

Macon County Social Services Board

February 16, 2016

Minutes

Call to Order

Patrick Betancourt called meeting to order. Members in attendance were Jim Garner and Lisa Leatherman, Patrick Betancourt, Secretary to the Board, and Cathy Makinson Business Officer designated to record minutes. Dinah Mashburn was out of town.

Minutes

Open Session and Closed Session Minutes of the January meeting were approved after motion by Lisa Leatherman, and second by Jim Garner.

Program Reports

Agenda was adjusted to allow Sheila Jenkins to present her Program Report for FY 14-15 as she had a meeting to attend. Meals and volunteer hours were reduced last year primarily to winter weather in February. The SHIIP Program numbers are very good compared to surrounding counties. As a result, Macon SHIIP funds were not decreased. Sheila reported they actually serve many clients from surrounding counties as they come in to the CRC. The open enrollment period just ended and she reported 700 clients were seen by the volunteer staff over a 6 week period compared to 200 in Jackson County. She also reported they are serving approximately 70 home delivery meals per day. Of the 70 meals, Highlands Hospital provides an average of 6 home delivered meals per day and the Rec Park staff sometimes assist in delivery. The Board asked if there were contingency plans when weather is bad. Sheila stated the staff check on clients individually when they need to and make sure they have the essentials they need.

Old Business

Sheila reported the Advisory Committee for SCOPE held their first meeting and all went well. As part of the certification process, they have scheduled listening sessions with members of the Crawford Center. The first session was held last Friday and provided good feedback. One suggestion that was made was a desire to see a greater diversity which is one of the aspects SCOPE evaluates. The Advisory Committee was made aware of the outreach already in place to these communities. The suggestion to increase the outreach to the Latino and African American communities was noted. A formal vote was taken on approving the revised By-Laws, motion by Jim Garner, second by Lisa Leatherman with unanimous approval. Sheila also mentioned that suggestion boxes have been placed at the Senior Center for feedback and suggestions from clients and members of the community.

Patrick reminded the Board of the the kiosks that had previously been purchased for E-pass applications and had not been able to be used due to E-pass issues at the State level. Our new computer support staff employee, John Cerri, has been able to evaluate the kiosks to see how they can be used in other ways. He was able to program computer within to place one kiosk in the DSS lobby that runs a power point presentation listing

DSS Services. He is exploring the possibility of utilizing one at Senior Services for clients to complete an online survey with feedback.

Financials

Monthly financials were provided in the Board books. Business Officer, Cathy Makinson reported on the status of the current energy programs. LIEAP funds have been exhausted but we still have Haywood and Crisis funds remaining. Cathy reported that DSS has received the State Estimates for FY 16-17 and that the county budget is due by March 21, 2016. Cathy stated she would have the DSS budget ready for review and approval at the March meeting.

Old Business (cont'd)

Patrick reported the November Child Welfare Process Review report had been received. He shared a few highlights of the evaluation including identified problems and potential need areas. The State found that DSS are using the Intake Tool to screen correctly. However, the evaluation of reports screened out revealed the tool was not being used correctly and that there is a need to follow guidelines more closely in this area. Part of that issue is that in addition to the full time social worker whose specific duty is to receive intake of reports, there are other social workers who occasionally fill in who have main responsibilities in other areas such as investigation, foster care, etc. The report highlights the need to do training so the reports are screened consistently by all staff.

Second area Patrick referenced was the Assessment and Investigation process which the report states good work is done on the front end of the process but the longer it takes to process and conclude an investigation, the less strong this service is on the back end. The need is to ensure that just as much attention is given at this point. Patrick stated this is a strength in our agency because we have scheduled staffings with social workers, supervisors and mental health providers who evaluate these cases regularly.

Third area Patrick mentioned was in the area of foster care with the focus on permanency within 12 months and if not, the achieving permanence such as adoption within 24 months. For Macon, this process was affected by an increase in continuances. Since that period of time, Supervisor Lisa Hilliard has worked closely with our contract attorney to move these type of cases through court more quickly. These continuances sometimes occur through external partners such as the GAL or responding attorney.

Patrick reported to the Board that the Medicaid Transportation Audit had gone very well. Cathy Makinson stated staff had worked very hard to address audit issues identified two years ago. Since that time, Medicaid Transportation cases had been entered into the Northwoods document imaging system to assist with all demanding requirements of the program and the need to have cases organized and updated regularly as the State requires. She stated the amount of work required for this to be successful is too overwhelming for one staff person, so some of the duties have been assigned to other clerical staff. The main coordinator, Laura Langston, has done a great job cleaning up records and organizing them including adjustments to reimbursements that needed to be completed.

