

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

**Department of Social Services  
Western Regional Office  
190 Patton Street  
Abingdon, Virginia 24210**

**June 19, 2019**

**Attending:** Dr. Danny Avula (Chair), Mr. Kent Willis (Vice Chair), Ms. Veronica Washington, Mr. William Boone, Ms. Lou Ali, Mr. John Kines.

**Absent:** Ms. Joan Brennan, Ms. MaryAnn Boyd, Ms. Mona Malik, Mr. Clyde Santana, and Dr. Andrew Heck.

**Also in Attendance:** Mr. Duke Storen (Commissioner) and Ms. Ellen Malenke (Assistant Attorney General).

Dr. Avula called the meeting to order at 9:00am

**United Way of Southwest Virginia** – Mr. Travis Staton, President & CEO  
Mr. Staton provided information on his organization and services provided.

**Washington County DSS** – Ms. Kathy Johnson, Director  
Ms. Johnson welcomed members to the region and shared information on some of the challenges faced by her agency.

**People Incorporated Community Action Agency** – Mr. Robert Goldsmith, President & CEO  
Mr. Goldsmith provided information on the services provided by his organization and noted the close partnership with the Department of Social Services.

**Tommy Casteel, Western Region Director & William Boone, Board Member**

Mr. Casteel provided an overview of the western region and noted its unique features. Mr. Boone spoke about the region's lack of resources and the impact on vulnerable citizens and on the agencies charged with serving them.

**Comments from the Commissioner** – Mr. Duke Storen

Commissioner Storen provided updates on activities on the federal level, including the uncertainty regarding TANF reauthorization, Family First implementation and the Child Abuse Prevention Treatment Act. On the state level, he discussed the roundtables on gun violence scheduled for July, adopting ALICE as a system for assessing cases, local workforce recruitment and retention (including a work force study) and a change in SNAP rules.

**FOIA Update** – Elle Malenke, Asst. Attorney General

Ms. Malenke provided a refresher session for Board members, including responding to requests for public records and open and closed meetings.

The Board recessed for a tour of Western Regional Office, followed by lunch.

**COMMENT PERIOD**

**Comment from Local Boards and Directors of Social Services**

Ms. Lana Mullins, Director of Scott County DSS and Kristin Shumate, Director of Grayson DSS, provided comments.

**Comment from the Virginia League of Social Service Executives** – Andy Crawford, President

In addition to addressing the Board on current League activities, Mr. Crawford also shared challenges specific to his agency and to those of the other directors in attendance. This included inadequate office space, low salaries and lack of flexibility and options to recruit and retain adequate staff levels.

**ACTION ITEMS**

**1. April 2019 Meeting Minutes**

*On Motion Duly Made*, (Mr. Kines), second (Ms. Washington), motion approved with all in favor.

**2. Local Department of Social Services Salary Range Adjustment**

*On Motion Duly Made*, (Mr. Boone), second (Ms. Washington), motion approved with all in favor.

**3. 22VAC40-880, Child Support Enforcement Program – Periodic Review Report of Findings**

*On Motion Duly Made*, (Mr. Boone), second (Mr. Willis), motion approved with all in favor.

**4. 22VAC40-470, Exemptions Applicable to Public Assistance Programs – Fast Track Regulation**

*On Motion Duly Made*, (Ms. Washington), second (Dr. Avula), motion approved with all in favor.

**5. 22VAC40-201, Permanency Services-Prevention, Foster Care, Adoption & Independent Living – Proposed Regulation**

*On Motion Duly Made*, (Mr. Kines), second (Ms. Ali), motion approved with all in favor.

**6. 22VAC40-201, Permanency Services-Prevention, Foster Care, Adoption & Independent Living – Final Regulation**

*On Motion Duly Made*, (Ms. Washington), second (Dr. Avula), motion approved with all in favor.

**7. 22VAC40-211, Foster and Adoptive Family Home Approval Standards – Final Regulation**

*On Motion Duly Made*, (Ms. Washington), second (Ms. Ali), motion approved with all in favor.

**8. 22VAC40-677, State Response When a Local Department of Social Services Fails to Provide Services – Proposed Regulation**

*On Motion Duly Made*, (Mr. Willis), second (Dr. Avula), motion approved with all in favor.

Ms. Penny Hall, Piedmont Region Director and Ms. Tracie Brewster, Piedmont Region Administrative Manager, shared draft procedures for implementing this new regulation.

Mr. Boone noted some possible conflicts between the draft procedures and the Board bylaws. Commissioner Storen explained that staff would revisit the draft procedures for further discussion by the Board in August.

9. **22VAC185, Standards for Licensed Child Day Center – Update to Conform to 2019 Legislation**  
*On Motion Duly Made*, (Ms. Ali), second (Mr. Kines), motion approved with all in favor.

**Opportunities for Board Advocacy – Dr. Avula**

**Nomination of New Officers – Mr. Kent Willis**

Mr. Willis reported on the slate of officers chosen by the Nominating Committee. Included were Lou Ali for Board Chair; MaryAnn Boyd for Vice Chair; and William Boone for Secretary. Members voted unanimously in favor for the new officers.

**Opportunities for Board Advocacy – Dr. Avula**

In recent meetings, the Board has expressed the desire to play a larger advocacy roll for the agency. After some discussion, Dr. Avula asked Mr. Boone to draft a letter on behalf of the Board to Governor Northam, noting the struggles by local departments to attract and retain qualified staff and requesting that resources be provided in his 2020 proposed budget. Mr. Boone will work with Mr. Crawford and present a draft letter for consideration at the August meeting.

**Meeting adjourned at 3:15pm.**