Chatham County Board of Social Services  
Meeting Minutes  
November 20, 2019

In Attendance: Richard Edwards, Chair; Thomas Droke, Vice Chair; Valerie Broadway; Member; Emily Lowrance, Member; Stephanie Watkins-Cruz, Policy Analyst and Nancy Burgess, Executive Assistant. Jennie Kristiansen was conferenced in via phone.

Richard Edwards called the meeting to order.

Minutes for October were tabled for updates/editing.

Stephanie Watkins Cruz, Policy Analyst from the Chatham County Manager’s Office presented on the status of Affordable Housing in the County.

The Board review the Monthly Data Report Card. During the review Ms. Kristiansen specifically provided additional detail regarding timeliness for Child Protective Services Investigations/Assessment. There were five cases initiated outside of time frame for the month of October, however, diligent efforts were made on all cases to ensure timely initiation. Cases were outside of timeframe due to despite social worker visits after hours and on the weekends and calls to collateral contacts to locate family members. In one case, a request was made to another county to interview a child located there and this was not completed within time frame. Other initations were late due to an accommodation of a parent work schedule and a child being out of town with relatives (all other siblings and parents were seen in a timely manner). In the other two cases a child and a parent could not be located. As mentioned above, multiple visits and phone calls (including calls to people who knew the families) were attempted to find the parent and child.

Economic Services Updates:

On November 19th Medicaid transformation was placed on hold indefinitely due to lack of funding.

A quarterly review call was held with the review team for the Medicaid Recipient Eligibility Determination Audit (REDA). Chatham County DSS accuracy rate for May-July 2010 was 96.7% (standard is 96.8%) with one error. Internal control accuracy rate was 91.7% (standard is 90%).

An outreach meeting was held in late October to provide information about the two federal energy programs, Crisis Intervention Program and Low Income Energy Assistance Program. Program information was provided followed by a discussion of other outreach opportunities. DSS staff will be taking applications at both Senior Centers and at the PACE program in Pittsboro.

Food and Nutrition timeliness reports were corrected and will be posted when they are available.
The annual county “Heads Up” document was finalized and submitted in early November. Every department submits these documents every year early in the budget process to identify issues potentially impacting their department in the upcoming year. Economic Program items included Medicaid expansion and increased funding for childcare for Food and Nutrition Services Employment and Training.

**Family Services Updates:**

Question from last meeting: “Will NCFAST provide a report on contributing factors to the maltreatment finding during a CPS investigation?” This was recently clarified by NC DHHS that the report for contributory factors is not available due to problems with table alignment.

Senate Bill 537 was ratified and now includes language that there will be no further deployment of NCFAST for child welfare until July 1, 2020. A study of the NCFAST functionality will be completed by the Program Evaluation Division by May 1, 2020. Counties who were phased in during 2019 may elect to opt out of NCFAST.

The Adoption Day celebration will take place on Saturday November 23rd at the Justice Center from 10-12. Several families will finalize their adoptions at the event. Also, Christmas Wishes and Dreams are currently in full swing.

A “Donuts and Data” event was held for child welfare staff to share information about data and to also discuss the results of the employee survey. This event was well attended and generated good discussion about current challenges in serving families.

The Heads Up item for child welfare was about the increasing workload and number of families involved with foster care. In a DSS social worker survey, social workers identified the need for additional services to effectively serve families and more time to complete paperwork and other requirements as key issues. Both were included in the Heads Up document.

**General Agency Updates:**

Since the last meeting, Chatham County was selected for a Trauma Informed Communities Grant. Also, in collaboration with the Sheriff’s Office a series of Excel trainings were held for DSS employees. A revised Agency handbook was completed for new employees that includes updated information and policies.

The board members discussed the current state of recruitment for the vacant board seat.

With no further items of discussion there was a motion to adjourn from Thomas Droke with a second motion from Valerie Lawrence; all in favor.

The next meeting will be held Wednesday, December 18th at 3:00pm in the DSS Board Conference Room.

[Signatures]

Chair

Date

Secretary

Date