

Macon County Social Services Board

Thursday, June 27, 2024

Regular Meeting Minutes

Welcome/Call to Order

Patrick Betancourt called the regular meeting of the Macon County Social Services Board to order. Members attending were Anne Hyder, Dale West, Mike Williams, Patrick Betancourt (Executive Officer and Secretary to the Board), Beneth Aiken, and Amy Sandefur. Guests in attendance were Jennifer Hollifield and Cara Smith. Introductions to the Board members and explanation of the process was made to prospective board member, Cara Smith.

Proposed Agenda

Agenda was approved on motion of Dale West and seconded by Mike Williams.

Minutes

May minutes were approved on motion of Anne Hyder and seconded by Dale West.

Celebration of Dale West's service

Patrick Betancourt and the Board expressed their gratitude to Dale West for her service on the Social Services Board. Dale stated that her heart will always be with the Dept. of Social Services.

Fiscal/Budget Update

Amy Sandefur and Patrick Betancourt reported on the new fiscal year's budget approval. They are still working through each line item to ensure they are aware of any significant changes. Questions were fielded from the Board regarding unclaimed bodies expense and increase in social worker on-call pay.

Commissioner Discussion of Senior services Space/Needs Analysis

In flowing with the budget discussion, a space needs analysis allocation of \$200,000 was part of the new fiscal year budget as a contingency line item. Several years ago there was a space needs analysis for the entire county for less money than just for the Senior Services building. This was not a line item that Patrick or Jennifer Hollifield were aware of before the County Commissioners meeting. Patrick and Jennifer Hollifield also discussed, an inspection was conducted at the Senior Services building by the Macon County Safety Director, Maintenance Director, Fire Marshall, Planning Dept. staff member, and County Property Insurance Coordinator without Patrick or Jennifer Hollifield having been notified or present. The inspection had not been discussed at the Department Head level nor at the Safety Committee Meetings. This resulted in a 20 page document of items that required a response for plan of action by July 15, 2024. The largest item being the sprinkler system that leaks. This has been an ongoing problem that maintenance and the Fire Marshall have been aware of. Patrick requested a meeting with all parties before the next Commissioner meeting as information was relayed the County Manager would need additional information on safety concerns regarding Crawford Senior Center by then. Due to scheduling conflicts, the meeting has been scheduled for the end of July. The Dept. of Social Services is unclear if this inspection was part of a standardized process being utilized across the county or whether this was an effort to gather supporting documentation for the space need analysis. This has not been communicated to the agency. The question was asked by the Board if our assigned county commissioner, Danny Antoine, had been made aware of the ongoing problems with the building at Senior Services. Commissioner Antoine, Commissioner Shields, and Senior Tarheel Legislator Pat Hedrick have all been in discussion with Jennifer Hollifield regarding potential solutions. This previously resulted in Jennifer Hollifield providing a list of areas of concern to the commissioners per their request. This list

was shared at the last Commissioner meeting. Jennifer Hollifield states that despite the 20 page document, there are multiple problems not listed on that report. Raised outlets on the floors, the sewer backing up into the building periodically, etc. were some of the additional concerns discussed with the Board. Patrick requested that Jennifer Hollifield brief Commissioner Antoine on the inspection document.



Personnel Update/Agency Exits Data

Beneth Aiken shared personnel updates, including a new Social Worker II starting on June 17, 2024. Four departures from the agency as of May 17, 2024 include Teresa Wood, Austin Vinson, Katrina Stover and Nicole Jennings who transferred to the Macon County Planning & Inspections Dept. After presenting the agency exit data, Board members asked Patrick if he has been in communication with Commissioner Liaison Antoine regarding the pay differentials between Macon County and the surrounding far western counties. Patrick indicated that he had not had that discussion with Commissioner Antoine and indicated he would be willing to help make Commissioner Antoine aware of the pay discrepancies for the positions that comprise the majority of the Social Services workforce including Income Maintenance Caseworkers and Social Workers.

Upcoming Meeting Schedule

Next meeting remains as scheduled, Thursday, July 18, 2024 at 9:00 a.m.

A motion to move into closed session was made by Dale West, seconded by Mike Williams. A motion to return from closed session was made by Dale West, seconded by Anne Hyder. A motion to adjourn was made by Dale West, seconded by Mike Williams.

APPROVED BY:  July 19, 2024  7/18/24
Executive Officer/Secretary Date Chairman Date