

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

February 21, 2024

Attending: Buckey Boone (Chair), John Kines (Vice Chair), Megan Miloser (Secretary), Leslie Ford, Don Carey, Jennifer Slack, DeRonda Short, Zulma Santos, Sheryl Garland, and Rachna Heizer

Absent: Maria Benjamin

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

Meeting called to order at 10:01am – Mr. Boone

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

COMMENT PERIOD

There were no comments from the public.

There were no comments from boards and directors of community action agencies.

Comment from the Virginia League of Social Service Executives – Rebecca Morgan, President
Ms. Morgan highlighted a couple of items from the League’s perspective. The League has been working on legislative priorities. They requested budget amendments to the General Assembly involving VaCMS, the training academy, and the PIPP program. The PIPP program language will eliminate a local match. The League will advocate for full funding for the training academy.

Tiffany Gordon, Chair, Benefit Programs Committee, acknowledged during the month of February they take time to recognize and celebrate Benefit Programs Specialists across the state. As of this morning, the DMAS website listed just under 500k case renewals needing completion. She spoke about the three accomplishments the workers would like to see: safety for workforce, secure process for receiving verifications from citizens, and VaCMS resources for fixes. The Benefit Program Committee, the League, and BPRO thanked Dr. Avula for his hard work since last February. She thanked Mr. Boone for the letter on behalf of the State Board of Social Services, advocating for funds.

ACTION ITEMS

1. **Approved December 2023 Meeting Minutes**
On Motion Duly Made, (John Kines), second (Don Carey), motion approved with all in favor.

2. **Resolution to Recognize April 2024 as Child Abuse Prevention Month**
On Motion Duly Made, (Megan Miloser), second (Zulma Santos), motion approved with all in favor.

3. 22VAC40-705, Child Protective Services - Final Regulation

On Motion Duly Made, (John Kines), second (Sheryl Garland), motion approved with all in favor.

Constituent Correspondence Overview – Shavon Hinton, Mary Walter, and Jewel Wynn provided an overview of the constituent correspondence process.

Medicaid Unwinding and Kinship Update – Carl Ayers provided an update.

Board Member Requests

Ms. Short thanked Commissioner Avula for recognizing the need for more integration between DSS and the court system. She renewed her request for the establishment of roundtables between judges, local departments of social services, and other interested parties. Commissioner Avula will discuss further with Ms. Short.

Ms. Short requested that consideration be given to having the public comment period at the beginning of each of each meeting, or at the end, to allow for member discussion and questions after information presentations. Commissioner Avula deferred to the Chair.

Ms. Garland requested guidance on the role the Board plays in sending a message to the General Assembly on the importance of funding the replacement of VaCMS and CommonHelp. Commissioner Avula noted the Board's previous advocacy efforts, both as a body and individually. Ms. Morgan spoke to the League's advocacy role.

Ms. Garland moved that a letter be drafted on behalf of the Board, to advocate for funding to replace VaCMS and CommonHelp and forwarded to the Senate budget conferees. The letter would follow talking points previously presented to the Secretary of Health and Human Resources. Ms. Ford indicated that, because funding was not included in the Governor's budget, she would not vote in favor of the letter. Ms. Short noted the short window of time left in the session and the need for more planning.

On Motion Duly Made, (Sheryl Garland), second (Jennifer Slack), motion approved with members Garland, Slack, Miloser and Heizer voting yay and members Ford, Short and Kines voting nay. Mr. Carey was not present, and the Chair did not vote. The letter will be sent on behalf of the Board.

Meeting adjourned at 12:26pm