

HANOVER COUNTY SOCIAL SERVICES ADVISORY BOARD
New Member Orientation
Minutes
June 14, 2016

I. CALL TO ORDER

Dr. Crossen-Powell called the meeting to order at 2:04 p.m.

Board members present: Sheila Crossen-Powell; Bernadette Cornelius; Faye Prichard and Robert "Rick" Richardson. Also in attendance: Dennis Walter, Deputy County Attorney; Tamara Temoney, Assistant Director; Ginny Ferguson, Quality Assurance Coordinator; Daricka Jackson, Program Coordinator II and Robin Riley, Administrative Assistant.

II. INTRODUCTIONS

Everyone introduced themselves.

II. BASIC INFORMATION

Orientation binders were provided to the new Board members.

a. Member Roster

The Board member roster and contact information was reviewed. Mr. Larry Huber, Vice Chair, has resigned from the Board. There is no new appointment yet. Mr. Jim Taylor is talking to several people about a replacement.

b. Meeting Dates

Meetings are held the fourth Tuesday bi-monthly: July, September, November, January, March and May. The meetings begin at 3:30 p.m. and must finish by 5:00 or the Board can take action to extend the time.

c. Rules of the Board

Mr. Walter said the State requires a Board for DSS agencies. The Social Services Board was formerly an administrative board and is now an Advisory Board (SSAB). The Board used to approve consents for adoption. The county decided to move to an advisory Board six years ago. The County Administrator determined that it was inefficient to have two decision makers, both County Administration and the Board of Social Services. The Board's main goal is to advise the Director - she is actually the "Local Board" for signing documents, i.e., consents for adoption. Once a year, the SSAB is charged with advising the Board of Supervisors on the budget.

Virginia State code requires that the SSAB meet a minimum of six times per year, unless a special meeting is called for particular issues. The SSAB meets every other month, currently the fourth Tuesday of the month. The SSAB operates under a modified *Roberts Rules of Order*. The Chair runs the meetings, can vote and make motions. There is an opportunity for citizens' time, DSS staff and other agencies' presentations. The Chair makes decisions regarding any questions that arise.

Mr. Walter's role is that of parliamentarian, to ensure rules of procedure to enable those not present to see what was discussed, what motions and decisions were

made. He also works with the Director to the extent there are legal issues. State laws affect operations as well as funding for Hanover DSS. Rules are in place for the Board meetings to operate in an efficient manner. A new Chair and Vice Chair will be elected in July. Mr. Walter will review the Rules of the Board and update if needed. The SSAB is one of the few Boards that does not meet in the evening. A quorum is necessary for the SSAB meetings. The SSAB is a nine-member Board. Although the Director is non-voting, she is included in the count for a quorum. Five members must be present for a quorum. Meetings can be extended past 5:00 if needed, by vote of the Board. If there are any questions about information coming forward that touch on the legal side, contact Mr. Walter.

Dr. Richardson asked if there is any provision on taking action if a member misses a certain number of meetings. There is not, and there have not been any protracted absences in quite a while. If there were to be such an issue, it would be addressed administratively. Dr. Richardson asked if meetings were held up due to continued absences preventing a quorum, would there be any action? There would not. There is not an automatic provision for removing individuals. Dr. Crossen-Powell said there has only been one time in the last 3-4 years where no quorum was reached. The Board meeting went ahead and did all the non-voting items such as staff presentations.

There are some State Code provisions to be aware of:

1. Conflict of Interests Act - Since this is an advisory board, there should be very few issues where there is a true conflict. The nature of this Board is to try and draw people in who have an interest. There may be a particular matter that involves an organization in that someone is affiliated with a Board member and the Board might be voting on something to do with that organization. In those instances, contact Mr. Walter to see if any conflict is determined. DSS works with a lot of community partners such as ACES and MCEF, some that have multi-organizational groups within them. It may not be a direct issue but may be an indirect one. If there are any questions about the Conflict of Interests Act, please let Mr. Walter know.
2. Freedom of Information Act – It requires the retention of public records and access for the public. There are many exemptions for Social Services' records, ones that are individual in nature. Identifiable information is private and must be kept confidential. FOIA requires that meeting notices be posted, agendas be available for the public and that minutes be taken at all meetings.
3. Emails can be tricky. If you receive something on a personal email account that deals with your work here, just forward to Sheila or Robin so DSS has a copy in accordance with the record retention policy for DSS.
4. Records Retention Act –Public records are required to be kept in orderly fashion. Robin keeps track of all the Board packets and they are all retained. If you receive something from someone outside, you will want to make sure that DSS has it so it can be kept in accordance with policies and procedures for Social Services' records. A lot of what we deal with is not for public consumption. If you do receive something that is not for the public, after you forward it, the message can be destroyed so you will not have to worry about your personal email account getting hacked. If you have something on a public server such as Gmail, Yahoo, etc., it never really goes away.

Dr.-Crossen-Powell said there are records of Board meetings that go back many years and they are stored in the DSS vault.

III. BACKGROUND

a. Brief History

Dr. Crossen-Powell discussed a brief history of the Virginia Department of Social Services (VDSS). Virginia has had welfare since 1646 beginning as a workhouse for poor children. In 1760, Almshouses were found in most Virginia parishes and counties. In 1908, the General Assembly established the State Board of Charities and Corrections. Welfare included jails at the time. In 1922, it was renamed the State Board of Public Welfare, and a Commissioner was appointed. Hanover County had a “poor farm” that was on the site of what is now Poor Farm Park. It was actually a working poor farm where people lived and worked on the farm. Families were hired to stay on the property.

When the Great Depression occurred, the federal government became involved, so Welfare was no longer just a State system. There were three categorical assistance programs:

- Aid to Families with Dependent Children
- Old Age Assistance
- Aid to the Blind

Two other categories were subsequently added:

- Aid to the Permanently and Totally Disabled – 1950 (since dismantled)
- Medical Assistance for the Aged – 1960 (now under Medicaid)

In 1948, the State Department of Welfare and Institutions was created (“Institutions” designated the correctional system and its facilities). In 1974, the Department of Welfare became separate from Institutions, and in 1982, the name was changed to the Department of Social Services. DSS is state supervised and locally administered. The federal government still provides a large chunk of money that the State gives DSS – pass through money.

Prior to 1990, Hanover DSS was a State agency operated totally under State rules. In 1990, HDSS became a partially deviating agency by moving under the County’s classification/compensation plan and being paid under the County pay plan. Although still partially deviating, in 1993, HDSS expanded deviation to include moving to all County HR rules, performance evaluation procedures, observing the County holiday schedule, HR policies and inclement weather policy. In 2002, HDSS submitted an application to VDSS to become fully deviating and it was approved and became effective January 1, 2003. This meant that the agency completely complied with all the County’s rules and policies. The exception is that HDSS continued with an Administrative Board with the Director reporting to the Board. In 2010, the Board became an Advisory one with the Director reporting to the County Administrator.

b. Structure of the VDSS – Organizational Chart

The State organizational chart, operating divisions and regional offices were reviewed. Nancy Flanagan just retired from the State. She was formerly the Assistant Director of HR in Hanover, then Director of HR and then became the State HR Division Director.

1. **Advisory Board Excerpt from VDSS Local Board Member Handbook**

Board members should act as liaisons and public educators in the community and enhance the public image of DSS. There is a perception that all DSS does is take children away which is untrue. All efforts are made to provide services to keep families together. Originally, food stamps were so farmers' surpluses could be used. Recipients must be eligible to receive benefits. DSS always tries to have presentations from different units about the programs available through DSS.

Ms. Prichard said that Goochland has food benefits at local farmers' markets. Can DSS partner with the Ashland farmers' market? Dr. Crossen-Powell said the former owner went to the state with this issue, but the Town of Ashland is not willing to take on the responsibility of having a fiscal agent which is required. She has spoken with Skip Steinhauser who is in charge of SNAP at the State, and he advised that there must be a fiscal agent. Ms. Ferguson said the Hanover Food Network is 100% behind this program. Ms. Cornelius asked if the housing assistance person could administer. That person is from Ashland Open Door and is supervised by Hanover Safe Place. They will be housed at Community Resources. Ms. Prichard asked who ran the Hanover Food Network. Ms. Lisa Adkins with Community Resources is the Chair and Ms. Ferguson runs the Google group. They meet every other month. A Facebook page is available. Dr. Crossen-Powell said the EBT (SNAP card) conversation has been going on about the Ashland Farmers' Market for about two years.

Another group, Circles, is also a part of Ashland Open Door, and they assist people who live in motels.

c. **Structure of the HDSS**

1. **Mission, Vision and Values**

DSS tries to align the vision with the County's, to highlight families and individuals having a strong foundation and supporting families' growth. Dr. Crossen-Powell read the County's Vision Statement.

H.O.P.E. – Helping Others; Promoting Empowerment

The Mission Statement was the result of a staff competition. One of DSS' staff members, who is now a BPS Supervisor, was the winner. A panel of outside judges decided the winning entry.

Values are: Accountability; Innovation; Integrity and Respect, which are about the same as the County's. DSS wants to hold staff accountable for each value.

2. **Organizational Chart**

The position of Services Intake Worker is currently being advertised. This is a new position. 77 applications were received, and ten candidates will be interviewed this week and next. The worker will need to know APS and CPS, and Dr. Crossen-Powell wants them trained as a homelessness case manager, someone who “speaks the language”.

d. **HDSS and Hanover County Administration**

1. **DSS End-of-Year Report 2015**

Ms. Ferguson gathers the information for this report.

- SNAP

The SNAP Assistance graph shows the trend for applications during the recession which went from about 6,000 to a peak of almost 9,000. That trend has not come down much. There seem to be more SNAP applications this year.

- TANF (cash assistance)

This program has seen quite a decrease. It is time limited, and if a client meets certain specifications, they are required to participate in the employment services program. Anyone who has custody of children can apply for TANF. Ms. Jackson said the benefit for a household of three is about \$300.

- New Benefit Program Customers

There was a decline in new benefit program customers not previously known anywhere in the State for benefits, but that number has been climbing again in 2016. Mr. Harris, County Administrator, asked DSS to track this information. We are not certain what was driving the drop, but now the numbers are going back up. Dr. Richardson said there was not an even recovery from the recession and some people are recovering better than others. Jobs are not created at the same level as ones that were lost. Dr. Crossen-Powell said DSS has no way of gathering that data although it would be useful to have.

- Energy Assistance

The energy assistance cooling program is geared toward the elderly, disabled and families with children under age 6. Available energy assistance funding continues to decrease. Ms. Ferguson commented that there is a possibility of people thinking it may not be worth their while to apply due to the small amount of money.

- CPS

The number of CPS reports has increased. One of the purposes of the new intake position is to have consistency with the intake process and smoother work flow. Currently, everyone who is a Family Services Specialist (FSS), except the VIEW and child care workers, rotates intake for CPS and APS reports. DSS needs someone who is trained in what questions to ask to determine whether or not a case is valid. There is a study across the state to determine why there are discrepancies between the number of complaints taken vs. the number of valid reports. In order for a CPS report to be valid, the child must be under 18 and live within the locality. The alleged abuser must be in a caretaker relationship and

the complaint must meet the State definition of abuse and/or neglect. Many complaints are from ex-spouses complaining on each other. If multiple calls are received on a case, DSS will take the report even if it does not rise to the level of abuse/neglect. Dr. Richardson said that it used to be that all complaints received at the local level had to be sent to the State for approval. Dr. Crossen-Powell said she did not recall the State ever having to make the decisions. She said if there is an appeal of a founded assessment, then the State gets involved. An assessment for less serious complaints such as lack of supervision has been added. Serious complaints are automatically put under an investigative track. If there is a founded CPS complaint, and there is an appeal, the first step is a local conference administered by Dr. Temoney. If not satisfied with the local level decision, the person can then appeal to the State. The appeal offices at the State are all attorneys, and they are looking at it from a different standpoint. This is a topic of discussion at the Child and Family Services committee of the League because people have a difficult time separating protecting the children and civil rights. Then, if the person with the founded investigation is still not satisfied, they can appeal to Circuit Court. Dr. Richardson asked if it is a due process kind of issue – yes. CPS workers see the reports from a different viewpoint than the schools, for example. It is understood that CPS has a set of rules, regulations, policies and all the legalities that enter into due process. When children in school are in the nurse's or principal's offices or in the classroom, and reported for what would be a legitimate referral which is returned after a period of time as a case not viewed as founded, what does it take? Years ago, there was educational neglect and the schools were told that CPS is no longer following up on educational neglect. Dr. Crossen-Powell said policy changed. Dr. Richardson said there is a continuing issue that every time the policies, practices and guidelines change for DSS, there is a sense that the child's well-being may be compromised due to lessening of the ability of DSS to really follow up with detailed scrutiny. Dr. Crossen-Powell said that concern is not unique to educators; the local departments also have that concern, and it is a topic of conversation at every meeting of the League's Child and Family Services Committee. There are also concerns about the cases that get overturned at the State level.

Ms. Prichard said the percentage of 57% for the number of valid CPS reports is incorrect. Dr. Richardson said it should be 43%. The 120% indicated for more referrals received is also incorrect.

Ms. Cornelius asked if the age of cell phones and Google has increased the actual reports to DSS or if people would probably just call 911. In 2011, the number of cell phones people had compared to today is a night and day difference of numbers. Dr. Crossen-Powell said this may be something DSS needs to look into. Mr. Walter said the General Assembly made a change and added more people to be mandated reporters. One of the issues now is people will call in and complain because they have been told they are mandated reporters so they are

going to make sure they report something they think is valid. If it doesn't meet one of the criteria, it is kicked out. The reporter may call back later with more information and say the person was the babysitter or in another caretaker role.

Dr. Temoney said decisions are based on information received at the time of the referral, so if the right questions are not asked, all the worker can do is screen based on the information provided. The intake person should know what questions to ask. Dr. Crossen-Powell said the category of mandated reporters includes many more. CPS staff does a lot of community education. At schools, performances of "Hugs and Kisses" are presented, and DSS sometimes does receive valid complaints from that program. Education is also provided to Fire/EMS, the Sheriff's Department and more. One problem frequently encountered is reports of abuse or neglect when the person is not in a caretaker relationship. Those reports are referred to the Sheriff's Department.

- Adult Services/Adult Protective Services

Adult Services include facilitating a UAI (Uniform Assessment Instrument) which is a process used in assessing the long-term care needs of the elderly and people with disabilities to provide appropriate services and to develop an effective and efficient system of quality, affordable programs and services. DSS has one worker designated for this and she works with the Health Department nurse to plan the assessments. It is not known what is driving the drop in Adult Services.

APS investigations include physical abuse/neglect, guardianships and financial exploitation. Dr. Crossen-Powell said that unless a person is declared incompetent, and if they do not want DSS to interfere, we cannot move forward. It is a different procedure with CPS. Dr. Temoney said a lot of calls are received for self-neglect, but the person has the "right" to continue that behavior if not declared incompetent. Financial institutions also call in suspected exploitation.

- Foster Care

Much of the foster care population is over 15 years old and tend to have many challenges, barriers and complex issues. Some require residential care. There are currently 18 children in care and DSS is on notice for six. Many foster care children are teenage girls.

- Child Care

66% of children served are in a "fee program" category, where the parent(s) pay part of the cost. The majority of child care providers used by DSS customers are located within Hanover County. Eligibility is based on income, and some families qualify for a "non-fee" program.

- Applications filed on line

Customers may file an application on line for benefit programs, energy assistance and child care. FY2015 showed a significant increase in on line applications.

- Customer Volume

Customer volume is tracked for the County and includes the number of switchboard calls and the number of customers who sign in at both the

Ashland and Bell Creek offices. The percentage of customers whose interviews were by phone last year was 88%. Workers are encouraged to provide their direct extension to customers.

- Looking Ahead

Ms. Jackson said there has been a decline in application timeliness due to system-based processing rather than manual. Workers are getting through the Eligibility Modernization. BPS workers are mostly generic, handling numerous programs.

Dr. Crossen-Powell said challenges also include vacancies in units. Some workers applied for positions within their own unit causing ongoing vacancies that lasted 18 months. The Benefit Programs unit recently lost five workers and a supervisor. Other workers volunteered to handle entire caseloads during that time. Other challenges: Scanning documents and other information has been good; however, there have been timeliness issues due to a person at the Bell Creek office scanning things incorrectly and to the wrong folder which took a while to track down. That worker has been re-trained. Ms. Ferguson said there are numerous outstanding tickets with the State for system issues. Sustainability has challenges with funding at the congressional level. There is talk of cutting the Social Services Block Grant (SSBG) which would have a major impact on funding. The main concern is complication with cases, i.e., families with multi-generational drug abuse issues, lots of youth with substance abuse issues and complexity of cases. Dr. Richardson asked what the impact has been on the local County budget. Dr. Crossen-Powell said that despite all the "threats", DSS has not seen a huge financial impact, mostly looming out there with sequestration. There may eventually be some negative impact but not yet. There is always talk about cuts, and there is a shift in where funding is going. Traditionally, funding has gone to foster care but we are starting to see a move at the federal level towards prevention funding. The State has not moved in that direction yet. The new child welfare reform bill was discussed and that there would be serious penalties for congregate care placements. This is starting to be seen at the federal level. Dr. Richardson asked if there is any effort in this region to talk with Dave Brat. Dr. Crossen-Powell said the State of Virginia gets a large chunk of money for TANF which is used to pay for and fund other things. Ms. Prichard asked for an explanation of congregate care. If a child is in congregate care, there is a lower match for services, a lower reimbursement than if in a therapeutic foster care home or even just receiving a day program at that facility but not as an in-house resident. Congregate care is very expensive, approximately \$9000/month. Ms. Cornelius said that day treatment is about \$3000/week. DSS has contracts with all of the DSS vendors. Dr. Richardson said there needs to be position papers and an effort to educate Dave Brat on issues in the community. Mr. Walter said that making comments to the federal government is dicey especially with regard to DSS. It can backfire, and the federal government can decide to cut funding. Dr. Crossen-Powell said the number of people who receive

TANF in Hanover is miniscule. TANF money is not just used/being spent on TANF recipients but for other things too.

IV. SERVICES AND BENEFITS

a. Mandated/Non-Mandated Programs

Federally and State mandated programs are:

1. Protection (CPS, APS, ongoing CPS, Adult Services including UAI for children and adults)
The State decided to contract someone to provide UAI for children as DSS is not required to do them; however, DSS continues to assist the Health Department with UAI for children.
2. Permanency (Foster Care, Adoption, Court Ordered/Interstate Requests, Foster Care Prevention)
3. Benefit Programs (SNAP, Medicaid, FAMIS, Auxiliary Grants, Energy Assistance)
FAMIS is health insurance for children. Auxiliary grants are for people who live in adult nursing facilities.
4. Self-Sufficiency Programs (TANF, VIEW, VIEW and Transitional Child Care, Child Care Fee System to the extent funds are available)
The local agency used to administer the child care program/funding but the State took it back so DSS does not know how much is available.

Non-mandated programs (support Hanover's citizens) are:

1. Permanency [Foster/Resource parent Training, Respite, Promoting Safe and Stable Families (PSSF), Independent Living
Resource parents are trained to become adoptive parents or foster parents. There are respite programs available for the adoptive or foster parents so the placement will not disrupt. PSSF is a small amount of money the State gives which is designed to assist children and families resolve crises, connect with necessary and appropriate services, and remain safely together in their own homes whenever possible. The VEMAT instrument is used to determine needs of the child; there are different levels of need. The rater has to take classes to qualify as a rater. Once approved, money is received the next month. This includes an emergency rate for the first month if approval has not yet gone through. Foster care and adoptive children are eligible for Medicaid until age 25.
2. As of March, 2016, 97 tax returns were completed and 38 returns were eligible for EITC tax credits totaling \$42,441. Federal refunds totaled \$125,572 and State refunds \$22,658. MetroCash is a nationally recognized United Way program.
3. The Child Care Quality Initiative provides training for child care providers.
4. DSS assists the Hanover Christmas Mother program by sending applications to SNAP clients who have children under 18.

b. Benefit Programs

1. Energy Assistance Fact Sheet
Ms. Jackson said the cooling assistance allotment is \$300 this year. This amount changes every year.
2. SNAP and SNAP script
Everyone who works at DSS is required to read the SNAP script when any inquiries are received about the program. The State conducts blind testing to ensure the script is being read. This is the result of a lawsuit in the early '90s when a family who not receive their food stamps sued the Commissioner of Social

Services. Customers are advised that their application begins the day a client signs and submits it.

Ms. Prichard asked about the WIC program and where it comes from. The Health Department administers WIC. Generally, most people who get WIC also receive SNAP. WIC has more restrictions on what can be purchased than SNAP does. Ms. Ferguson said there is a “go to the grocery store” tour for WIC recipients. More information is available on the Hanover Food Network Facebook page.

Ms. Prichard said there has been an increase in the number of 911 calls in the Town of Ashland from residents of nursing homes who have cell phones.

V. Children’s Services Act (CSA)

The Children’s Services Act was formerly called the Comprehensive Services Act. This is a pool of money from the Department of Education, DSS, The Department of Juvenile Justice and other agencies to ensure that children receive the services they need. Hanover spends more per child than any others in the Central Region.

VI. Equal Opportunity Employment/Non-Discrimination; Statement of Ethics

This information is from the Hanover County Human Resources Policy Manual. Employees and members of boards and commissions are asked to follow the Standards of Ethical Conduct.

VII. Performance Dashboard

This information is sent to Mr. Harris once a month and also discussed at the monthly meetings with Dr. Crossen-Powell.

VIII. Questions/Discussion

Dr. Crossen-Powell said copies of applications for UAI, VEMAT, SNAP and Medicaid will be brought to the next Board meeting or maybe pull them up from the web site. The applications are quite complicated to fill out.

Ms. Cornelius asked if Social Services has been made a component of school classes where there are children who might need to know this information for their future jobs, whether to lead other people to the right places or awareness for their own political consciousness. DSS has done classes at Randolph-Macon and provided training to all teachers at schools about CPS, but not for the actual student population. It may be something DSS wants to look at. Mr. Walter discussed the “So You’re About to Turn 18” program and maybe adding a DSS component for high school seniors about accessing services and registering to vote. That would be right before they graduate high school. DSS does provide voter registration to people who apply for benefits. Ms. Cornelius said this program should be done county-wide, maybe as a part of the college night program. Ms. Prichard cited an example of a college student who was disowned by his parents, and he did not know how to handle basic living skills or resources. Maybe the School Board could add this program. Dr. Crossen-Powell will discuss with Ms. Dibble who is on the School Board.

Ms. Cornelius asked if anything besides advocacy is needed by the Board members. Dr. Crossen-Powell said school advocacy was a good suggestion. Other agencies in the County do not always know what services DSS provides and there is sometimes misinformation given. Board members can identify gaps in the community, and DSS will see what can be done.

Ms. Ferguson mentioned the Survivor Day program.

Ms. Cornelius asked if the Dashboard could be bigger. Ms. Ferguson commented that one page is what was requested by the County. Ms. Riley will break the information down into sections and send both the summary sheet and separate, enlarged pages of each section. The budget information does not change much and Ms. Althizer updates it at each Board meeting.

The new Board member orientation was adjourned at 4:05 p.m.

Sheila Crossen-Powell, Director