

**York-Poquoson
Social Service Advisory Board
Minutes
Wednesday, November 18, 2020**

Present:

Board Members: Roy Staton, Chair
James Tucker, Vice-Chair
Michael Chandler
Carolyn Griffith
Lourdes Guidicelli-Gadea
Vivian McGettigan
Mary Ann Meyer

Other Attendees: Richard Verilla, Director
Neil Morgan, Your County Administrator
Tedra Collins, Administrative Assistant to the Director
Burnette Hendricks, Assistant Director-Benefit Programs
Candace Mickelborough, Assistant Director-Services
Patti Alderman, Administrative Services Manager
Linda Faircloth, Child Welfare Supervisor
Jennifer Bolden, Child Welfare Supervisor
Tom Little, Administrative Analyst
Vicki Krusie, Self-Sufficiency Supervisor
Prell Gross, CSA Coordinator
Kendall Perry, Adult Services Supervisor
Ashley Palochak, Family Services Specialist

Call to Order:

The meeting was called to order at 9:08 a.m. by Mr. Staton.

Ordering of the Agenda:

There were no changes to the agenda.

Public Comment Period:

Because of the current pandemic, this was a virtual meeting, each member joining remotely. Public notices advised those wishing to observe or participate in the meeting contact Tedra Collins. Contact information was provided. No one contacted Ms. Collins. No public comments for this meeting.

Approval of Minutes:

Mr. Tucker made a motion to approve the minutes of the October 21, 2020, meeting. Ms. McGettigan seconded the motion. All approved; motion passed.

Personnel

During the last meeting the Board expressed a desire to meet new staff as they come on board. Ms. Mickelborough introduced Prell Gross, Children's Services Act (CSA) Coordinator. Mr. Gross has a Master's Degree in clinical mental health counseling from Radford University, and he's a Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC). He was most recently the site director with Family Insight. Mr. Gross has great deal of clinical background experience. Other work history includes clinical supervision, mental health support, outreach coordinator and volunteer work.

Ms. Kendall Perry, Adult Services Supervisor introduced Ashley Palochak, Family Services Specialist. Ms. Palochak previously worked at the Center for Sexual Assault Survivors in Newport News and was a member of the Peninsula Elder Abuse Forensic Center. Two years ago she attended the Virginia Adult Protective Services annual conference as representative of the Center. Ms. Palochak has a Bachelor's Degree and a Master's Degree in social work. She resides in Poquoson.

Presentation:

Ms. Patti Alderman, Administrative Services Manager, presented an overview of the Administrative Services Division. She is celebrating her fortieth year here at York-Poquoson. The Administrative support staff is comprised of employees that work with all divisions of the agency. The agency employs 15 support staff members with over one-hundred and fifty years of local social services experience.

This presentation was divided into four categories, general, financial, benefits and service administration. Each of these areas has its own unique support needs. General administration provides our office support work, and two workers perform some direct client services, including transportation of foster children and elderly adults.

All applications for benefits are initially processed by a benefit support staff. All fiscal functions including payroll, monthly reporting, receipts, accounts payable, check processing and receivables are written and verified by support staff. Child and Adult Protective Services investigation records are initiated by support staff. Basically for all persons contacting the agency by phone or in person, thru first point of contact is an administrative support staff. They are truly the hands, eyes and the face of our agency.

Old Business:

Director Position Recruitment & Selection:

Mr. Morgan reported that the director selection process is essentially complete. Mr. Morgan thanked the selection committee that included Dr. James Tucker and Vivian McGettigan, Advisory Board members, Amy Etheridge, Human Resources Director, Peter Gezzi, Virginia Department of Social Services, and Rick Verilla. The selection committee interviewed four applicants and they referred two for the Administrative Board to interview.

Administrative Board were very excited about one of those applicants, Margaret Mack-Yaroch. Ms. Mack-Yaroch currently in behavioral health at Southeastern Training Center. She has a twenty year history in program management, and she demonstrated a deep understanding of our Social Services department, including metrics as compared to other local departments. Ms. Mack-Yaroch arrives with a sense of the strength of our staff and the importance of maintaining a strong workforce. Her energy and enthusiasm for the task, level of research, and the understanding of the agency gave the board confidence that she is a capable leader.

The Administrative Board later today will officially appoint Ms. Mack-Yaroch as director. She has tentatively accepted and begin on December 14th.

Local Board Member Pre-Service Agreement:

A friendly reminder that board members are to complete the Pre-Service Agreement form and return it to the director. It can be return electronically or as a hard copy.

Board members have access to the Virginia Learning Center. Ms. Collins forwarded login information to each member. The Learning Center offers a variety of webinars and courses in addition to those on your pre-service agreement.

New Business:

Kinship Navigator Grant Renewal:

Two years ago James City County DSS, Williamsburg DSS, and YPDSS jointly applied for a grant funding support services to relatives and “fictive” kin providing full time care to children/youth. James City DSS serves as the fiscal agent and employs a part time case manager. This program has been very successful and the agencies applied for an extension. Virginia Department of Social Services renewed the grant. No local match is required.

The half time case manager works with individual families, helping them to navigate various systems, including schools, healthcare and mental health. In addition, the Kinship navigator provides training for kin and the professional community. This position is cost effective by preventing foster care placements that are more costly in dollars as well as emotional well-being.

40 Hour Work Week Effective January 1, 2021:

On October 21 the Administrative Board approved expanding the DSS work week from 37 ½ hours to 40 hours effective January 1, 2021. Staff will receive a 5% pay increase on January 1. The work day will be 8 hours with a mandatory 45 minute lunch break. Accrued leave will also increase January 1 reflect a forty hours work week.

Flex time options, switchboard hours and other coverage related details, are currently under consideration. These issues will be decided by January 1. The switchboard currently operates 8:00 to 4:00. Most county offices, open at 8:15 until 5:00.

Mr. Morgan gave the perspective of the Administrative Board on flex time and altered schedules. They should be consistent with the director’s prerogative in making sure they are aligned with county departments.

Office Re-Opening:

The office is now reopened to the public. Staff is still encouraged to limit face-to-face interaction, doing business online, by mail, and by telephone as much as possible. County staff sanitize high-contact areas (door knobs, railings, vending machines etc.) twice daily.

These first several weeks have been relatively uneventful. Currently, a minimum of 4 frontline staff for benefits, services and administration are required. Supervisory coverage is proportional. There are more than the minimum required staff in the office on most working days. Since reopening the agency has expended from approximately 15 percent to approximately 50 percent of the staff in the office. COVID numbers and in-office customers will dictate future adjustments.

Statistical Reports:

Mr. Verilla reviewed statistical reports.

Director’s Report:

The Code of Virginia requires that the Advisory Board meet no less that every other month and the Administrative Board attend a minimum of four of those meetings. Because this board was newly formed, and most members are new, the decision was made to meet once a month. December will be the last meeting for 2020.

Ms. McGettigan suggested that the board schedule meetings for the next calendar year on the third Wednesday every month. It's easier to remove a meeting sometimes than it is to add them. In the past, the Social Service Board scheduled monthly meetings and then the board would discuss if and when any of the meetings should be canceled.

Mr. Staton stated that some other boards and commissions he is on meet monthly. Sometimes they cancel one of the summer meetings and sometimes they cancel one during the holiday season, either November or December.

Next Board Meeting:

The next meeting will be held on December 16, 2020. This meeting will be virtual.

Adjournment:

Hearing no further business for discussion, Mr. Tucker made a motion to adjourn the meeting and Ms. Guidicelli-Gadea second. Motion passed. The meeting adjourned at 10:36 a.m.

Respectfully submitted by:
Richard M. Verilla, Secretary