major

ATTEST: Vicki J. Weakley