

ALBEMARLE COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES
VIRTUAL ADVISORY BOARD MEETING
TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 16, 2021

Chair: Jennie More

Vice Chair: Mary McIntyre

Present: Mary McIntyre, Amy Laufer, Emily Dodson, Kaki Dimock, Mary Stebbins, Wanda Hoerman

Absent: Jennie More, Katherine Burton, Karen Horridge and Doug Walker

BOS Members: none in attendance this month

Guests: Cayla Morris, Janie Hunter

Mary McIntyre as acting Chair called the meeting to order at 3:35 P.M.

Agenda Item: Approval of the October 2021 Minutes

Discussion: There was no quorum this month, so we were unable to approve the October minutes.

Action: The October minutes will be added to the December agenda

Agenda Item: Business from the Director – Information Items

Discussion: Mary asked if there were any questions for Kaki. Amy had asked about the vacancies and how hard it is to find qualified applicants. Kaki shared that our last CPS posting only received three applicants. Kaki is hoping that the current posting gets a better variety in the applicant pools including brand new social workers and seasoned social workers as well. The Budget requests for new positions are due to the County tomorrow. After reviewing the unit needs leadership came up with 8 Service workers, 11 Benefit workers and 2 housing workers. The need for work-force stabilization is not unique to DSS. Anytime our staff suffers that can impact the community. All of the departments in the County have the same challenges. The County has decided to focus on workforce stabilization. We have had a 7% growth rate in the last quarter of FY2021. The growth rate appears to be sustaining and we have had a surplus of money and the Board of Supervisors is considering mid- year compensation for employees and possibility of hiring staff mid-term. Kaki included all of the positions for the Board of Supervisors to review and consider. (21 positions mentioned above) Mary asked if the money coming from the economic growth is one time money or longer-term budget impact. Kaki said it is hard to predict future in this changing world, but it seems like the surplus is sustaining. The BOS approved Jeff Richardson's request to separate Local Government and school Human Resources. A new Human Resources Director has been here for six weeks. Her first assignment was to do a compensation study to compare to other localities. There could be some

compensation adjustments going forward once the compensation study is completed. Mary said the school board meeting last week touched on a \$1000 bonus to school employees, but the staff would have preferred the systemic issues be tackled rather than just do short term band-aid (bonus). Kaki understands and agrees that the shortages and stress has been going on for quite some time. She suspects that the county will do % increases to get salaries in line. There is 3 layers of relief. Any one of the layers would NOT resolve the issues. Mary asked what the timeline is for Budget. The final Budget generally is approved in April. Mary asked for the message out to give guidance on talking with the BOS members as advocates for the budget items.

Action: informational

Agenda Item: Business from the Director- “November is Adoption Awareness Month”

Discussion: Cayla Morris and Janie Hunter have joined us to talk about Adoption Awareness Month. Cayla is one of the Senior Foster Care/Adoption with primary focus on adoption and post adoption work. Janie Hunter, she has the distinction of being the longest worker in the agency and as an adoption worker. We have an adoption team. Amie Casey is the Supervisor, Janie, Cayla, and Amanda Hodgson make up the team. They finalize all adoptions for the foster care workers who have adoption as the goal. Adoption is a lifelong journey. It starts with kids who come into foster care and cannot go home. Initially its rooted in loss and children are not able to grow up in their birth families being adopted by people who aren't their birth parents.

In the state fiscal year 2021, 2, 743 children entered Virginia Foster Care system. Currently there are 5,400 children and youth in the Foster Care system in Virginia. 36% are teenagers, the average age of a youth in Virginia Foster Care system is eight (8), twenty percent (20%) of these teens end up aging out of the system with no family committing to them, some having had the goal of Adoption while in Foster Care.

ACDSS currently has 91 total children and youth in Foster Care. Out of the total number of minor youths in Foster Care, 36 have a Primary Permanency Goal of Adoption and 10 have a Concurrent Goal of Adoption.

The Adoption program continues to work diligently, even though the challenges of the Pandemic. Last fiscal year 2020, ACDSS finalized twenty-two (22) adoptions. Current fiscal year 2021, ACDSS finalized six (6) adoptions and have another four that are due to be finalized by the end of the year. Of the ten adoptees, four of them are being adopted by blood relatives.

In Adoption there is:

Loss

Grief

Guilt

Joy

Hope

And so much more....

Action: informational

Agenda Item: Business from the Board-Open Discussion

Discussion: Kaki said that likely we will have two new advisory board members join after the first of the year and at that time she plans to do the formal orientation with Emily and the new members.

Action: Lisa will send a copy of the meeting recording out to all the Advisory Board members so they can view the presentation and will also send a copy of the power point presentation once Cayla and Janie provide the document.

Message Out:

Meeting adjourned at 4:42 PM

The next Advisory Board virtual meeting will be the third Tuesday of the month, December 21, 2021 at 3:30 PM using Zoom.

Jennie More -Chair

Lisa Jordan - Secretary