

Minutes
VA State Board of Social Services
December 14, 2005

Chesterfield/Colonial Heights
Dept. of Social Services

Members Present

Julie Christopher, Chair
Danny Brown, Vice Chair (left early)
Nettie Simon-Owens, Secretary
Trudy Brisendine
Peppy Linden
Maggi Luca
William Mitchell
Bela Sood (left early)

Members Absent

Marilyn Rigby

Wednesday, December 14, 2005

The meeting was called to order at 9:00 a.m., Chairman Julie Christopher presiding.

Welcome and Introductions

Jane Clements, Operations Director, Division of Quality Management welcomed the Board to Chesterfield. Local Directors were acknowledged and thanked for their attendance. Sarah Snead, Director of the Chesterfield Colonial Heights Department of Social Services was introduced and provided a brief overview of the area.

Brad Hammer, Deputy County Administrator was also introduced and welcomed the Board. Mr. Hammer called attention to the need for additional eligibility workers.

Members were invited to enjoy lunch and a reception hosted in their honor today.

Regulation Status Report

Richard Martin advised that as December 13, 2005, the Department of Social Services has 62 regulations in place. 31 of the 62 are currently in process.

- Of those 62, 18 are in the process of being repealed
- Of those 62, 13 are in the process of being amended
- 11 additional new regulations are in the process of being promulgated

That totals 73 regulations and proposed regulations, 42 of which are currently active.

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Committee Meetings

Update on Implementation of Assisted Living Facility Legislation

Carolynne Stevens, Director of Licensing Programs provided an update on implementation. Due to an administration decision, the regulation will go back out for additional public comment and will come back before the Board in February. The emergency regulation expires in December 2006 and will revert to the previous regulation if something is not in place before that date.

Carter Harrison, Dana Steger and Beverley Soble were present to answer any questions on this issue if needed.

Ms. Sood advised she had heard ALF training was not going well. Ms. Steger stated there was concern over how the training was being taught statewide; quality issues and lack of disclosure form. A log is being kept and will be forwarded to VDSS staff for review.

Ms. Christopher suggested the training could be put on line and be more effective and efficient. Lynn Williams advised this had been reviewed and was a substantial cost. Ms. Soble volunteered their help in assisting with training. The Commissioner asked she communicate issues and feedback to the Licensing Department as soon as possible. Ms. Soble advised the Licensing staff had been extremely helpful to providers. Commissioner Conyers thanked staff for all their work on this regulation.

Ms. Stevens provided an overview of the Come and Go Programs. Jeff Williams advised there will be a meeting at the home office on Monday, December 19 to further discuss this issue. Members were welcomed to attend. This meeting is open to the public.

Program Improvement Plan

Lynette Isbell, Assistant Director of Family Services provided an overview of the Program Improvement Plan. A copy of the approved plan was provided to members. A copy is housed with the official minutes housed at the home office.

Chesterfield Colonial Heights Dept. of Social Services Presentation

Sarah Snead provided an overview of the department and introduced staff. Members were appreciative to hear a success story from former TANF recipient Jeanette Hanks. Ms Hanks is now employed with the department.

It was mentioned to Board members that local agencies had not received additional administrative allocations since 1989. Ms. Snead confirmed she is in a watchful mode, hoping that BPR will assist them.

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Public Comment

None

VLSSE Comments

Ben Owen advised that foster care training dollars are their number one problem; they remain #48 out of 50 states in lowest payment. He confirmed that rates within Virginia vary by age with \$500 being the max. He also advised that there is inadequate staffing in the eligibility worker area.

He invited members to attend the next League Conference on May 1-3 in Roanoke. Ms. Christopher encouraged members to attend. Mr. Owen will forward information to Pat Rengnerth for distribution.

Members were invited to attend the League Legislative Reception in Richmond on February 1.

Commissioner's Comments

Commissioner Conyers stated it had been an administrative decision to send the Assisted Living Facility Regulation back out for additional public comment; therefore, it will be removed from the "action item" on today's agenda. This action provides yet another opportunity to have as much input into the process as possible.

There will be additional meetings in January to include providers and other interested parties to discuss the regulation in detail and bring it back in February as a proposed regulation. Due to the short timeframe, Commissioner begged the Board's indulgence in getting this information to them.

Commissioner Conyers spoke on the Come and Go Programs, advising that staff continue to work on the issue of protecting children. The Office of the Attorney General has filed an appeal and will move the case to the Virginia Supreme Court.

Commissioner Conyers advised the number one budget priority is eligibility administration dollars.

Members questioned whether JLARC had addressed foster care rates. Ms. Isbell thought it was last done in the 1990s. Commissioner asked that she verify this information and advise members.

Action Items

Locality Grouping James City County Social Services

Tom Little, Chief of Eligibility at James City County Social Services requested the Board to approve the reclassification of James City County from Locality Group 1 to Locality Group III for Temporary Assistance for Needy Families cash assistance to be effective July 1, 2006, contingent upon sufficient funds being appropriated by the 2006 session of the General Assembly.

ON MOTION DULY MADE (Billy Mitchell) and seconded (Nettie Simon-Owens) moved to approve the request contingent upon sufficient funds being appropriated by the 2006 session of the General Assembly. Motion carried with all in favor.

22 VAC 40-141 Licensing Standards for Independent Foster Homes

Exempt Final Adoption

ON MOTION DULY MADE (Trudy Brisendine) and seconded (Nettie Simon-Owens) moved to approve the exempt final regulatory package for publication in the Virginia Register subject to approval under the provisions of Executive Order 21 (2002) and the Administrative Process Act. Motion carried with all in favor.

22 VAC 40-330 Collection of Overpayments in the Refugee Other Assistance

Program

Fast Track Proposed Action

ON MOTION DULY MADE (Nettie Simon-Owens) and seconded (Trudy Brisendine) moved to approve the fast tract proposed action to repeal 22 VAC 40-330, Collection of Overpayments in the Refugee Other Assistance Program for publication in the Virginia Register subject to approval under the provisions of Executive Order 21 (2002) and the Administrative Process Act. Motion carried with all in favor.

22 VAC 40-340 Protective Payments in the Refugee Other Assistance Program

Fast Track Proposed Action

ON MOTION DULY MADE (Maggi Luca) and seconded (Trudy Brisendine) moved to approve the fast tract proposed action to repeal 22 VAC 40-340, Protective Payments in the Refugee Other Assistance Program for publication in the Virginia Register subject to approval under the provisions of Executive Order 21 (2002) and the Administrative Process Act. Motion carried with all in favor.

22 VAC 40-730, Investigation of Child Abuse and Neglect in Out of Family Complaints

Exempt Final Adoption

ON MOTION DULY MADE (Trudy Brisendine) and seconded (Nettie Simon-Owens) moved to approve the exempt final regulatory package for publication in the Virginia Register subject to approval under the provisions of Executive Order 21 (2002) and the Administrative Process Act. Motion carried with all in favor.

22 VAC 40-325, Fraud Reduction/Elimination Effort

Final Adoption

ON MOTION DULY MADE (Peppy Linden) and seconded (Billy Mitchell) moved to approve the regulatory package to amend 22 VAC 40-325 et seq., Fraud Reduction/Elimination Effort, subject to approval under the provisions of Executive Order Number 21 (2002). Motion carried with all in favor.

22 VAC 40-740, Adult Protective Services will not be reviewed today. This regulation will come before the Board in February.

22 VAC 40-705, Child Protective Services

Withdrawal of Regulatory Action to Amend

ON MOTION DULY MADE (Nettie Simon Owens) and seconded (Trudy Brisendine) moved to withdraw 22 VAC 40-705, Child Protective Services. Motion carried with all in favor.

Due to inclement weather and the need for several members to leave early, the Chair discussed the possibility of wrapping up today and canceling the meeting on Thursday.

ON MOTION DULY MADE (Billy Mitchell) and seconded (Nettie Simon-Owens) moved to approve wrapping up the meeting today and canceling the meeting on Thursday. Presentations slated for Thursday will be rescheduled at the February 2006 Meeting. Motion carried with all in favor.

ON MOTION DULY MADE (Billy Mitchell) and seconded (Nettie Simon-Owens) moved to request the Chair to send a letter to the Chairs of the Senate Finance and House Appropriations Committee supporting the need for additional eligibility staff at the local level and the need to increase foster care rates by a minimum of 5% for 2006-07. This letter will be crafted with the assistance of VDSS staff. Motion carried with all in favor.

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ON MOTION DULY MADE (Nettie Simon-Owens) and seconded (Peppy Linden) moved to approve the Minutes as presented. Motion carried with all in favor.

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Future Meeting Schedule

By consensus, the Board agreed to the following future meeting schedule:

February 15-16	Home Office
April 19-20	Shenandoah
June 14-15	Eastern
August 16-17	Alexandria
October 18-19	Roanoke
December 13-14	Petersburg

Committee Reports

CPS Out of Family

Peppy Linden attended a meeting in April. The Advisory Group requested the Chair change the reporting date to October 2006 to ensure a full 12-month data collection would be available. Ms. Christopher advised she had already spoken with Ms. Timoney and approved this request.

Ms. Brisendine voiced her request that the OOF Committee look at the impact this regulation has on children as well as teachers.

Child Welfare Committee

Ms. Brisendine met with this committee on November 18. Issues discussed included: VISSTA Contract Payments –Rick Pond (VCU) discussed the difficulty of six month contracts and the continuing problems associated with being reimbursed for expenses by the Department.

Leila Hopper (Supreme Court) discussed efforts to improve training for Guardians Ad Litem and possible sanctions being considered for non-compliance with expected responsibilities.

VLSSE Conference

Ms. Brisendine advised she had attended the League Conference in Roanoke along with Danny Brown and Julie Christopher; thanking Mr. Owen for the invitation. Notable speakers included Elaine Ryan, American Public Human Services Association and Clarence Carter; Director of Food Stamp Program spoke on changing the categorical way social services are funded to a more holistic approach. Currently 224 poverty programs in federal government – three quarters of a trillion dollars.

Local Board Meeting

She also advised she had attended a local Board meeting in Prince William County where the Board worked on prioritizing budget items to accommodate reduction in property taxes.

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They also provided a presentation on Earned Income Tax Credit with a goal to return one million dollars for 2005.

Legislative priorities are staffing supplements, increasing payments to foster care parents, keeping VIEW in DSS, and a regional priority—securing \$1.8 million for Birmingham Green. Wish list for future includes: increasing TANF payments by inflation factor, increasing minimum wage by \$1.00 /hour each year for the next three years, and eliminating ban on drug felons receiving food stamps.

They expressed concerns about dropping training for private home child day care providers and work participation guidelines in TANF.

Copies of July and October Quarterly Newsletters were provided to Board members.

Strategic Planning Meeting

Chairman Christopher attended the Strategic Planning Meeting; mentioning the Governor's Press Release on Early Childhood.

Ms. Luca advised the Strategic Planning teleconference in Warrenton was cancelled due to snow.

***Without further business to discuss and on MOTION DULY MADE
(Ms. Simon-Owens) and seconded, moved to adjourn. Motion carried with all in favor.***

Adjournment 3:45 p.m.