

## **Macon County Social Services Board**

May 17, 2017

Minutes

### **Call to Order**

Lisa Leatherman called meeting to order as Patrick completed a Directors conference call and then joined the meeting in progress. 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**

Open Session and Closed Session Minutes of the April meeting were approved with motion by Lisa Leatherman and seconded by Dinah Mashburn.

### **Financials**

Business Officer, Cathy Makinson updated the Board on the County Budget which had been presented to the County Commissioners the evening before. DSS portion of the budget has been included in full; there is an increase in the county as well as the employee portion of the health insurance plan along with an increase in deductible and out of pocket; and County Manager has requested a 2% COLA.

Cathy reported that the new phone system has been installed at DSS and employees have received training on using new phones. The full county system upgrade will not be completed until some time in June. Cathy reported on a meeting with the auditors who will be completing the Single County Audit in June. Auditors informed Patrick, Cathy and Supervisor Sheila Conley that the annual audit will be much more intensive due to State Controller's findings of error rate in recent evaluation. Along with an increased number of files being pulled, if one error is found, more cases will be pulled and so on. Any internal control corrections will be noted as a finding where in the past, if those corrections were made before audit was complete, it resolved the issue and no finding was noted. Contract list for FY 17-18 was presented and approved. Lastly, Cathy reported on the Medicaid Transportation process changes. Macon DSS has been able to successfully upload files for prior approval by NC Tracks and Macon Transit has been able to successfully submit claims and received reimbursement. This has been a long difficult process with little training provided to these changes required by DMA.

### **Old Business**

Patrick stated to the Board that he hopes to have an updated DSS policies and procedures manual at next month's meeting. There will be an additional revision to the new draft of the promotional opportunities within DSS that will be included. Anything that is to be deleted will be struck through and new information and changes will be in red and underlined. Patrick will bring an overall summary of major proposed changes.

Patrick had agreed to bring the monthly Medicaid timeliness report however it was unavailable for April. DMA stated that there are calculation errors and once corrected it will be emailed to agencies.

### **Program Reports**

Gwen Taylor presented performance measures in the area of Human Resources which included statistics on staff turnover, education level of staff and training. She reported the biggest challenge has been the lack of qualified applicants, not just in Macon County but across the state. She has increased her

marketing efforts beyond just local advertisement. Recently, Gwen, Lisa Hilliard and Maureen Pruett had a presence at a job fair in Asheville for recruiting purposes. Some of the interested attendees didn't even know where Macon County was located. Many of the students were returning to their home town areas for employment following graduation. Not one WCU Social Work graduate has applied for our vacancy.

### **New Business**

Patrick reported more extensively on Senate Bill 594/House Bill 608 which was briefly mentioned last month. There are two main parts to these bills: 1) Regionalization of DSS into 30 districts, 2) Overall reform to improve the child welfare system. It was initiated unlike most legislation which included the directors not being made aware until it was presented. It appears that the principle drafter of the legislation is the Benchmarks consortium of child placing agencies across the state who helped craft the bills. The second part of the bill is some of Senator Barringer's signature such as specifics of opportunities for foster children to have more normalcy, for example the Driver's License pilot. To avoid a knee jerk reaction to the bill, the Directors Association (NCACDSS) adopted a neutral stance until they were able to sit down with the Senator. Senator Barringer was gracious to meet but is unwilling to remove the regionalization part. Directors expressed their concern with state supervision such as the lack of accessible training and child welfare not having a reliable state-wide information system. The proposed legislation suggests that the state be divided into no more than 30 districts to oversee all 100 counties. Patrick stated this would only add an additional level of bureaucracy as the regionalization would still require services in the local areas. The NCACDSS asked to provide markup language of the child welfare reform and proposed a pilot around regionalization to see if there was any benefit data. NCACDSS was working closely with the Senator to provide data on child welfare improvement initiatives. Two weeks ago, the Directors learned that S.B. 594 was rolled into the Senate's Budget Bill with a strong indication that the Senate Bill would move through quickly, which it did. Once this type of legislation is rolled into a larger bill, it is hard to remove portions for modification. NCACDSS stepped up their plan and decided they would focus on working with the House who appears to be not as receptive to this legislation. NCACDSS pulled data on states and found that regardless of the child welfare governance structure, there was no evidence that this or privatization has any positive impacts on outcomes. Currently efforts are being directed towards the House. Patrick mentioned Buncombe and Henderson County Directors drafted a letter to be delivered to their Representatives explaining as neighboring counties, they work collaboratively but feel the best way to function in child welfare is function independently. Patrick requested a copy and has drafted a similar letter for the 4 western counties including Graham, Cherokee, Clay and Macon to be sent to Representative Kevin Corbin. The letter does support the child welfare reform part of the legislation but states there is no data to support regionalization, which adds another level of bureaucracy, that has the potential of draining already limited state funds, and does not address the primary issue of deficiencies in the child welfare system. Patrick agreed to forward the letter to the DSS Board following review and agreement with the other counties who will be presenting this information to their boards as well. Patrick mentioned that other counties have sent letters to the County Commissioners Association because of the fiscal impact on counties. Board encouraged Patrick to follow up with CC Ronnie Beale and have the Board of CC adopt a resolution. Lisa Leatherman felt that the Board of CC may be more influential than just the legislators. NCACDSS is keeping directors apprised of the bill's movement. Patrick then mentioned the conference call he was a part of this morning between the 100 county directors and the DHHS Secretary and was only notified of the call late yesterday afternoon. Once the call began, it was apparent it was just a question and answer call and no one had been prepared for this

beforehand; however, there were some good questions presented. DHHS is not establishing a position on this legislation and they are already speaking from a position of “when this legislation passes, and the planning process of how this will roll out, etc.”, as if DHHS has already resolved itself that this is a done deal. Lisa Leatherman recommended a one paragraph summary to the letter for Representative Corbin so that the staff that read it recognize the importance.

**Closed Session**

Dinah Mashburn made motion to go into Closed Session to discuss personnel and confidential case information. Lisa Leatherman seconded, and motion carried.

**Next Meeting**

Next Board meeting is changed to Friday, June 23, 2017, at 9:00 a.m. in the DSS Administrative Conference Room with Appreciation brunch for outgoing Board Member, Dinah Mashburn.

APPROVED BY:

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Chairman | Date

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Secretary | Date