

ALBEMARLE COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES  
VIRTUAL ADVISORY BOARD MEETING  
TUESDAY, JANUARY 18, 2022

**Chair:** Jennie More

**Vice Chair:** Mary McIntyre

**Present:** Karen Horridge, Emily Dodson, Mary McIntyre, Alice Micklem, Mary Stebbins, Amy Laufer

**Absent:** Jennie More

**BOS Members:** Diantha McKeel

**Guests:** Tamara Ryan, Tammy Critzer

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

**Agenda Item: Approval of the October and November 2021 Minutes**

**Discussion:** The Advisory Board has the October and November 2021 minutes to review and approve. Mary M. asked for questions or changes for both October and November minutes. Hearing none she asked for motion to approve for both months.

**Action: Amy Laufer made a motion to approve both October and November minutes. Emily Dodson seconded the motion. All members in agreement. Motion passed.**

**Agenda Item: Business from the Director – Information Items**

**Discussion:** Mary loved the pictures especially the one of the child with the blue mouth. On page 4 Amy Laufer asked for the meaning of an acronym. ETV. Mary said that is related to payments made to foster care parents. Amy asked if vaccination status was affecting placement for foster care. Alice said that VDSS nor ACDD is requiring vaccinations. Letting older teens make that choice with the help of parents or foster parents. Amy asked if foster parents are required. Alice said that is also totally up to the parents. Kaki said she remembers that at the beginning of the pandemic there were extra stipends issued to foster parents who take kids that are unvaccinated. Alice clarified that is no longer in place. Amy asked what two position were currently being advertised. Mary Stebbins confirmed that we have one family preservation position open and two in CPS. Kaki said we are delighted that the BOS had approved 3 positions in CPS in December. ~~We have not, unfortunately, been getting qualified applicants applying for these positions.~~ Kaki said Albemarle is not abnormal in terms of turnover but there are many in worse shape. There are some agencies have not been able to function and cannot compete with medium and larger agencies. Amy also mentioned the Housing information item

was exciting. Mary M asked about the December Info items regarding the denials for childcare assistance. We know there aren't enough childcare providers, and it continues to be an issue. When is the hiring expo mentioned going to happen? Alice will ask Sam Spencer and let the Board know. In January info items the item with youth being let go without a step-down plan. What are the repercussions for that? Alice said it's a concern across the state, Discussion with VLSSE in putting a bill in place to require step down plans before youth are let go. The bill did not go thru. There was a youth visiting home for Christmas and was not allowed back because of a covid diagnosis. This issue impacted the release plan for this child. A group home we didn't have a CSA contract with took our youth. This situation makes it very hard for the child and the agency trying to provide services. We can complain but there isn't a lot that we can do. Mary asked how does the youth notify us and/or get emergency services? Alice said we are responsible for the child. Usually, the facility notifies us, and we respond to the child and provide services. Mary is very concerned about this situation impacting more trauma upon a child who is already in trauma. Amy said what needs to happen is a plan does have to be in place. How can someone taking care of a child not have a plan in place if a covid outbreak happens? Can the Advisory Board advocate for us? Amy asked for contact information on who they contact and maybe an overview of the issues. Kaki said there are number of advocacy groups that are likely working on this she will provide contact information. Kaki said we continue to work on revising our Strategic Plan which has been extended because of the Pandemic. Kaki will share strategic plan changes with the Advisory Board for February.

**Action: Kaki will identify any direct ongoing efforts to impact this and send the information for advocacy related to congregate care to the Advisory Board. Alice was informed that the date for the expo has not yet been set. With the high omicron numbers, they are waiting.**

**Agenda Item: Business from the Director- “Advisory Board Annual Report to the BOS”**

**Discussion:** March 16<sup>th</sup> will be the date that the Annual Report is presented to the BOS. Last year Amy went with Phyllis to the meeting and Amy presented it to the BOS. Phyllis provided bullet points as a guideline. Basically, they had 10 minutes and some Q&A. Amy met with Phyllis online and read the report five times to determine what they wanted to highlight. They talked a lot about Kinship Placement in foster care and staffing. Emily volunteered to do the presentation to the Board. Mary feels like it would be a lot of work for Kaki to read the whole report when the Board only got the report today and prob hasn't gotten to read it carefully. Amy said the Medicaid processing needs a lot of discussion. The chart with green and one red box. Maybe the Advisory board should review and revisit for the February meeting? Kaki can send the slide deck out in advance. Tamara said there will a change on page 14 talking about # of VIEW cases. Shows 66 but it is actually 166 so that will be corrected. Kaki said reflects a trend we have seen over 3 years. 4 years ago, there was a drop in cases but the last 3 years the cases have all increased. One unit received a 62% increase in cases. That is a huge leap. LTC is another unit we have felt the case increases. We have also seen increase in #'s and complexity of cases needing higher levels of service. Mary asked about the Fuel Assistance. Seems the numbers to be flat. She would expect it to grow because of population growth. Is it stable because only a certain amount can be approved? Or are we not reaching out to the people who need help. Amy advocates that we remind folks of all the money we are managing and leveraging for the good of this community. Amy said its huge what we are doing in distributing

this money. Mary M asked about Albemarle's ability to get money. Are the limits the School has also in Local Govt? Kaki said there is an overall % for Local SS and for separate programs and for staffing. Kaki asked VDSS if there is a point where the State would not contribute to new positions. They have a baseline amount they pay but it's a fairly significant amount. They identify baseline requirements and there is also a 30% amount that can be paid toward. Kaki said the County has a lot to offer job seekers. But staff leaves for different reasons. Kaki asked if we should talk about recruitment and staffing levels comparing to other localities? Mary asked if the information is public? Kaki said we all report data to VDSS. Some is open to the public, some more case specific data is not available. Mary M. asked if there were any additional questions about the report. Emily Dodson asked about the Medicaid renewals being on pause and when will we start processing again. Mary found a fact sheet that all benefits are based on availability of funding related to Fuel Assistance. This leads her to believe that there is a limited amount of funding available. Mary S. says we should look into that further. Alice said that a date has not been set for the expo. With the numbers of omicron up they may not be able to meet in person.

**Action: Mary and Alice said they do not know the answer to the question about Fuel Assistance numbers appearing to be flat, but they will find out and get the answers to Board. Mary provided some information from a Fact Sheet but will look for more information. Emily volunteered to present the report to the BOS on March 16<sup>th</sup>.**

#### **Agenda Item: Business from the Board-Open Discussion**

**Discussion:** Karen announced at the start of the meeting that this would be her last meeting. She has decided to step back. Diantha thanked Karen for her service to the community and this Advisory Board. The Board discussed advertising for these positions and asked if there was anything the Advisory Board Members could help with. Kaki said the Advisory Board can reach out to people in the community and advertise. Diantha has identified someone interested in applying for the Jack Jouette position (replacing Karen Horridge) Arc of Piedmont is advocating for a pay increase from \$10 to \$12 per hour for caregivers of disabled children. One of the delegates (Corey) is going to put in a bill to allow parents to qualify as caregivers for their own children with waivers. 43 DSS staff members volunteered to staff warming shelters for 5 ½ days after the first storm. Before the 2<sup>nd</sup> storm arrived, Kaki asked County leadership to allow the expansion of the field of people who could staff warming shelters not just DSS staff. They got 44 more volunteers. She was really proud of DSS staff for volunteering and pleased that the County allowed us to reach out beyond DSS staff. Mary M. said that she suggests we reach out to the School side too many people are qualified and eager to give back to the community. The fire chief had suggested that very thing, it is on his radar and apparently it is hard to say no to him.

**Action: informational**

#### **Message Out:**

- 1) Thank the BOS for all the positions approved in December, particularly the three child protective services positions.**
- 2) Eligibility remains a high priority for decision-making in the FY23 budget process, however, given the significant rise in caseloads and changes in policy at the federal level.**
- 3) Consider who you know that might be interested in serving on the DSS Advisory Board!**

Meeting adjourned at 4:34 PM

The next Advisory Board virtual meeting will be the third Tuesday of the month,  
February 15, 2022 at 3:30 PM using Zoom.

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Jennie More -Chair

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Lisa Jordan - Secretary