

Scotland County of Social Services Board
May 15, 2025
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: Andy Kurtzman, Amanda Holland, Mollie Flowers

DSS Staff Members Present: Kimberly McRae, Jessica Buehler, Shannon Hammonds, Arlita Carter, Stephanie Jacobs, April Martin

DSS Board Members Absent: Dorothy Tyson, Darwin Williams

The meeting was called to order at 8:32 a.m. by Andy Kurtzman. Amanda Holland led the opening prayer.

A brief introduction of all present was made. Arlita Carter and Stephanie Jacobs discussed their involvement with the Leadership Development Program. April Martin is one of the two social work supervisors in the foster care unit.

A motion to approve the Agenda for the May 15, 2025 meeting was made by Mollie Flowers and seconded by Amanda Holland. The Board agreed and the motion passed.

Open Forum

Elaine Coates and Sharon Quick, from Restoring Hope Center, gave thanks to those present. Ms. Coates inquired about the need for transitional housing for children that are coming out of foster care. Mrs. Martin discussed the Voluntary Placement Agreement (VPA), which is for young adults aged 18-21. Children that turn 18 while in foster care, have the ability to sign a VPA, which provides additional support. Mrs. Martin stated that there are currently seven young adults in the program. Typically once the child ages out of foster care, they sign a VPA due to a lack of family support, Mrs. Martin stated. Mrs. Martin informed Ms. Coates that there is a need for transitional housing for that population of young adults.

Ms. Coates stated that Restoring Hope Center would soon open up a shelter and their Board has discussed connecting with the Department of Social Services to see how the shelter could be of assistance. Ms. Coates asked if there were any others in outlying counties that are in need as well. Mrs. Martin informed Ms. Coates that she is currently not aware of anyone. Mrs. Martin

stated that there are sometimes young adults that move from another location that offers the program and they want to rejoin once they reside in Scotland County. Mrs. Martin stated that Laura Gardner, and herself, have to have a court hearing stating that the young adult currently meets the requirements to join the program. Mrs. Martin stated that once the young adult is able to enter the program, they are being seen by a social worker once a month. Mrs. Martin discussed her concerns for a current participant that turns 21 in July and will have to reenter the same environment in which they were removed at age fourteen. Ms. Coates stated that the Restoring Hope Center would like to focus on those that are just entering the program as they are the most vulnerable. Mrs. Martin gave Ms. Coates the contact information for Laura Gardner, who is the other social work supervisor for foster care.

Mrs. Holland asked that Mrs. Martin speaks to the program requirements. Mrs. Martin stated that participants must either still be in high school, secondary school, or working at least twenty hours per week. The environment that they live in has to be a home environment, which needs to be approved by the Department of Social Services. Mrs. Martin stated that communication with a social worker is required to take place at least monthly and can be either in person or virtual. Ms. Coates inquired about the licensing requirements, to which Mrs. Martin stated that the young adults are no longer required to be in a licensed home.

Ms. Coates stated that the facility will be located inside of the Restoring Hope Center at just over 2,000 square feet. There will be an educational piece as well as Richmond Community College will be partnering with Restoring Hope Center, which will be done pro bono. Ms. Coates discussed the new computer lab that will be there as well. It was discussed that it would need to be decided if females or males would be housed at the facility as it would not be possible to house both. The goal is to give them an opportunity to become self-sufficient and self-sustaining.

Mrs. Hammonds discussed that a meeting will be held with Wendy Stanto, Laura Gardner, April Martin, and representatives for Restoring Hope Center. The physical address for Restoring Hope Center is 1206 North Main Street in Laurinburg.

Director McRae asked Ms. Quick to discuss the summer feeding program that will be hosted by Restoring Hope Center as well. Ms. Quick stated that they are currently working on recruiting organizations to become a food site in the county. It was discussed that successful facilities would have a program as well as the parent would likely need an incentive to bring the child. There are currently eight confirmed sites and there is room for additional organizations as well. Ms. Quick stated that mandatory training would take place next week for the current organizations. If an organization would like to join at a later time, Ms. Quick assured that training would take place for them as well. Ms. Quick stated that all volunteers would need to have a copy of their ID or License on file as well as be checked against the Sex Offender

Registry. A national background check is also performed on those that run the facility. Ms. Coates stated that all members of Restoring Hope Center have to pass a national background check as well, which looks for violent offenses and sexual offenses. Ms. Coates stated that the program will be delivered throughout different satellite locations in the county.

Mr. Kurtzman inquired about the ratio used and Ms. Quick responded that a ratio to one adult per ten children is recommended. However, there will need to be at least two adults present as one will need to count the meals and one will be tasked to hand them out. Ms. Quick stated that is an FDA regulation. Mr. Kurtzman inquired about the days that the program will run. Ms. Quick stated that the program will run Monday through Friday, but sites will run the program on the days that they can throughout the week. The program runs from June 9, 2025 until August 15, 2025 according to Ms. Quick. Ms. Quick stated that sites have the ability to operate both breakfast and lunch schedules or solely operate with a lunch schedule only. All meals provided during breakfast will be shelf stable. Ms. Addie McQueen, a local caterer, will provide hot lunches for the children that are going to be served. Ms. Quick discussed wanting to provide meals that the children are likely to eat to combat meals being thrown away.

Director McRae gave thanks to Ms. Coates and Ms. Quick for attending the meeting.

A motion to approve the minutes from the April 17, 2025 meeting was made by Amanda Holland and seconded by Mollie Flowers. The Board agreed and the motion passed.

Director McRae gave the administrative report.

Please see the attached report.

Discussion from the administrative report:

Social Work Services:

Mrs. Martin discussed that one home has been licensed and the application has been submitted for another home to become licensed as well. There are currently three other homes that the Department is working on to become licensed. Mrs. Martin discussed that the Department is excited because only one family completed the class in 2024, but now several families have the potential to become licensed foster care homes for Scotland County.

Other Impacts:

Director McRae informed the Board that currently, the bathroom remodel has been placed on hold as there was a pipe that burst in the men's bathroom. Director McRae stated that a company by the name of Servpro was hired to assess the mold concern due to the flooding that occurred. KM-Servpro is working on that to resolve issues.

Additional Conversation:

Mr. Kurtzman inquired about the seventeen vacancies, to include those that are currently on hold. Director McRae discussed that a requisition has to go to county Finance and then be approved by the County Manager. Director McRae stated that currently, the Department is unable to hire for a position that is not mandatory. Director McRae discussed that economic services are currently having to find ways to make it work and to not get behind.

Mr. Kurtzman inquired about the current fiscal year budget, to which Director McRae stated that the budgets seem to be on target as of now. Director McRae discussed the need for additional funding in the Reentry Program as there is enough to fund the social work positions, but not enough to operate the program sufficiently. Mrs. Hammonds stated that when the \$150,000 is received from the Department of Adult Corrections, the agency is informed that additional funding will most likely be needed. Mrs. Hammonds discussed the importance of the Reentry Executive Committee and their responsibility to find additional funding for the program. MRs. Hammonds stated that the Reentry Program is currently working with the coordinator, Mr. Styles, to better outline the roles and responsibilities with the Reentry Executive Committee. Director McRae and Mrs. Hammonds both discuss their enthusiasm for the new grant writer in the county and hope this will be an asset to the Reentry Program.

Mr. Kurtzman discussed the retention of social workers and inquired about potential barriers to retaining social work staff. Mrs. Hammonds stated that there have been a few social workers that discussed leadership in social work being an issue. Mrs. Hammonds stated that coaching has been performed within that unit's leadership. Director McRae stated that a clear difference has been seen within the last two months in terms of the attitude towards leadership within the social work units. Director McRae stated that typically offers are rejected due to salary or the prospective employee obtaining employment at another location.

Mrs. Holland asked Mrs. Hammonds to discuss what has helped to reduce the repeat maltreatment finding within the county. Mrs. Hammonds discussed that while sitting in on staffing, it is noted that staff are going beyond the surface level with not only their investigative work, but in building connections with their families as well. Mrs. Hammonds also stated that staffing sheets have been updated to ask additional questions. Mrs. Hammonds stated that the biggest barrier comes for the court system and the ability to dismiss petitions that social workers and leadership feel should have not been dismissed.

Mrs. Holland inquired about social workers' ability to articulate how substance or domestic abuse have an impact on children. Mrs. Hammonds stated that social workers are doing an excellent job of articulating that to the court system. Mrs. Holland inquired about the Court

Collaborative, to which Mrs. Hammonds told her no longer is in effect. Mrs. Hammonds has asked Director McRae to discuss this with Judge Wilson as it would be beneficial to continue the Court Collaborative.

Unfinished Business

- None

New Business

- Consolidation of Health and Social Services Departments Discussion

Director McRae informed the Board that Mr. Williams would like to discuss this, but with his absence today, the conversation would need to take place at a later date. Director McRae stated that the public hearing will be held at the next Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) meeting on June 2, 2025. Mr. Kurtzman inquired about the potential ways the Social Services Board could be affected. Mrs. Holland discussed that the BOCC can either dissolve the Board and serve in that role or develop an advisory board that combines Social Services and Health Department. Mr. Kurtzman inquired about why it was being brought up now and Mrs. Holland stated that there were previous discussions of doing so in 2017. Director McRae stated that at that time there was a resistance to it as you lose your protection under State Human Resources Act. Mr. Kurtzman asked Director McRae if she had any concerns, to which she stated that her concern would be positions being cut, but she is inquisitive about how it looks for the Department. AH-brought up in 2017. Mr. Kurtzman discussed the lack of conversation that the Social Services Board members have been able to have and requested that a special meeting be held so that the Board can discuss this before the June 2, 2025 meeting. Director McRae stated that she will work to get a meeting scheduled for next week.

A motion to adjourn was made by Mollie Flowers and seconded by Amanda Holland.

Jessica Buehler, Board Clerk

Andy Kurtzman, Board Vice Chair

Administrative Report

April 2025

Budget and Finance:

- The FY 25 DSS revised budget amount is \$9,169,041. The FY 25 SCATS revised budget amount is \$828,377 requiring an approximate 20% match in county funding. The Reentry budget, which began on December 1st, is approximately \$155,000. Spending through April 2025 is as follows:
 - DSS 74.78%
 - Reentry 39.89%
 - SCATS 45.76%
- Increase foster care reimbursement through a joint finance/program reconciliation process. (Strategic Plan)
- Create a user guide for finance staff and finance processes. (Strategic Plan)

Personnel Services

- The Department has seventeen vacancies with several positions on hold. There is one Child Support Supervisor II, two Leadworker IMC III's, four IMC II's, three IMC I's, one CPS Intake Social Worker II, one Social Worker III, one SWIAT, one Vehicle Operator II, two Child Support Agent II's, one Community Social Services Technician.
- The FY 25 turnover rate is 19% for the agency.

Child Support

- At the end of April, the unit has consistently excelled in achieving its Self-assessment goals, exceeding expectations in all areas.
- Currently, 96.28% of cases are under an order, significantly higher than the target of 90%.
- To date, the unit has successfully collected over \$4.2 million in support for the families it serves.
- The average score from Quality Reviews for the unit is 95.54% for the fiscal year and 100% for the month of April.
- One of the CSA Supervisor II positions was filled. The unit continues to demonstrate exceptional resilience and productivity throughout April while maintaining performance levels equivalent to those of a fully staffed team despite a shortage of four staff members.

Economic Services:

Child Care

- The Daycare unit currently serves 549 children. This number fluctuates each month based on the attendance reported by the daycare. Children are attending 14 daycares in Scotland County and 25 daycares outside Scotland County.
- There are currently 203 clients on the waiting list.
- During FY 25 the Daycare unit's combined spending coefficient is 94.5%.
- The Daycare unit is meeting MOU goals consistently for timeliness. **(Strategic Plan)**

Food and Nutrition

- For the month of April, FNS application timeliness was 91.5% slightly below the 95% required. This was due to the volume of applications and the unit's recent IMCII vacancy. **(Strategic Plan)**
- The unit strives for a same day processing goal of 25% for expedited applications and a 18 day average for non expedited applications. During the month of April, the same day processing goal was exceeded. Expedited applications were at 62% and non-expedited applications were at an average of 17 days. **(Strategic Plan)**
- In April, FNS received 534 recertifications with 98% timeliness. For May, 707 recertifications are expected.

Medicaid

- The Medicaid units are meeting the MOU goals for application timeliness. **(Strategic Plan)**
- For April, there were no SAA and no SAD applications. **(Strategic Plan)**
- Medicaid's Timeliness Report Card for April was 99%.
- The NC Medicaid Expansion Dashboard for Scotland County was last updated April 4, 2025. The dashboard reports Scotland County having 3,556 enrolled in the Medicaid Expansion Program.

Work First Family Assistance/ Work First Employment

- The Work First Family Assistance unit is meeting MOU goals consistently for timeliness. As of April, we have a caseload of 76. **(Strategic Plan)**
- The Work First Employment caseload size as of April is 8 participants.

Program Integrity

- 100% of cases continued to be investigated timely.

Social Work Services:

Adult Services

- The unit continued to meet all MOU requirements during the fiscal year, The MAC coding for April, 2025 was 70%.

Children Services

- The children services unit works to increase retention across the unit which has been a statewide issue (**Strategic Plan**). For the month of April, the unit had 3 vacant positions, a SW II Inake, 1 SWIAT and a FC SW III. Positions for the SWIAT were posted and interviews completed, with hopes to fill those positions by mid May. The SW III position remains posted as well and interviews are being conducted. The agency also received approval to post the Intake SW position. The agency is working diligently to fill these positions.
- For all children who were victims of maltreatment, no more than 9.1% receive a subsequent finding of maltreatment. As of April 2025, repeat maltreatment was 12.6%. (**Strategic Plan, MOU measure**). Although this is higher than our MOU measure, it continues to trend down each quarter. Program Administrators continue to sit in on staffings monthly to ensure that cases are being staffed appropriately and safety issues are being adequately addressed. Program Administrators are also reviewing petitions and court documents to ensure they are adequate to prevent court issues such as dismissed petitions.
- All social work documentation will be current within seven days. (**Strategic Plan**) Program Managers and Supervisors in the Children's Services Unit continue to meet monthly to assess and track documentation to ensure it remains current. Workers continue to have protected time to work on documentation on Fridays in office. They are also able to work on documentation from home, which seems to be productive. The unit continues to work diligently to increase timeliness with documentation. Currently, the unit remains short staffed, which has proven for the last several months to be a barrier for staff being able to adequately keep documentation current.
- Increase the number of licensed foster homes by 25%. As of April, 2025 there are 9 licensed foster homes in Scotland County. The fall MAPP class was completed on 1/21/25. There were 5 families that completed the class. The goal is to have these homes licensed by the end of June, 2025. (**Strategic Plan**).

DAC Reentry Program

- For the month of April, the Reentry Program had 31 active participants, and 10 new referrals.
- The Reentry Program has 2 new housing partners and currently has participants in the homes, which is going well.
- Funding still remains a great challenge for the reentry program. The Reentry program continues to seek funding and is hoping to be able to identify and apply for grants to assist in funding the program.
- Second Chance month was in April. The agency did several things to acknowledge this, including 2 radio spotlights, reading of the proclamation, and a second chance day and toiletry drive.

Scotland County Opioid Outreach Program

- For the month of April, the OOP had 2 new referrals, and 5 active participants.
- The OOP social worker has reached out to Scotland Memorial to discuss implementing a process for the program to receive referrals from them, and for the social worker to be able to possibly set up a table at the hospital as well to accept referrals/educate community members about the program.
- The OOP is off to a good start. The social worker is engaging clients and linking them with community resources; however, we have found that housing seems to be a great barrier for individuals participating in the program.

Scotland County Family Treatment Court

- The Scotland County FTC held its first official session February 7, 2025, which went well. As of April, the program has 6 active clients, and will continue to receive referrals for individuals that may be candidates for the program.
- The FTC Coordinator and Judicial staff are scheduled to attend the ALLRISE Conference in Kissimmee FL in May 2025.

Scotland Area Transit System (SCATS)

- The Scotland Area Transit System (SCATS) average daily trips during April was 71 trips per day. The number of trips were a result of two buses being out of service during the month.
- Bus 182 remains out of commission due to a broken frame and is slated for disposition to Scotland County Parks and Recreation.
- Bus 181, involved in an accident on February 14th, was also inoperable throughout April.
 - The new Bus was received but due to a faulty inspection of the air conditioning system, has not been put on the road as of yet.

Other Impacts on DSS:

- The DSS Bathroom Remodel and Construction Project through Allen Peele Construction Company has taken an unexpected delay as there was a water pipe that burst on the evening of April 22, 2025 causing flooding to the main areas of the building including the main hallway, Front Lobby, Child Support, SCATS, Adult Medicaid, the breakroom and one Program Managers office, etc. Servpro has been on site to determine the extent of the water spread and damage and has taken action on the affected areas.

Common Acronyms:

ADA - American with Disabilities Act
APS - Adult Protective Services
CPS - Child Protective Services
COVID - 19 - Coronavirus
DAC- Department of Adult Corrections
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
FTC- Family Treatment Court
IT - Information Technology
LIHEAP - Low Income Housing Energy Assistance Program LIHWAP - Low Income Housing Water Assistance Program LBL - Local Business Liaison
MAC - Medicaid Administrative Claiming (funding source) MOU - Memorandum of Understanding
OHSR - Office of Human State Resources
OST - Operational Support Team
OOP- Outreach Opioid Program
REDA - Recipient Eligibility Determination Audit
SCATS - Scotland County Area Transit System
SSBG - Social Services Block Grant (funding source)
SNAP - Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program
SWAP - Scotland Wellness Assistance Program
PHE - Public Health Emergency
PPE - Personal Protective Equipment
PSNAP - Pandemic Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program WFFA - Work First Family Assistance