

**Commonwealth of Virginia
State Board of Social Services**

**Libbie Mill Library
2100 Libbie Lake E Street
Richmond, VA 23230**

December 13, 2023

Attending: Buckey Boone (Chair), John Kines (Vice Chair), Megan Miloser (Secretary), Maria Benjamin, Don Carey, Jennifer Slack, DeRonda Short, and Sheryl Garland.

Absent: Zulma Santos, Les Ford, and Rachna Heizer.

Also in Attendance: Dr. Danny Avula (Commissioner) and Ellen Malenke (Assistant Attorney General).

Meeting called to order at 10:00am – Mr. Boone

Comments from the Commissioner – Dr. Avula provided local, state, and federal updates.

COMMENT PERIOD

Mary Ottinot – Ms. Ottinot expressed her concerns that Virginia is in crisis. She expressed there's a severe workforce issue and mental health oversight crisis. She would like the Board and the agency to do a public inquiry and figure out how many families and children were harmed because systems were not in place.

Brittany Whitworth – Ms. Whitworth expressed her concerns about kinship care. She expressed there is no oversight or accountability to the people not following the policies. She also expressed Virginia is in a homeless crisis.

Lori Slayton – Ms. Slayton expressed her concerns about the distressing trends in CPS as it relates to false accusations and psychological and physical abuse. She expressed there needs to be a system in place to stop the cycle of abuse of children.

Comment from the Virginia League of Social Service Executives – Rebecca Morgan, President
Ms. Morgan shared the League is aligned with the legislative priorities of the department this year. The League's top three legislative priorities will be to replace VaCMS, the building and maintaining of a training academy to strengthen staff, and kinship.

Linda Gibson, chair of Professional Development Committee – Ms. Gibson spoke about the importance of and the need for a better way for local departments to on-board staff.

ACTION ITEMS

1. Approved October 2023 Meeting Minutes
On Motion Duly Made, (John Kines), second (Megan Miloser), motion approved with all in favor.

2. Benefit Programs Appreciation Month Resolution
On Motion Duly Made, (Sheryl Garland), second (Don Carey), motion approved with all in favor.
3. LDSS Administrative/HR Manual Updates
On Motion Duly Made, (John Kines), second (Megan Miloser), motion approved with all in favor.
4. 22VAC40-675, Personnel Policies for Local Departments of Social Services- Exempt Regulation
On Motion Duly Made, (Don Carey), second (Sheryl Garland), motion approved with all in favor.
5. Follow-up on Request to Secretary of Health and Human Resources Regarding 2024 Budget and Legislation
The Chairman noted the Governor’s budget would not be released until December 20, and the Board will not meet again until February. He opened discussion regarding how the Board might support the agency’s budget priorities, especially the funding request to replace VaCMS. Ms. Garland indicated that she and Mr. Cary, as the Board’s Legislative Committee, discussed the issue and how members can support the agency. She moved to encourage members to contact their legislators and express the Board’s support for funding to replace VaCMS with a new integrated system. **On Motion Duly Made** (Sheryl Garland), second (Don Carey), motion approved with all in favor.

Ms. Garland requested that the agency provide information to members on who to contact and supporting information, so that members convey a consistent message to their legislators.

Community Action Update: Hearing from Whole Family Approach Leaders – Erik Johnston, President & CEO, VACAP and Kevin Otey, VACAP Board Chair. Mr. Johnston and Mr. Otey spoke about the work being done on the whole family approach. They introduced the team within Community Action who are leading on the whole family pilot. Monique Moore, Sharon Black, and Chris Napier each shared their experience.

Medicaid Unwinding & Kinship Updates – Elizabeth Lee provided updates on Medicaid unwinding and kinship.

Member Requests

Ms. Garland requested a dashboard regarding constituent correspondence, to track the timeliness of the agency’s responses, identify trends and provide opportunities to focus on areas of most concern.

Mr. Carey asked the Commissioner to look into the concerns expressed during public comment and report back at the next meeting.

Ms. Short requested to know the number of undocumented adults and children that VDSS serves.

Mr. Boone requested to know what the Governor’s budget includes.

Meeting adjourned at 1:18 pm