

**HANOVER COUNTY
BOARD OF SOCIAL SERVICES
MINUTES
May 27, 2014**

I. CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Barnette, Vice Chair, called the meeting to order at 3:32 p.m.

The following members were present: Sheila Crossen-Powell, David Hobbs, Larry Huber, Michael Shannon, Sr. and G. E. "Ed" Via. Also in attendance: Jim Taylor, Deputy County Administrator; Lisa Seward, Assistant County Attorney; Daricka Jackson, Benefit Programs Manager; Cathey Jackson, Customer Service Supervisor; Anthony Quildon, Customer Service Agent II and Robin Riley, Administrative Assistant.

II. CITIZENS' COMMENT PERIOD

There were no comments.

III. INTRODUCTION OF NEW STAFF

Ms. C. Jackson introduced Mr. Quildon, Customer Service Agent II, who joined the DSS staff on April 16, 2014. Mr. Quildon said he is pleased to be a part of DSS. He was formerly employed with a correctional facility. Mr. Barnette welcomed Mr. Quildon.

Ms. C. Jackson and Mr. Quildon left the meeting at 3:35 p.m.

IV. APPROVAL OF MARCH 25, 2014 BOARD MEETING MINUTES

Rev. Shannon moved to approve the March 25, 2014 Board Meeting Minutes. Mr. Huber seconded the motion and it was approved unanimously.

V. PRESENTATION: ACCESSIBLE HANOVER – HDSS REPORT

(electronic copy of presentation sent to Board members 5-28-14)

Dr. Crossen-Powell announced that Dr. Temoney was married on May 24th and is on her honeymoon. Ms. Ferguson and Ms. Althizer are also out of the office today.

Information was presented on transportation and remote access:

- How customers get to DSS
Transportation survey September 2013 through April 2014:
89% drove, 9% got a ride and 2% walked; total visits 7,730.

- Why customers visit DSS
Majority of visits are to pick up or drop off information.
Mr. Barnette asked if information pick up or drop off has to be done in person. Dr. Crossen-Powell said documents can be sent via email, fax or by scanner except for copies of checks. Ms. D. Jackson said that verifications are often dropped off instead of mailed due to last-minute deadlines.
- Remote access/technology
Of eligibility interviews conducted, 1,721 were by telephone and 88 were face-to-face.
- Eligibility applications
Mr. Huber asked if applications can be filled out on line. Dr. Crossen-Powell said customers are encouraged to apply electronically; however, there is a lack of computer literacy for some. 1,787 applications were completed on line and 1,902 were submitted as paper hard copies.
- VIEW clients
Of 140 clients, 82 required some form of transportation assistance. DSS provides assistance with gas cards, insurance, vehicle repairs, fines, and can help with the purchase of a vehicle (federal funds), not to exceed \$1,000. Occasionally, DSS will pay for a taxi or other type of transportation. Mr. Barnette asked if assistance included DSS providing services for picking up or dropping off people for work. Dr. Crossen-Powell said DSS previously used VanGo Services but there were issues. The goal is to promote independence and for people to have their own method of transportation to/from work. Mr. Taylor asked how many cars have been purchased for under \$1,000 and Dr. Crossen-Powell said there were more than expected.
- Challenges
Applications cannot be completed on line using a cell phone or tablet.
The CommonHelp website and benefits application cannot be accessed with any browser except Internet Explorer (cannot use Firefox, Safari, Chrome, Mozilla).
Not everyone has access to a scanner or fax machine.

VI. BUDGET UPDATE

The budget report covers data through the end of March, 2014. DSS is still within the budget but is having to spend more this year on personnel costs due to retirements and other payouts to staff who ended employment. Mr. Barnette asked if there was any way to budget for the payouts. It was explained that some of the employees had worked for other County departments for an extended period of time before they came to DSS, and when they left, DSS was responsible for the entire payout. Ms. Althizer did talk to Finance, but they said DSS could not go back to other departments to assist with the leave payouts. When the estimated budget is received from Finance at the beginning of the year, they do not build in anything for leave payouts. Additionally, if DSS has a vacancy, the minimum is entered into the budget for that position. The reality is that very few people are hired at minimum because DSS is looking for people who can come in and start doing the job very quickly. It appears that this issue is largely resolved at this point.

VII. HANOVER DSS SCORECARD

(electronic copy of Dashboard sent to Board Members 5-19-14)

Dr. Crossen-Powell discussed the Dashboard data. There was a slight drop in ongoing benefits programs count and the number of customers previously unknown to any DSS. Ms. Saunders said that MCEF refers customers to DSS to apply for benefits. The VIEW unit is working very hard, and numbers exceed the State's measurements. Mr. Huber asked how the figure is determined for how many people are eligible for VIEW. Dr. Crossen-Powell said this is not known but the information is projected from census statistics of people living below poverty level. For Services, the measures were under standard for items one through four. Mr. Taylor and Mr. Harris have challenged DSS to reduce congregate care placements and a meeting has been scheduled. This number does need to be reduced and closer to the State average. Mr. Taylor said the Human Services Strategic Plan will be presented to the Board of Supervisors next month and congregate care information will be included. Mr. Barnette asked if there are particular barriers and Dr. Crossen-Powell said there are not enough foster homes available to deal with difficult teenagers. Even when DSS goes outside to child placing agencies and pays for the service, it is still very difficult to find foster homes. There also is a "cultural" misconception among the agencies working with these children that teens in Hanover are "bad" and have to be placed in facilities. Mr. Taylor said the percentage is higher than in comparable counties. Dr. Crossen-Powell said that often when children/youth are placed into foster care by the court, not much information is available or known and workers tend to request that assessments be done at facilities. Mr. Via asked what the age threshold is for not being placed. Dr. Crossen-Powell said they should never be at that threshold. Mr. Via asked at what age does it become more difficult to place an older child. Dr. Crossen-Powell said age 15 and for some children, age 14, depending on their behaviors. DSS does have some children right now who are middle to older teenagers who are in foster homes or relative placements. It can be done - it's just a matter of finding the right fit. Small children are usually either returned home or are adopted. Home visits are at 100%.

DSS will have a new CPS Worker on June 1st. There also are two good candidates being considered for the Senior Social Worker position.

VIII. DIRECTOR'S UPDATE

- The Central Regional Director visited HDSS for a review.
- A ten-day old baby came into care, and DSS has an adoption agreement for another infant.
- Staff participated in a Laserfiche demonstration. Three licenses have been obtained for: 1) the Memorial Regional Hospital office; 2) Distribution; and 3) the CPS Supervisor for redacting file information. Five licenses have been built into the 2015 budget.
- For the EITC program, 148 tax returns were prepared with \$203,524 in federal refunds, \$31,000+ in State refunds and \$77,000 in EITC credits. The majority of returns were prepared for Hanover residents.
- A \$5,732 disbursement was received in April for the Energy Share fund which was gone two weeks ago. The cooling program will begin June 15th.

- There are a number of staff members working on the Human Services Strategic Plan.
- The CPS staff gave the “Hugs and Kisses” presentation at Kersey Creek Elementary School.
- Ms. Ferguson is participating in a 2½ day Quality Service Review training in Pulaski, VA.
- Dr. Temoney, Ms. Althizer, Ms. D. Jackson, Dr. Crossen-Powell and the Management Team attended NeoGov training which is a new performance evaluation program based on competencies. It is more user-friendly and web-based.
- A number of employee appreciation events were scheduled in May:
 - Ice cream social
 - Bagels and biscuits/Western wear day
 - Sports team jersey/sneaker day
 - Additional hamburger/hot dog lunch
- DSS staff has been working very hard handling additional responsibilities and caseloads.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

The Board meeting was adjourned at 4:20 p.m. by Mr. Barnette.

Robert Barnette, Vice Chair

Next meeting: Tuesday, July 22, 2014; 3:30 p.m.