

**PITT COUNTY BOARD OF SOCIAL SERVICES  
REGULAR SESSION**

**October 17, 2023**

The Pitt County Board of Social Services met in Regular Session at 3:00 p.m. The purpose of this meeting was to conduct the official business of the Pitt County Board of Social Services. Board members and Management Team staff present:

**Board Members**

Members Participating  
Darone Dancy, Chair  
Catherine Nelson, Vice Chair  
Kylene Dibble  
Mary Perkins-Williams  
Kim Anderson

**Agency Staff**

Members Present  
Sharon Rochelle, Director  
Nikki Mears, Deputy Director  
Bryan Averette, EES Admin  
Sonya Scott, Family Services Admin  
Inez Black, Business Officer

**County Manager Rep.**

Sam Croom, Finance Director

**Call to Order**

Chair Dancy called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m.

**Moment of Silent Prayer**

Chair Dancy offered a moment of silent prayer or meditation before the meeting began.

**Public Comments**

There were three public comments made during the meeting:

Ms. Jennifer Stroud and Ms. Kristal Gauthier spoke on the building conditions of the County Office Building

Mr. Jason Carrow spoke on the Daycare waiting list and the amount of time it will take to remove children from the Daycare Waiting List.

**Adopt or Revise the Agenda**

Item presented by: Chair Dancy  
Discussion: The agenda for today's meeting was reviewed by the Board and the Items for Consent and the Closed Session were removed from the Agenda  
Motion Made: To approve the revised agenda  
Motion Made by: Catherine Nelson  
Motion Seconded By: Mary Perkins-Williams  
Motion Passed: The motion was passed unanimously.

**Action on minutes of previous meeting**

Item presented by: Chair Dancy  
Item Description: Minutes of the September Board Meeting  
Discussion: Chair Dancy asked if there were any revisions to be made to the minutes.  
Motion Made: To approve the minutes  
Motion Made by: Catherine Nelson

Motion Seconded By: Kylene Dibble  
Motion Passed: The motion was passed unanimously.

### **Swearing-In of New Board Member**

Kim Anderson was sworn in for a 1<sup>st</sup> term as a Board Member by Ashley Clark, Clerk to the Social Services Board.

### **Recognition of New Hires and Retirees**

New Hires: Erica Sasser, Kayla Holder and Domonique Hall

### **Items to Report**

**Item Presented: Daycare and Crisis Intervention Updates**  
**Item Presented by: Bryan Averette, Family Support Administrator**

Ms. Scott presented on the Housing and Homeless Project, DSS received \$150,000 from the Planning Department, which was approved by the County Commissioners. With these funds, DSS would like to expand our eviction program to attract individuals who do not meet the qualifications for the current programs. Those maybe individuals who do not have a child in the home or are low in-come. Plans are to have the program up and running by December 1<sup>st</sup>. With the \$150,000, at least \$109,478 will be used for increased benefits, at least \$30,522 will be used for one temporary staff and up to \$10,000 will be for applicant training in basic household money management but the National Financial Educators Council.

Ms. Scott presented on Child Care Subsidy program and the historical data with unspent funds that were returned to the state. The state average of co-efficiency is currently at 78%, during the 22-23 Fiscal Year the Pitt County DSS co-efficiency was 88%. Pitt County DSS currently has the highest waitlist in North Carolina with 1075 children (as of October 2023). Prior to January of 2023, there was three and half staff member in Childcare, it currently takes 45 minutes to one hour to key applications into NC Tracks. Staff members are also responsible for keying changes in the cases, ie. Changes of address, income changes, household composition changes and state mandated recertifications yearly (450 per month). The goal is to have no waitlist by the Summer of 2024.

**Item Presented: Economic Services Update**  
**Item Presented by: Bryan Averette, EES Administrator**

Mr. Averette reported on the Medicaid report card and the processing timely percentage is 96% for Medicaid disability applications and 94% for all other Medicaid applications. Medicaid Expansion bill was approved by the North Carolina General Assembly, implementation will start on December 1<sup>st</sup>. During the November 13<sup>th</sup> County Commissioner meeting, 10 additional IMC II's, two IMC III's and one IMC's II's Supervisors were approved. The staff is being funded by Medicaid Expansion Federal funds that has been provided by the County, at 100%.

### **Deputy Director's Report – Nikki Mears, Deputy Director**

Ms. Mears reported there are 24 vacancies in the Child Welfare and Adult Services units. The State has been with the Adult Services team for a couple of weeks and the Adult Services Unit has accomplished the majority of the serious concerns they had. Practices, structures and organization are being put in place, so, DSS won't have the same issues occur again.

Child Welfare has several audits in the future, including the IV-D audit. Child Welfare is preparing the records now for the audit. A new policy for unlicensed kinship providers for foster care is beginning, those individuals will receive room and board payments. DSS is currently waiting on information on how the payments will be processed.

The current vacancies are 16 in Child Welfare and eight in Adult Services.

## Director's Report – Sharon Rochelle, Director

Ms. Rochelle reported the DSS Board Retreat will be held on December 5, 2023. Ms. Kristi Nickodem will be on-site to provide the training to the board members. A Strategic Plan will be given to the DSS Board at that time. The Director and Deputy Director attended the Personnel and Professional Development Conference at the end of September. Both attended workshops for Creating an Inclusive Workforce, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion and Preventing, Responding to charges of EEOC and Creating Great Workplaces.

During the next fiscal year, County Manager Gallagher plans for a study to be completed on how to move forward with a new County Office Building.

## Board Member Comments

Kylene Dibble – Ms. Dibble welcomed Kim Anderson to board and Welcome to staff members. Ms. Dibble thanked the employees who came before the Board and Director.

Darone Dancy – Mr. Dancy welcomes Ms. Anderson to the DSS Board. Mr. Dancy thanked the staff who came before the Board for coming and sharing their experiences.

Mary Perkins-Williams – Ms. Perkins-Williams welcomed Nikki Mears as the Deputy Director and welcomed Ms. Anderson to the DSS Board. Ms. Perkins-Williams suggested a Suggestion Box for individuals to speak freely without feeling pressured or retaliated against for their statements.

## Meeting Adjournment

Motion Made:	To end the October board meeting
Motion Made by:	Mary Perkins-Williams
Motion Seconded by:	Catherine Nelson
Motion Passed:	Unanimous

Respectfully Submitted,

Sharon Rochelle  
Director

Darone Dancy  
Chair

*Ashley Clark*

Ashley Clark  
Clerk to the Board