

Macon County Social Services Board

September 16, 2021

Minutes

Call to Order

Patrick Betancourt called the regular meeting of the Macon County Social Services Board to order. Members in attendance were Dale West, Anne Hyder, Evelyn Southard, Patrick Betancourt, Secretary to the Board, Page McCurry, HS Planner/Evaluator and Cathy Makinson, Business Officer designated to record minutes. Also in attendance were WCU intern Michaela Brooks, who is shadowing Patrick today and Amy Sanderfur, DSS Supervisor, back up to Cathy Makinson, present to observe.

Minutes

Minutes were approved on motion of Dale West and second by Anne Hyder.

Financials/Contracts

Business Officer, Cathy Makinson, presented End-of-Year Financials for SFY 2021. Calculated County savings are \$563,331, of which \$31,332 was in Foster Care and \$102,106 in Special Assistance, with \$429,893 remaining. Savings included \$147,000+ just in Social Work vacancies, no Adult Day Program, plus we received \$43,253 right at year-end in Adoption Funds. Foster Care budget in actuality was fully expended as the \$31,332 balance includes over \$45,000 in Child Support recoupments and increased FMAP. Senior Services had a savings of \$61,797 which included several new revenue sources including CARES act funding as well as Families First funding.

Diligent Recruitment/Retention (DRR) Plan Update

Lisa Hilliard presented the DRR (attached) which the state began requiring annually 4-5 years ago. The Plan is to assure that foster children do not have delays in placement due to race, ethnicity, and special needs, waiting on a home of the same. Macon County is not very diverse, but we have never had a problem with placement due to any of these areas. Lisa Hilliard explained the impact of COVID has caused 52 children to be in custody over a year which is much higher than normal, due to delay and backlog in court system. Only 8 of the 52 are cleared for adoption, 6 of them in their adoptive placements. The goal is up to one year for permanency for parents to make choices so that their children can be returned. The seven western counties are part of one judicial district with only one judge and limited judicial resources. Recently the 30th Judicial District was granted an additional judge through legislation to assist with the backlog. Federal legislation evaluates children in congregate care and effective October 1, 2021, IV-E funding is no longer available for this type of facility placement for children entering care after October 1, 2021. Lisa explained that Macon DSS only uses the congregate care when all other resources have been exhausted. Lisa informed the Board that now that foster care social work staff has no vacancies, hopefully that will allow the position of foster care and MAPP training/licensing to assist Stacey Messer in getting families, including relatives that have kinship placement, wishing to receive financial assistance, licensed.

Compensation Committee Update

Patrick updated the Board on a recent meeting he and Page attended with county admin. Once Patrick and Page had the opportunity to review the proposed benchmark positions, they felt the Decision Band Method (DBM) assigned were low. Our Department was not the only agency with these concerns. Both the Health Department and DSS have reached out to the Office of State Human Resources (OSHR), who assigns job classifications and grades, to determine how the DBM methodology will integrate in what is already assigned through OSHR.

Patrick informed the Board that the On-Call compensation was approved by county admin including an increase to the nightly rate due to the reduction of FICA and retirement. It will now be \$24/night for social worker, \$12/night for supervisor and retroactive to the first full pay period in July.

Personnel Update

Page presented a graph with updated turnover rates. After the largest rate of 22.08% for SFY 20-21, we are currently at 9.09% in the first quarter of SFY 21-22. Page informed the Board that with the two recent hires of Miriam Villanti and Ellie Britain, the Foster Care/Permanency Planning social work team is complete. One resignation at Senior Services of Leeann Higdon, who is going to assist her husband in his business, becomes a vacancy along with a CSSA in Adult Day. DSS continues to have a SW position in CPS and one in Adult Services, and two vacancies in Adult Medicaid.

COVID Update

The Department was given new requirements by County Admin as to how to proceed when there is exposure internally and externally to employees. One area most concerning and has reduced our staff by not allowing the staff to work due to exposure and/or being unvaccinated, is there is not a current remote work option at this time.

Next Meeting

Board adjourned on the motion of Anne Hyder, second by Dale West. Next meeting is scheduled on Thursday, October 21, 2021, at 9am at the Human Services Building.

APPROVED BY:

Chairman/Date

Secretary/Date

