

Macon County Social Services Board

January 18, 2017

Minutes

Call to Order

Patrick Betancourt called meeting to order. Members in attendance were: Lisa Leatherman, Darlene Green, Dinah Mashburn, Patrick Betancourt, Secretary to the Board and Cathy Makinson Business Officer designated to record minutes.

Minutes

Revised Open Session and Closed Session Minutes of the November meeting were approved after motion by Dinah Mashburn, second by Darlene Green.

Old Business

Patrick reported on the Final County Audit for FY 15-16. There were no findings. He advised the Board of concerns other DSS Directors have in regards to increased audit findings, many times due to the inexperience of auditors who recently graduate from college and are given the task of auditing DSS agencies. We have experienced auditors that don't know how to correctly evaluate or know what to correctly ask. When auditors consult with their firm, the firm may call the State Division for policy interpretation. In Patrick's experience, various positions may be asked to respond to these calls and the state employee may not have the knowledge or experience in that program field or NC FAST to answer questions appropriately. The Directors' Association is developing a response to these concerns.

Patrick explained a concerning report issued by the state auditor last week in regards to Medicaid processing and timeliness. Ten counties were sampled and there were highlighted concerns in both processing and timeliness. However, the auditors used were contracted through Vanguard, a staffing agency, that utilizes retired and terminated social services employees who are not trained in audit procedures. The Directors' Association is developing a response to these concerns. With the new Governor's proposal to expand Medicaid, the timing of this audit does not put DSS agencies in a very favorable light. To pass, counties must achieve an 85% average in 4 areas including percent of processing time (ppt) and average processing time (apt). Patrick provided a Medicaid report card for all counties for months July through December. Macon has improved in the ppt but work still needs to be done in the apt. Sheila Conley has met with staff to address deficiencies and highlight strategies for improvements. Patrick stated he would continue to inform the Board on the ongoing reports. He mentioned that FNS has continued to do well both on a state and county level and that USDA has released the state from the program improvement letter.

Financials

Business Officer, Cathy Makinson gave a brief report on the energy programs and it was decided to make TANF Emergency Assistance available for families with a heating crisis so that the remaining CIP funds can be utilized for the elderly population. Monthly financials were provided in the Board books.

Program Reports

Lisa Hilliard presented FY 15-16 statistics in the areas of foster care, adoption and adult services. At the end of the FY, we had 38 children in custody which has increased to 45 to this point in time. Two were legally adopted. Approximately 15 children have been identified and are in process of getting cleared

legally for adoption. Since July, 3 adoptions have been finalized with the rest in various stages. Lisa also reported that Macon County achieved 100% in the federal requirement of every foster child being seen face to face monthly, not just in school but in the home. This requires many after-hours home visits and we contract with Vanguard to provide these visits to our out of county foster children. However, our social workers see the children face-to-face at least quarterly. Lisa also supervises the Intake social worker and she explained we have had a vacancy at different times during the past FY. It is a difficult position to fill and sustain. The other social workers have rotated the intake responsibilities during these times. Currently, we hired our social work intern who is able to work 32 hours per week and she will complete her internship and graduate in May. At that time, she will become a full time employee.

Lisa stated that the number of referrals in both CPS and APS have skyrocketed and that the cases continue to be more complicated with many of the same issues. Last year in APS, a total of 109 reports were made. At this point in time, we have already received 95 reports in 6 ½ months. This puts incredible demands on our one adult service worker and there is a legitimate need to evaluate the possibility of requesting an additional worker in the upcoming budget year. We continue to contract with The ARC of NC for guardianship cases where there is a not a family or friend available and the client has mental health and/or substance abuse issues.

New Business

Patrick reported on the continued work to expand NC FAST to include child care subsidy next, then Medicaid Transportation followed by Energy Assistance.

Patrick presented a draft policy on promotional opportunities with our agency. He explained it takes a full year for staff to become aware of how to navigate our systems and to be educated in program policies and procedures. This would coincide with achieving career status through OSHR. Once completed, an employee may apply for internal positions that become available and are more than just a lateral transfer.

Closed Session

Dinah Mashburn made motion to go into Closed Session to discuss personnel and confidential case information. Lisa Leatherman seconded, and motion carried. Board returned from Closed Session with motion from Dinah Mashburn, second by Lisa Leatherman.

Next Meeting

Next Board meeting is scheduled on Wednesday, February 15, 2017, at 9:00 a.m. in the DSS Administrative Conference Room.

APPROVED BY:

Chairman | Date

Secretary | Date