

ALBEMARLE COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES  
VIRTUAL ADVISORY BOARD MEETING  
MARCH 15, 2022

**Chair:** Jennie More

**Vice Chair:** Mary McIntyre

**Present:** Amy Laufer, Natalie Detert, Emily Dodson, Jennie More, Wanda Hoerman, Mary Stebbins, Kaki Dimock, Mary Stebbins, Mary McIntyre

**Absent:**

**BOS Members:** none in attendance

**Guest:** Sarah Harris

**Amy Laufer Vice Chair called the meeting to order at 3:34 P.M. Mary McIntyre joined the meeting at 3:41 and took over facilitation.**

**Introductions were made.**

**Agenda Item: Approval of the February 2022 Minutes**

**Discussion:** The Advisory Board has the February 2021 minutes that were sent out by email. Amy asked if there any changes to the February minutes. Amy asked for a motion to approve.

**Action: Emily made a motion to approve the minutes. Natalie seconded. Motion passed.**

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

**Discussion:** Amy asked if there were any questions about the Information Items for this month. Comments or questions? Emily asked regarding Housing voucher program. Where are we at in that process? Kaki said they started a Lottery. Staff is beginning to notify folks if they were screened, sorted, or accepted. The best practice is to maintain a waitlist with only the number of households you can move into supported units within 24 months. Amy asked about Item 2G regarding Foster Care having trouble with facilities that are dismissing kids. What can we do to help? Kaki said this is a concern that we are facing right now. We have a young person with no family and no avail placement. Capacity has been reduced because of covid and work force issues. We have this young person at an AIR BNB with staff taking shifts to stay with them. Mary S. said staff has signed up hour by hour. In terms of advocacy is to encourage the development of appropriate residential spots for high need kids. The second is that the primary source of money that we use to pay for these services is CSA funding. Our regional office has been working with us to help us not have to use local dollars only. This problem is not unique to

Albemarle. Kaki said there are two other kids that are on our list and this situation may happen with them also. It is hard for the case workers to provide loving care as substitute parents and be the caseworker. Amy asked about the public house emergency funds running out on April 16<sup>th</sup>. Amy wonders if the social media campaign is effective? Will people get requalified. Wanda said that the process has been named “unwinding” The state has not told us what that will look like. Every Medicaid case has to be reviewed (there are close to 4000 cases) Staff cannot review that many cases all at one time. People who are not eligible have had open cases and are now used to having Medicaid Benefits. There are going to be a large number of cases that will be closed once the reviews are started. The State has said they are going to give us a year to complete the reviews. Amy asked if we have a plan on how to manage this. Wanda said when you cannot manage what you have, and you don’t know what the State is going to require it is very difficult to plan. We have hired a few new staff members who are already experienced Eligibility workers so that will be helpful. The State says they will be hiring DMAS workers to help with this project. Wanda said we are trying to stay positive and wait for guidance from the State. Mary M. asked about the Foster Care ETV funds. Education Training Voucher is what that acronym stands for. Mary M. asked what the difference is between ETV vs IL funding. Mary S. said traditionally we get \$5000 to support older kids for training/education. During covid the funding was doubled but now they have lowered it back to \$5000 and they are having to try to come up with ways to support these kids with a lot less money. Mary M. asked about the Housing software. Is this a new budget item? Kaki said we had a service before that we will be terminating. This new service is more expensive. We had to purchase the product and it will have a subscription charge. This is a purpose-built software system built for HUD processes and the reporting capacity will be much greater. Also, this system will allow direct payments to the landlords. It will take about 18 months to acclimate staff. Kaki also mentioned that we used ARPA money to purchase. Mary M. asked about community partners re: United Way. What is mixed delivery? Mary S. said that mixed delivery is a collaboration between United way, County/ City schools and County/ City DSS. Provides grant funding, childcare subsidy funding to replace as many kids as possible in preschool programs in high quality private programs for free.

**Action: informational**

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

**Discussion:** Emily and Kaki met regarding the presentation to the BOS tomorrow. The annual report has been submitted to the BOS and Kaki submitted the slides to the County Clerk’s office yesterday. Kaki wanted to ask if there was anything that the Advisory Board would like highlighted. Mary M. suggested they do a practice run for us now if they want to. Emily feels ready to do the presentation tomorrow. Kaki said it hasn’t changed beyond what was discussed at the February meeting. Kaki and Mary will be in the background at the BOS meeting. Kaki and Emily are scheduled to go before the Board around 4:00

**Action: Kaki and Emily will do the presentation for the Board tomorrow**

### **Agenda Item: Business from the Director-Community Response Team Initiative**

**Discussion:** Kaki said there is a national conversation going on regarding police calls for people having mental health episodes. Many police officers say that no matter how much training they have they are ill prepared for these types of calls. There is no 911 call specifically for a mental health call. Many times, these people are perceived as violent and dangerous. There is a concerted effort in the state of Virginia to make sure the police are fully trained in de-escalation. Kaki said as a Director of the Haven if she had to call 911, she always requested officers with CIT training. The police would like to decriminalize their response to mental health calls. The response team that we are looking at would include a police officer, a fire officer and a DSS service worker. This team will respond to mental health calls that come in. Depending on the nature of the call the Police might take the lead or the Fire/EMT worker or the DSS worker. Kaki is worried that this team might have issues trying to connect these individuals with services. Mary M. asked how much money has been requested. Kaki shared that the police held on to the money that had been used for school resource workers. Mary M. asked if we had considered reaching out to the community. People that aren't police, Fire/Rescue, DSS. What about a volunteer rescue team? Kaki said they are talking about a Human Services position and in the second year hopefully being able to add a peer support person into the team. The Peer support per would be intentionally hired based on someone with legal/mental health experience. This will be a very new way for both the police and fire and rescue to interact with the public. Amy agrees with what Kaki said about the team having issues connecting these calls with proper resources in the community Kaki said her list of ideal would be to have the peer support. A person that can be flexible and reach out to community resources. Amy asked if there was sense of the number of calls, we are getting. Kaki said suicide calls and overdose calls are currently up. Mary M said in the schools they are reminded that the kids having a crisis are still kids. A law enforcement officer might say they are breaking a law. The Mental Health representative might say but they are in a mental health crisis and don't need punishment. Mary M. thinks that should be considered for adults in mental health crisis as well. Can this team stop a person in crisis from being charged with a crime? Kaki said that is the crux of the matter. This pre response team will be working together. The police and Fire Rescue will be guided by human services. They will all come to the table with the intention to avoid escalation. They will be led to focus on the individual. They are meeting with people in other states on how they are doing this work. What are the pitfalls? What if the individual is armed? Kaki said that the Police Chief, Fire Chief and Director of DSS are going to have disagreement and they know this going in. Mary M asked if the closest region also doing this is Richmond? Kaki said yes and there is a team in Atlanta that is doing good work. Instead of police officers arresting people they are refer them to services. Natalie thinks this a great idea and a wonderful learning opportunity for this community Very timely and she looks forward to hearing reports. Emily predicts there will be plenty of challenges in figuring up the best approach. She wonders how a uniformed police officer showing up to the scene would help a tense situation Kaki said no uniforms. Tee shirts... Emily feels this will spark conversations on how we respond to a mental health crisis going forward. She looks forward to hearing about the challenges and outcomes. Mary M. wants us to keep in mind and that our desired outcomes may not mean we reach a certain number of calls right away. The program will take time. Numbers on charts and how much money we spend should not be the most important thing.

**Action: informational**

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

**Discussion:** Jennie said that she is looking to step down from the board. Sarah Harris attended today's meeting just to get an idea of what the Advisory Board was like. Sarah said she works at Wild rock, has been an advocate for Equity & Inclusion in ACPS. She would like to be a part of this Advisory Board. Mary M. asked if Kaki got the information about the posting of public documents discussed in the February meeting? Kaki shared that we have to post the agenda and zoom invitation four days before the meeting. We are currently not in compliance because it has been posted about 2-3 days prior to the meeting. Mary M. is not going to be here for April. She is going to be in Ireland with her kids being Irish Dancers. Mary S. said that there will be a change in our public meetings. At this time this meeting will continue virtually.

**Action: There will be a future discussion on hybrid meetings vs face to face going forward for this meeting.**

**Message Out:** Community Response Team for the budget process. There are two practical ways how the Advisory Board can help. This budget includes three eligibility worker positions and one housing position. Kaki feels these are critical positions. If the BOS wants to help DSS it would be great if all the positions could be effective July 1 rather than staggering the start dates for these much-needed positions. Eligibility definitely is a department that needs extra staff. It is a theme at DSS that staff doesn't feel recognized, valued or seen. This work is not talked about at cocktail parties. The BOS doesn't get to see the work. Kaki has been trying to think of ways how this message out can really inform the BOS on the work we are really doing. There is a budget work session this Thursday 3/17/22 and DSS will be discussed.

Meeting adjourned at 4:44 PM

The next Advisory Board virtual meeting will be the third Tuesday of the month, April 19, 2022, at 3:30 PM using Zoom.

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Mary McIntyre -Chair

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Lisa Jordan - Secretary