

ALBEMARLE COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES
VIRTUAL ADVISORY BOARD MEETING
TUESDAY, May 11, 2021

Chair: Jennie More

Vice Chair: Mary McIntyre

Present: Doug Walker, Phyllis Savides, Wanda Hoerman, Mary McIntyre, Katherine Burton and Amy Laufer

Absent: Scottsville position currently vacant, Karen Horridge and Jennie More

Guest: Lorna Jerome

BOS Members: Diantha McKeel

Phyllis had the members introduce themselves. She also let the Board know that once the presentation begins she will be leaving the meeting as the presentation pertains to the recruitment of her position. Diantha will also leave the meeting the same time Phyllis does.

Mary McIntyre as Acting Chair called the meeting to order at 3:36 P.M.

Agenda Item: Approval of the April 2021 Minutes

Discussion: No quorum

Action: tabled until June meeting

Agenda Item: Business from the Director – Information Items

Discussion: Phyllis said there are many robust information items and asked if there were questions. Amy asked how many eligibility workers will be working from home? Wanda Hoerman said there are roughly 42 eligibility workers (including UVA Medicaid Unit). Amy also asked if the Eligibility workers would be reimbursed for gas. Wanda clarified that they will be working from home primarily and will not get gas reimbursement (they never got gas reimbursement) Wanda also shared that with eligibility working from home they have increased their productivity by 400%. Wanda advised that the home visits for waivers are completed by Adult Services (not eligibility) and they would use county vehicles to conduct the home visits. Phyllis said when the building opens, and customers start coming back into the building there might be a plan to have an eligibility worker in the office. Teleworking has proven to increase available parking spots in the office locations as well as office space thus saving the county money. Not having to move voter registration saved a great amount of money for the County. Doug stated that we are trying to be thoughtful on how we can make space sharing work. Wanda

said that there will be “five banked offices” in Eligibility that is eligible for use by signing up. There is also a plan to have one dedicated position that will be in the office every day. Workers email addresses will also be given out so customers can contact their worker directly. Doug said all departments are looking at customer service and efficiency. Mary reminded everyone about the meeting we had two years ago about teleworking and how it could save money, save space, save tax money and be an incentive to acquire and retain staff. Mary said maybe DSS can serve as an example across the County. Telework could be the solution to space issues. Doug said we have cancelled two leases and brought those departments back into COB. There are some services like Fire and Rescue and the Police department that have to have office space. But other departments (such as Eligibility) have been able to be productive while teleworking. Diantha said that the schools are doing this as well. Mary asked if there was plan for doing virtual Bright Stars classes. Phyllis will have to ask Carol Fox for information. Mary asked about the Bonus Bucks Program to get landlords to work with our voucher clients. Phyllis said it is very brand new. Basically, what we are trying to do is bring in landlords to rent to voucher holders. The idea is to offer a financial incentive to get the landlords to participate. So far, the landlords have been very receptive. This is something we wanted to do for a long time but never had the funding or someone to manage this program. Phyllis will ask for information on how many landlords we have gained. Mary wondered if something like that could be done with childcare vouchers. The cost of daycare is a barrier to people going back to work. Phyllis said that VDSS has given a significant chunk of money towards childcare. We are waiting to see how much of that money trickles to local DSS offices. Two important budget items: The funding for the two in-home service positions have been confirmed. We also will be requesting the BOS approve a permanent Administrative position in housing. It will be fully funded by HUD fees. Diantha mentioned that we should remember to reach out to UVA day care facilities to ask for scholarships and providers to agree to work with subsidy. Diantha said that there is a new administration and we should keep trying to get UVA on board. Amy asked about the Blue Bird Walk for Foster Care/Adoption and asked if it would be in a newsletter. Phyllis said it will definitely be on social media.

Action: Phyllis will ask Carol fox for information about the Bright Stars classes for next year and whether they will be doing virtual classes.

Agenda Item: Business from the Director- Presentation-Update on DSS Director Recruitment process including input opportunity- Lorna Gerome and Doug Walker

Discussion: Lorna Gerome, HR Director and Doug Walker, Deputy County Executive gave an overview of the recruitment process and asked the Advisory Board for input.

Action: Doug and Lorna invited the Advisory Board to email them directly if they have further input.

Agenda Item: Business from the Board-Open Discussion

Discussion: Amy brought up that it gets somewhat confusing to get the zoom invites separately from the meeting documents. It was suggested that the zoom invite be sent out on the day of the meeting. It was also suggested that a file can be shared into the chat and the Advisory Board can open the file during the meeting.

Action: Starting with the June meeting, Lisa will send the zoom invite the day of the meeting. Lisa will also figure out how to either attach the documents to the zoom webinar

or possibly share the file in chat so the Advisory Board can open the documents at the meeting. Lisa will consult with Nicole Jones (CAPE) regarding the possibilities. We will try this for June, July and August and see how it goes.

Meeting adjourned at 4:47 PM

The next Advisory Board virtual meeting will be Tuesday, June 8, 2021 at 3:30 PM using Zoom.

Jennie More -Chair

Lisa Jordan - Secretary