

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

**Hilton Hotel & Conference Center
Glen Allen, Virginia**

December 16, 2009

Members Present

Trudy Brisendine, Danny Brown, Shirley Culpepper, Willie T. Greene, Margaret Luca, Brenda Hornsby, Barbara Manuel, and Bela Sood.

Members Absent

Michelle Larkin

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Trudy Brisendine called the meeting to order at 2:00 p.m.

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

The Chair welcomed members and guests and remarked how nice it was to be part of Governor Timothy M. Kaine and First Lady Anne Holton first Governor's Conference on Children's Services Transformation. Since Transformation began in December 2007, more children are being placed in loving, permanent families.

REVIEW OF THE AGENDA

Richard Martin, Manager of the Office of Legislative and Regulatory Affairs reviewed the meeting agenda.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None

LOCAL BOARDS AND DIRECTORS OF SOCIAL SERVICES

None

LOCAL BOARDS AND DIRECTORS OF COMMUNITY ACTION AGENCIES

George Morris- Bay Aging CAP receives funding for programs and services through the Older Americans Act, federal, state, and local governments, the Department of Social Services, grants and through private donations. Use of additional TANF dollars gave them the ability to help a community hurting due to the economy.

Daniel Lawson -Southeast Rural Community Assistance Project, Inc. spoke on the Well Loan Program. A packet of information was provided and is attached to the official minutes housed in the central office. Members were asked to pass along this information to households that do not have a clean water source.

VIRGINIA COMMUNITY ACTION PARTNERSHIP (VACAP)

Jim Schuyler, Executive Director of VACAP, said it was important for community action agencies to come to Board and speak and he was proud that Bay Aging and Southeast RCAP are here today their initiatives. He thought that many people were surprised that we still had water and wastewater needs across Virginia and felt people are unaware of the Well Loan Project. This project is being marketed through meetings, media coverage, and word of mouth.

He previewed the highlights of the VACAP Annual Report for July 1, 2008 through June 30, 2009. Agency emergency needs are over 125,000; that is a fifty percent increase over last year. Over 6,000 people were helped with rental assistance this year; that is 2,000 more than last year.

The health care and parenting skills programs are also on an upswing with 2500 more being served for a total of 10,000. Head Start stays relatively level with 8200 children. About 2,000 young people were assisted to attend college or technical school largely through Project Discovery. Prisoner Reentry Program VA Cares helped over 3200 ex-offenders.

Heating and Cooling programs showed a huge increase this year and he expects the numbers to continue to grow.

Agencies are also working with 2,100 elderly and disabled people to live independently; and mentoring and working to help start 2200 small businesses.

They calculate over 570,000 volunteer service hours for the year. Based on the multiplier used by VEC, that is represents #12 million in volunteer services.

Mr. Schuyler said they are concerned about state funding in the FY 2011 and 2012 budgets. He hopes there would be some TANF funding available in the Governor's budget line so they can seek additional funds from the General Assembly. The risk of no funds in the Governor's budget would mean the agency would lose about forty percent of their funding from 2009 (the year before federal stimulus funding).

Success stories in the annual report this year focus on two areas: emergency services that include foreclosure avoidance, rental assistance and utility assistance, and job training and development.

He expressed his concern about future state funding for the EITC Grant Program that assists free income tax preparation.

VIRGINIA LEAGUE OF SOCIAL SERVICES EXECUTIVES' (VLSSE)

None, a report will be made at the February meeting.

COMMISSIONER'S REPORT

Commissioner Conyers spoke on the following:

Budget- Prepared for Budget release on Friday. Will reestablish the Budget Reduction Committee and find areas where we can surgically cut rather than "hatchet" cut. Thus far, we have been able to cut \$102M and still maintain the structure of the agency. He does not think local agencies can be protected as much as they were during the last two previous reductions.

Child Welfare Transformation- Family engagement model. Mentioned communication received from 19 Western Local Directors Coalition that expressed their reservations about the Family Engagement Model as a key component of Child Welfare Transformation in Virginia. Their objection appears to be a financial one rather than taking exception to what they are being asked to do.

He advised that last year was the first year that Comprehensive Services (CSA) spent less money than they did the year before. Of the 120 local governments, 117 of them had no increase and most of them had significant reductions in their CSA costs. Meanwhile, there are fewer children in care; a larger majority are in family settings and are making placement decisions based on the needs of the child as opposed to funding consideration. By most measures we have more to do with kinship care and some other areas but we are clearly making progress in terms of transforming our child welfare system and doing it without raising the costs in those specific areas.

Recognizing the varying degrees of staff and resources across Virginia, the department has built in a level of flexibility for local departments so they may choose a structured model that is most relevant to their locality. A copy of the response letter will be forwarded to the Board.

Commissioner was asked to comment on the future of the agency. He said "the system will be just fine; because at the end of the day its not the number of dollars you have in a program, or your practice model. The most important thing is that you have caring, competent and committed people trying to help people help themselves. We have those people working in social services so the system will be just fine".

Commissioner advised this might be his last meeting. He said it has been an honor to be counted among one of those caring people working on behalf of Virginian's vulnerable citizens. He said he feels blessed and privileged to work with the Board.

Commissioner received a standing ovation.

The Chair asked Commissioner to return to a future meeting to be properly recognized for his contributions. Commissioner said he would do that with the proviso that the request be routed through and approved by the new Commissioner.

STATUS OF REGULATIONS

Richard Martin advised that the department has 55 regulations in place. Five of the 55 are currently in the process of being amended, 14 are being repealed, and seven additional new regulations are being promulgated.

That totals 62 regulations and potential regulations. This report is attached to the minutes.

2010 LEGISLATION UPDATE

Richard Martin shared a copy of the 2010 Virginia General Assembly Session Calendar with members.

The following Studies were shared with members and are included with the minutes housed in the central office:

Annual Report on Child Care Subsidy Sliding Fee Scale;
Progress Report: Implementation Plan for Web-based Eligibility System;
Report on the Virginia Faith-Based and Community Initiative;
Report on the Effectiveness of Low-Income Energy Assistance Programs;
Annual Report on Obtaining the Maximum Available Federal Funding for Child Care Services; and
Annual Report of Space Needs in Local Departments of Social Services.

ACTION ITEMS

Approval of Minutes

ON MOTION DULY MADE (Mr. Brown) and seconded (Mr. Culpepper), moved to approve the October 2009 minutes as presented. Motion approved with all in favor.

22 VAC 40-180, Voluntary Registration of Family Day Homes—Requirements for Providers, Withdraw Notice of Intended Regulatory Action

ON MOTION DULY MADE (Ms. Sood) and seconded (Ms. Hornsby) moved to repeal Board action of August 20, 2003, to approve a notice of intended regulatory action for this regulatory action. Motion approved with all in favor.

22 VAC 40-181, Voluntary Registration of Family Day Homes-Requirements for Providers-Notice of Intended Regulatory Action

ON MOTION DULY MADE (Ms. Luca) and seconded (Ms. Hornsby) moved to approve the notice of intended regulatory action for publication in the Virginia Register subject to approval under the provisions of Executive Order 36 (2006) and the Administrative Process Act. Motion approved with all in favor.

22 VAC 40-131, Minimum Standards for Licensed Private Child Placing Agencies, Proposed Regulation

ON MOTION DULY MADE (Ms. Hornsby) and seconded (Mr. Brown) moved to approve the proposed regulation 22 VAC 40-131, Minimum Standards for Licensed Private Child Placing Agencies and repeal 22 VAC 40-130, Minimum Standards for Licensed Private Child Placing Agencies for publication in the Virginia Register subject to approval under the provisions of Executive Order Number 36 (2006) and approve the fiscal impact analysis of this action for distribution to local boards of social services pursuant to 63.2-217 of the Code of Virginia. Motion carried with all in favor.

Formalize the Establishment of the Poverty Committee

ON MOTION DULY MADE (Mr. Greene) and seconded (Ms. Hornsby) moved to formalize the establishment of the Poverty Committee. Motion carried with all in favor.

22 VAC 40-910, General Provisions for Maintaining and Disclosing Confidential Information of Public Assistance, Child Support Enforcement and Social Services Records.

ON MOTION DULY MADE (Ms. Sood) and seconded (Ms. Hornsby) moved to approve the Response to Petition for Rulemaking for publication in the Virginia Register and a 21-day public comment period. Following the public comment period, the department will recommend an agency decision to the Board at its February 2010 meeting. Motion carried with all in favor.

FUTURE MEETING SCHEDULE

February 17-18, 2010
Department of Social Services
801 E. Main Street
Richmond, VA

BOARD COMMENTS

Ms. Sood remarked this is in her fifth year on the Board and can see that differences are being made. She thanked the Chair, members, staff, and Commissioner for their support.

Ms. Manuel said she enjoyed the conference, especially the session she attended listening to the judges speak about helping youth. Congratulations were offered to Ms. Manuel on the birth of her grandchild.

Mr. Greene said this has been a great meeting and a good group of people to work with. He thanked the Commissioner for his support and opportunity to serve the Commonwealth.

Mr. Culpepper thanked the department staff for their assistance, and said he was enjoying the conference.

Ms. Luca advised she would like to have Ms .Katzman provide an update on the Child Fatality Report at the next meeting. She thanked department staff for all their hard work and said she was grateful to Commissioner for his leadership to the Board.

Mr. Brown said he enjoyed the conference and thanked staff for their hard work.

Ms. Hornsby thanked department staff for their diligence and commitment in accomplishing Board work. She voiced her thanks to Commissioner for his work with Virginia's most vulnerable citizens.

Members thanked the Chair for the Christmas gifts.

CHAIR'S COMMENTS

Ms. Brisendine reiterated she would hold off on goodbye to the Commissioner and said it was her hope that he would attend the February meeting so the Board could officially recognize him for his accomplishments.

Ms. Brisendine advised she attended a CWAC meeting.

She also participated in a meeting with House staff to discuss emergency TANF dollars and advised the state does not have matching dollars. They are looking at opportunities in the private sector or in local government that may qualify to bring funds into Virginia.

Rolling Agenda items include a report on Child Welfare; Poverty; Division Overview (Family Services); Child Fatality Review (Rita Katzman); Budget Issues (JR Simpson); and Governor Commission Report (Jim Schuyler) to speak on the three recommendations that go to the Legislature.

ADJOURNMENT

With no further business to discuss, the meeting adjourned at 4:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Pat Rengnerth