

Scotland County Department of Social Services Board
February 17, 2022
Regular Meeting

The vision of the Scotland County Social Services Board is to foster individual responsibility and to create a strong cooperative community that is responsive to the needs of its citizens.

DSS Board Members Present: Board Chair Leon Butler, Board Vice Chair Dorothy Tyson, Carol McCall (Via Telephone)

DSS Board Members Absent: John Ferguson

DSS Staff: April Snead, Director, Jessica Buehler, Administrative Assistant/Clerk to the Board, Wendy Stanton, Social Work Program Administrator, Joy Hine, Income Maintenance Program Administration, Carolyn Lewellen, Income Maintenance Program Administrator, Paradise Seay Income Maintenance Supervisor, Twanna McCrimmon, Income Maintenance Supervisor

The DSS Board meeting was called to order at 8:30 by Board Chair, Leon Butler with an opening prayer by Dorothy Tyson.

A motion was made by Vice Chair, Dorothy Tyson, to approve the agenda for the February 17, 2022 Board meeting. Carol McCall seconded the motion. The Board unanimously passed the motion to approve the agenda for February 17, 2022.

Open Forum

- None

A motion to approve the minutes from the January 20, 2022 Board meeting was made by Dorothy Tyson and seconded by Carol McCall. The motion passed unanimously and the minutes accepted.

Director Snead gave the Administrative Report for the month of February.

Please see the attached report.

Discussion from the Administrative Report:

Budget and Finance:

Death benefit accounts are not to be counted as income. With this information, the number of payee accounts that are over threshold has been decreased from twelve to three. When an account contains more than \$2,000.00, it is considered resources and over the threshold for continued SSI payments. Payments must be stopped until the account gets to a reasonable amount. Once this occurs, payment will begin again.

Personnel:

There are now ten vacancies throughout the agency. Economic services, which is considered to be one of the more stable units, has seen an increase in their number of resignations.

Food and Nutrition:

Food and Nutrition Services currently has three vacancies. They also have a staff member that is still in training. With the upcoming surge of recertifications and reviews, QA and management are looking into ways to continue to meet MOU goals.

Child Care:

The daycare waiting list has been depleted at this time. As of now, anyone that comes in and qualifies will be put on daycare roles. Mrs. Tyson wondered if there would be any advertisement for daycare assistance to the public. Director Snead informed Mrs. Tyson that there is currently no advertising taking place because everyone has not responded to their daycare letters, Advertising may be something that the agency looks into at a later time once funding for all on the waiting list is ensured.

Children Services:

The vacancies in this unit have not been filled. There is now a struggle with getting applications for these positions. Potential applicants may be applying in other counties due to better incentives offered in those areas. The department has also not been able to get anyone from a temporary agency, as they currently have no one to send. Mrs. Tyson was curious about the possibility of hiring retirees to work part time. Director Snead stated that they would have to go through training again. However, if any retirees were interested in putting the time in, it would be worth looking into further.

Mr. Butler asked when exit interviews are conducted, does salary seem to be an issue? Director Snead stated that salary is almost always in the mix of reasons a staff member puts in their resignation. For example, we have had an IMC II leave for Hoke County. They are now an IMC I and making more money. Even though they now travel to work, it is still worth it as they now have less duties and more money. Mrs. Tyson believed that exit interviews were conducted by

non DSS Staff. Director Snead informed her that all staff resigning have the opportunity to do an exit interview with Susan Butler. However, not many people do this. In the resignation letter, Mrs. Butler's contact information is present and staff are told to call her.

SCATS

Director Snead has spoken with Spectrum about having cameras installed by the SCATS vehicles for added security. She has also spoken with Police Chief, Duke Williams, about having additional patrol throughout the night for DSS. While discussing security, Mr. Butler asked about any fences on the property in which the fleet could be stored during non operation hours.

Director Snead informed Mr. Butler that there is a fence on the property. However, with the location of the fence, the fleet would be less visible from the road and may cause more harm than good.

Director Snead has found a way to get 40% of the SCATS vehicle maintenance staff member's salary and benefits reimbursed. This has not been done before and will be an added benefit to the county.

SWAP:

Brochures have been created and will soon be available to the public to provide more information about the program.

A motion to accept the Administrative Report was made by Dorothy Tyson and seconded by Leon Butler, The motion was passed unanimously and the Administrative Report accepted.

Action Agenda (needing vote)

- None

Strategic Agenda

Social Services Commission appointment -Andy Kurtzman is the only applicant for the vacancy on the Board. The Social Services Commission will meet in March to review applications and make appointments. Mr. Kurtzman's application will be reviewed then. Swearing Mr. Kurtzman, if the SSC appoints him the Board, will take place in April. The Board agreed.

Commissioner Retreat - The retreat will take place on Monday, February 21, 2022. It will be at the Morgan Center on Peden St. and it is open to the public. Director Snead will be discussing concerns with salary and retention.

The Social Services Board's Rules of Procedure was given to the board members for review. This will be discussed in more detail at a later date.

Additional Conversation:

There is a goal of March 1, 2022 to begin the new deviated fixed route as it is currently written. This will depend on the fleet being fully operational and being fully staffed in SCATS.

Mrs. Tyson discussed potentially using SCATS buses for advertising purposes. Director Snead stated that she will have to discuss this with the Department of Transportation as they are the owners of the fleet, not Scotland County.

A motion to adjourn was made by Dorothy Tyson and seconded by Carol McCall. The motion passed and the meeting was adjourned.

Jessica Buehler, Clerk to the Board

Leon Butler, Board Chairman

Administrative Report

February 2022

Budget and Finance

- The FY 22 DSS budget is \$8,119,375 and the SCATS budget is \$499,839. The DSS budget is spending at 55%.
- Salary has been under budgeted again for FY 22. For the fiscal year, through January, the lapse salary is \$-4,594
- Munis implementation began 2/1/22. Training continues to use all aspects of the program. **Strategic Plan)**
- Twelve payee accounts are over the required threshold. **(Strategic Plan)**
- Training for various DSS financial reports were held in November and December with finance in attendance. **(Strategic Plan)**

Personnel Services

- The Department has eight vacancies, one CSSA, two IMC II's, one IM Investigator II (frozen), one SW IAT and three SW III's. The FY 22 turnover rate through the end of January was 12%. The FY 21 agency wide turnover rate was 31%.
- Paperless personnel files are being researched through Neo Gov. Personnel will begin to scan recruitment files into Neo Gov. **(Strategic Plan)**

Child Support

- Due to COVID-19, the Child Support non-cooperation sanctions have been waived, creating a back-log of cases that agents cannot work on and cannot close. Scotland County has 154 cases that are not cooperating to establish paternity and/or a support order. This number has increased from the previous months.
- Child Support has begun working on a training manual by modeling the Child Welfare training manual. **(Strategic Plan)**
- During FY 22, the unit will focus on increasing the number of cases with a payment to arrears by 300 cases. At the end of January, the unit has added an arrears frequency to 152 additional cases since July 1st. **(Strategic Plan)**
- Using the Order vs. Distribution report, the unit is identifying cases that disbursements do not match the court ordered payment. At this time 99% of cases match. The year started with 261 cases identified. At the end of January only 46 cases remain. **(Strategic Plan)**
- Scotland County is exceeding the pandemic goal in all areas of self-assessment/incentive measures and is exceeding pre-pandemic goals in all self-assessment areas.

Economic Services:

Child Care

- COVID - 19 Response: No face to face interviews are being conducted.

- The current combined spending coefficient is 93%. In November, Scotland County was given an additional \$448,665 allocation, significantly lowering the spending coefficient.
- The Daycare unit currently serves 415 children. The waiting list has been depleted at this time.
- Parent fees are waived through June 2022. The payment for parent fees will not be removed from the subsidy allocation.
- The Child Care unit is meeting MOU goals consistently. **(Strategic Plan)**

Food and Nutrition

- Review work has begun again in FNS cases. Only those cases certified for six months with the certification period ending during the months of January, February, or March and the FNS and without a previous extension will be reviewed.
- The FNS unit is meeting MOU goals consistently. **(Strategic Plan)**
- The FNS unit will again work to strive for same-day processing. In January, 48% of expedited applications were processed the same day and 13% of non expedited applications were processed the same day. **(Strategic Plan)**

Family and Adult Medicaid

- COVID - 19 Response: No face to face interviews are being conducted. Medicaid benefits cannot be terminated unless a person moves out of state, dies, or volunteers to be removed. Individuals who are required to pay fees/premiums for NC Health Choice or Health Coverage for Workers with Disabilities (HCWD) are exempt from this requirement until further notification.
- REDA Audit AIP has begun with review of five cases. This is a real time audit and will encompass January's work to be reviewed in February.
- Both Medicaid units continue to exceed timeliness requirements of the MOU. **(Strategic Plan)**
- NEMT is not located in NC FAST. Laserfiche has been contacted regarding a paperless project for this program. **(Strategic Plan)**

Work First

- COVID - 19 Response: No face to face interviews are being conducted. No sanctions can be implemented for lack of cooperation with Child Support and/or non completion of work requirements. Terminations of cash assistance for lack of compliance and end of time clock are suspended through the "end of the month in which the COVID-19 public health emergency...is lifted."
- A Work First monitoring was held in February. Results are pending.
- The Work First unit is meeting MOU goals consistently **(Strategic Plan)**

Program Integrity

- COVID - 19 Response: Collection of FNS and Work First overpayments has been temporarily suspended. Collection of FNS and Work First newly established overpayments has been temporarily delayed. Clients can choose to make payments.
- All Program Integrity MOU goals are being met consistently. **(Strategic Plan)**
- Program Integrity has begun work on becoming paperless in the coming year. **(Strategic Plan)**

Quality Assurance/Training

- Medicaid Transportation and Energy program training modules have been developed and are being used to train new IMC I staff. **(Strategic Plan Completed)**
- QA held a refresher training of customer service with all IMC I staff. An agency-wide Customer Service Training refresher is planned in the coming quarter, once the new QA Supervisor is in place.
- The new Quality Assurance and Program Integrity Supervisor began on January 17th. The new supervisor was promoted from within the agency and comes with experience in Quality Assurance, as well as training in Program Integrity.

Social Work Services:

Adult Services

- COVID - 19 Response: Adult Services is operating normally without any practice changes. All staff have various methods of PPE available through the agency.
- New MAC coding allows for increased daysheet use and reimbursement. A 5.4% increase can be noted in the new fiscal year after the first six months of coding. **(Strategic Plan)**

Children Services

- COVID - 19 Response: Child Welfare is operating normally without any practice changes. All staff have various methods of PPE available through the agency.
- FY 22 turnover rate for the unit is 26% (six resignations) through February 2022. The turnover rate for the unit at the end of FY 21 was 51%. A request is made to present this retention crisis at the February Commissioner Retreat. **(Strategic Plan)**
- Foster care social workers continue to be over the caseload standard. Foster care staff have approximately 27 cases each, caseload standard being 10. No temporary staffing is available. There is a concern for providing required services to all children in care.
- Court delays and the high average of continuances continues to keep children in foster care and other cases from closure. The Scotland Permanency Collaborative has met two times to work on barriers to permanence.

- The unit is working to improve four goal areas: 12 months to Permanency is 43% achieved, Timely Case Decisions is 72% achieved, and filing petitions timely is 81% achieved, providing more LINKS activities. **(Strategic Plan)**

Work First Employment

- COVID 19 Response: All in person visits are waived.
- The agency has one Work First Employment social worker with a caseload of Work First participants required to have a Mutual Responsibility Agreement.

DPS Reentry Program

- Volunteers from the Executive Committee met and reviewed the by-laws and made changes. The vote has not been completed.

Scotland Area Transit System (SCATS)

- SCATS continues to use a hybrid fixed deviated route. The new full time driver position has been posted for hire. **(Strategic Plan)**
- The Department is gathering information to begin the process of analyzing the cost per each SCATS trip. Information is required from DOT and county finance. **(Strategic Plan)**
- Several billing cycles have been completed with the two Medicaid Managed Care providers. This process is not fluid at this time, however, payment is being received. **(Strategic Plan)**
- The SCATS Transportation Advisory Board is recruiting members to represent the community.

Other Impacts on DSS:

- The Department received Pandemic LIHEAP funding in addition to regular LIHEAP funding.
- Low Income Household Water Assistance Program - LIHWAP is a time limited program to provide financial assistance with water bills, connections, etc. The program began 12/1/21 and continues at this time.
- COVID 19 Response: Temperature readers have been installed in reception for use with visitors to the agency. The agency has again stopped all agency meetings, based on space restrictions and provided disinfectant to all staff members.

New DSS Initiatives

- The 2021-2022 Leadership Development finished the application process and has begun regular meetings and projects.
- Beginning 2/1/2020 the Department kicked off a customer service campaign - STARS. S-Service, T-Trust, A-Accountability, R-Respect. This continues with painting of the building and revamping the lobby, also creating a “kids corner” in the lobby. (Painting delayed based on COVID)

- The Scotland Wellness Assistance Program began in February 2022. At this time only prescription needs can be met. The Department works to get MOA's for optometry, dental, and audiological care.

Common Acronyms

ADA - American with Disabilities Act

APS - Adult Protective Services

CPS - Child Protective Services

DCDEE - Department of Child Development and Early Education (Daycare)

DHB - Department of Health Benefits (Medicaid)

DHHS - Department of Health and Human Services

FNS - Food and Nutrition Services

IT - Information Technology

LBL - Local Business Liaison

MAC - Medicaid Administrative Claiming (funding source)

MOU - Memorandum of Understanding

OHSR - Office of Human State Resources

OST - Operational Support Team

REDA - Recipient Eligibility Determination Audit

SCATS - Scotland County Area Transit System

SSBG - Social Services Block Grant (funding source)

PPE - Personal Protective Equipment

PSNAP - Pandemic Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program

WFFA - Work First Family Assistance

COVID - 19 - Coronavirus