

ALBEMARLE COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES
ADVISORY BOARD MEETING
DECEMBER 20, 2022

Chair: Mary McIntyre
Vice Chair: Amy Laufer

Present: Natalie Detert, Alice Micklem, Kaki Dimock, Mary McIntyre, Willie Mae Gray and Stacy Pethia

Absent: Sarah Harris, Amy Laufer and the Scottsville seat is still vacant.

BOS Members: none in attendance

Mary McIntyre mentioned that she had reached out to the School Board member in the Scottsville area looking for possible people to serve as our Scottsville Advisory Board member. Kaki has also been considering reaching out to Matt Lawless (Scottsville Town Administrator)

Mary McIntyre Chair called the meeting to order at 3:38 PM

Agenda Item: Approval of the October 2022 Minutes

Discussion: Mary McIntyre asked if there were any changes or corrections for the October minutes. Hearing none she asked for a motion to approve the October minutes.

Action: Willie Mae Gray made a motion to approve the October minutes which was seconded by Natalie Detert. October minutes were approved with no changes.

Agenda Item: Business from the Director – Information Items

Discussion: Kaki Dimock shared that the Office of Housing has been working on an update to their administrative plan over the last seven months. There were changes allowing for virtual briefings and more gender-neutral language. A number of BOS members had questions, but the changes were approved at the 12/6/22 BOS meeting. The unwinding of benefits has been on the mind of Benefits staff and has led to some budget requests. We did 360 evaluations of Administrative Staff (Director, Deputy Director and Assistant Directors) we have also done the same for all other Managers so all individuals with supervisory duties have now received anonymous performance feedback from supervisees and peers. Mary asked if she could get a blank copy of the survey to take to the schools. Natalie said it sounds like a great learning

opportunity. Natalie asked if progress is being made in hiring and staffing. Kaki said it seems that once we get caught up, we get another resignation. There is a high attrition rate in child welfare. The turnover seems to be happening faster than it has in the past. The caseloads are high, and our recruitment process has changed because of the lower number of applicants coming in. Willie Mae asked if money was the largest problem in people leaving. Alice said our salaries compared to other local agencies varies. We have a high cost of living in this area and we pay better than some localities but not as much as others. ACFR and ACPD has seen success with hiring bonuses. ACDSS has pursued that also. HR is not ready to entertain big changes because the class and comp study is completed, and we are getting ready to see some changes that should benefit new and existing staff. Mary said the schools have been doing exit interviews and now have started “stay interviews” in an effort to keep people. They filled up an entire week of stay interviews and have opened up a second week. The interviews were 30 minutes each and scheduled all day long. Many employees wanted to take advantage of these interview opportunities and the County School system seemed to be surprised that there are a lot of employees with feedback. Natalie said her husband is in leadership management position with UVA and we can’t blame the employee retention on the pandemic. This is a 50 year in the making problem. We are going to have to learn to make changes. Kaki said regarding the class and comp review. HR has worked to streamline job descriptions trying to make the paygrades and descriptions more uniform. They have not given a preview of the results of the comp portion. Mary asked about placement sources for foster care kids. Alice said we check our normal foster care providers and group homes. Mary asked if we are having trouble specifically with kids not being accepted because of being LGBTQ. Alice gave some examples of why placements would not work ranging from not wanting to travel, no space available to a male identifying as female would not fit in with the structure of a group home. Sometimes kids come into care late in the afternoon needing a high level of care and we cannot find anything available. We then have to house them here in our office or a motel. Natalie asked if there were resources for Gifts for Foster Care youth. Kaki said our Organizational Leadership Team (for the County) donated to our Bright Stars/Family Support clients. Kaki said today that a call did come in with someone wanting to donate gift cards. Kaki referred that call to the Foster Care Unit. Alice wanted to say that one of our Foster Care supervisors is going to donate to some of the Foster Care kids who need gifts. There was an email sent out to staff asking for help to transport youth to families for the holidays. They had ten volunteers. It is good to know we have the right people on our team.

Action: informational.

Agenda Item: Affordable Housing

Discussion: Stacy Pethia, Housing Policy Manager gave an overview of Affordable Housing in this area and an update on the Southwood development. There were questions about eligibility. There are many regressive policies around affordability. Local Govt’s first initial response is to provide funding to build affordable houses but have trouble managing the properties when affordability periods end. There are 2 phases in Southwood. Phase one is under constructions right now. There will be 450 units with 250 being affordable for 40 years. Phase 2 was just approved in November. They will provide 527-1000 units which 227-297 being affordable. There is a model home open in phase one. It’s a duplex. It is starting to look like a neighborhood. There will be a park in Village 2 and will be working with the Monacan tribe to build this park

with information on Monacan history. Stacy hopes to get together with the rest of the group after the holidays to get this project going. Kaki said a Grant Request has been filed for 13 million dollars to replace failing sewer lines in phase 1 and 2 of Southwood. It's a lot of money and a lot of energy to spend that will have good impact on the community. They have old septic tanks that are leaking and failing. It makes sense to dig it all up now instead of doing it one unit at a time. These leaking tanks are close to a waterway. The County is motivated to help get this problem resolved. For a long time, the residents were skeptical. Now that houses are popping up and a family is getting ready to move in people are getting excited about the progress. Mary asked if the Board could email Stacy if questions pop up.

Action: informational

Agenda Item: Presentation: PHE ending and Annual Report

Discussion: The Public Health Emergency resulted in the dramatic extension of benefits for SNAP, TANF and Medicaid. During this time all of the 90- day eligibility reviews stopped. Widely supportive but is filling eligibility staff of what happens when this end. At this point it has been said that the PHE will end on 1/14/2023 though we have not yet been given 60 days' notice. The county went to the BOS to ask for additional staff for this situation. We assured the BOS we would not recruit until we received the 60 days' notice. The Board approved five more positions. It was an incredible statement of support and worthy of thanking our BOS members. Kaki said its fine to do the annual report presentation the same way and we can use a power point in presenting to the BOS. Kaki will send this out electronically to the board. Kaki also shared that our presentation to the BOS will be in the first meeting of March.

Action: informational

Agenda Item: Business from the Board-Open Discussion

Discussion: A community member asked Kevin Kirst and Deborah Collins about field trips for Bright Stars students and a fund raiser for field trips. When DSS controlled the grant funding they always had funding for things like field trips. Since the schools took over the grant some schools have told they cannot have access to special funding. A Bright Stars family coordinator had a kid who needed some behavior modification and she wanted to make a sticker board for the child to have at home. Per the school, the coordinator was not allowed to buy the supplies for that sticker board. So, they are not allowed to purchase things that they feel is critical for their programs. Another big issue is because of the lack of funding the Family Coordinators have stopped doing family engagement events. What expectations we can have going forward?

Action: informational

Message Out:

- Thank you for supporting the request for additional staffing support for eligibility program to effectively manage the unwinding of public health emergency benefits.

Meeting adjourned at 5:08 PM

The next Advisory Board meeting will be in person the third Tuesday of the month, January 17, 2023, at 3:30 PM in Room 231

Mary McIntyre -Chair

Lisa Jordan - Secretary