

Minutes
Commonwealth of Virginia
State Board of Social Services
VA Dept. of Social Services
7 N. Eighth Street
Richmond, VA 23219

Attendees

Nettie Simon-Owens, Peppy Linden, Maggi Luca, Brenda Hornsby, Shirley Culpepper, Marilyn Rigby, and Danny Brown

Absent

Trudy Brisendine and Bela Sood

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 901 a.m. by Chairperson Nettie Simon-Owens.

Welcome and Introductions

Jane Clements, Director for the Central Region welcomed Board members.

Paul McWhinney, Director of Richmond City Dept. of Social Services welcomed members.

Local directors were recognized: Cathy Pemberton-Essex, Eddie Harrison-Russell County, and Sarah Snead-Chesterfield-Colonial Heights DSS.

Nominating Committee Selection

Due to concern over lack of time for the 2007 Nominating Committee to meet, the Chair will appoint the committee at this meeting and ask them to meet tomorrow at 8:30 a.m. All members are invited to attend and share collective ideas. The vote will be taken in June.

Committee:

Marilyn Rigby, Chair
Shirley Culpepper
Danny Brown

(Ad hoc Committee Meetings 9:30-10:30 a.m.)

Review of the Agenda

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

Regulation Report

Mr. Martin advised there are 63 regulations in place. Of those 58, 26 are in process.
14 being repealed
14 being amended
1 in periodic review
6 new actions for new regulations (taking place of 14 in repeal)

Mr. Martin advised Regulation 22 VAC 40-690 Virginia Child Care Provider Scholarship Program is in public comment that will end on March 21, 2008.

He reviewed regulations of concern which included 22 VAC 40-035 The Virginia Independence Program; 22 VAC 40-201-10 Permanency Services-Prevention, Foster Care, Adoption and Independent Living; 22 VAC 40-411-10 General Relief Program; and 22 VAC 40-705 Child Protective Services.

A copy of this report is attached to the official minutes housed in the central office.

Legislative Report

Mr. Martin provided handouts to the Board and discussed legislation of concern to the department. Copies of these handouts are attached to the official minutes housed in the central office.

Mr. Martin recognized Jan Sigler for her work in carrying a heavy load during General Assembly. Jan was the only legislative staffer in his office (there are usually 2).

Information Items

In appreciation for her years of service to the department, the State Board, and the citizens of the Commonwealth, Carolynne Stevens, former director of Licensing Programs was presented with a Resolution of Appreciation and various gifts from members.

Comment Period

Public

Eddie Harrison, Director of Russell County Department of Social Services spoke on local agency issues that included budget, CSA, foster care and child protective services.

Local Boards and Directors of Social Services

Eddie Harrison, Director of Russell County Department of Social Services continued his presentation by speaking on substance abuse issue in his area.

Arthur Lawson, Russell County Board member was introduced and thanked for attending the meeting.

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Virginia League of Social Services Executives

Sarah Snead, Co-Chair provided greetings from the League and thanked Mr. Harrison for his remarks regarding issues faced by agencies.

Ms. Snead advised she had sent emails to local directors, encouraging them to share their views during the comment period.

She also advised the League is having their conference in Hampton during the first full week of May. Members were invited to attend. Further information will be forthcoming.

Ms. Snead thanked the Commissioner, training staff, and the League on providing an excellent training event in the form of the Leadership Academy. Local directors have provided extremely high feedback and are in hopes this training will continue. She further commented that one group at the Academy worked on the issue of substance abuse and found it to be their number one concern.

First Lady Campaign-Ms. Snead stated the match rate is of concern.

Budget-budget implications from state and local are being experienced.

Income Tax Coalition- hugely successful model; Ms. Snead has the figures if members would like to view them.

Virginia Community Action Programs

Jim Schuyler, Director of VACAP provided members with a copy of their annual report. He also shared examples of activities that are being worked on. A copy of this report is attached to the official minutes housed in the central office.

Commissioner Comments

Commissioner Conyers spoke to the Board on EITC (this will be covered in-depth later today); the PreK Initiative; and Budget issues.

Child Protective Services Out-of-Family Advisory Update

Nan McKenney provided members with an update on questions that had been asked at the previous meeting. A copy of this report is attached to the official minutes housed in the central office.

The next meeting will be in Roanoke in June. She and the Board Chair are working together to fill some of the vacancies on the committee.

Mr. Wilson reminded this body is a public body and meeting notification will be posted according to FOIA requirements. The meeting will be open to the public.

The Chair thanked Ms. McKenney for an outstanding job.

Structured Decision Making

Doug Brown, MSW/CPS Program Consultant for the Central Region office provided a detailed presentation on Structured Decision Making (SDM) in Child Protective Services. A copy of this presentation is attached to the official minutes housed in the central office.

It was reported that although using SDM is more time-consuming, it is being widely accepted by users. It provided consistent practices statewide, future statewide statistical feedback, future consistency in documentation, increased safety through reduced subsequent harm to children, and increased well-being through reduced time to permanency. Members were encouraged to contact Mr. Brown at doug.brown@dss.virginia.gov if they have further questions.

Assisted Living Facility Closure Stats

Lynne Williams, Acting Director of Licensing Programs provided members with a report on assisted living facility closures, re-openings and their reasons for doing so. A copy of this information (July 2006-January 2008) is attached to the official minutes housed in the central office.

Impact on Aging Report

Renee Fleming-Mills, Human Resource Director and Patrick Patrong, Training Director provided members with a handout entitled "Succession Planning Guide-Project 2010: Preparing for the Future Today". A copy of this handout is attached to the official minutes housed in the central office.

Mr. Patrong confirmed with Ms. Hornsby that the plan matches current employees for mentorship and moving up within the agency.

Ms. Simon-Owens acknowledged the great deal of time and effort put into this presentation and staff planning for addressing attrition.

Guidance Document Update

Karin Clark, Policy Analyst for the Office of the Commissioner provided members with information on the current VDSS guidance document system and the administrative manual review and action plan.

This plan will update and streamline manuals; making them web-based and searchable. It was advised that a portion of the food stamp reinvestment dollars can be used to update the food stamp manual. Periodic updates will be provided to the Board as requested. Copies of these handouts are attached to the official minutes housed in the central office.

Action Items

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ON MOTION DULY MADE (Mr. Brown) and seconded (Ms. Rigby) moved dispense with the reading of the minutes and approve them as presented. Motion carried with all in favor.

Social Worker Appreciation Resolution

ON MOTION DULY MADE (Mr. Culpepper) and seconded (Ms. Luca) moved to approve recognizing the month of March as Social Work Month; commending all social workers and employment service workers in local departments for a job well-done. Motion carried with all in favor. (Read by Secretary Linden and accepted by Eddie Harrison on their behalf.)

22 VAC 40-211, Resource, Foster and Adoptive Home Approval Standards

Proposed Regulation

Lynette Isbell, Director of Family Services reviewed this regulation with the Board. This action will establish 22 VAC 40-211. The new regulation will provide rules specific to the approval requirements for resource, foster and adoptive family homes providers approved by local departments.

Discussion:

Ms. Hornsby asked if the definition of “resource parent” could be added to the definition list. Mr. Wilson advised that since the regulation in the proposed stage, it could be handled through comments accepted.

Ms. Hornsby asked if training on “nutrition” was discussed. Ms. Isbell advised it had not, but was a good suggestion and could be listed.

Page 7 of 8 (top of page) mentions toxic substances being secured as appropriate. Ms. Hornsby asked if the bar could be raised to use the word “lock”. Mr. Wilson advised it could.

ON MOTION DULY MADE (Ms. Linden) and seconded (Ms. Hornsby) moved to approve the proposed regulatory package to establish 22 VAC 40-211, Resource, Foster and Adoptive Family Home Approval Standards, 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 paragraph 63.2.2-217 of the Code of Virginia. Motion carried with all in favor.

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Carolynne Stevens Resolution

ON MOTION DULY MADE (Ms. Rigby) and seconded (Ms. Luca) moved to approve the Resolution for Carolynne Stevens as read by Secretary Linden. Motion carried with all in favor.

Recess 4:40 p.m.

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Reconvene at 9:00 a.m.

Richmond City Dept. of Social Services Initiatives

Paul McWhinney, Director, provided members with an informational brochure covering key Richmond data; organizational structure and functional teams; Early childhood education and quality child care; Substance abuse case management module; Richmond Approach; and CSA Innovative Grant. A copy of this report is attached to the official minutes housed in the central office.

Mr. McWhinney was thanked for his inspiring well-organized presentation.

Earned Income Tax Credit Project Update

Peggy Friedenber, Program Manager, Carolyn Spohrer, EITC Project Manager for VACAP, and Erik Beecroft, Research Director spoke to the Board on the Earned Income Tax Project. Copies of their presentations are attached to the official minutes housed in the central office.

Mr. Brown asked if there were plans to have accounting students from high schools and colleges to assist citizens with tax preparation. It was advised this type of program already exists and is working very well.

Ms. Friedenber mentioned an upcoming meeting with Dr. John Cavan at Southside VA Community College to discuss this issue. Ms. Simon-Owens asked to be kept informed when the meeting will take place.

Podcast Project Update

Marianne McGhee, Director of Public Affairs recognized Carla Harris and Jaime Flores as staff that worked on the podcasts. An online demonstration was provided to the members.

It was confirmed they are reaching out into different audiences (Spanish, etc.) in the future. Reporters have provided good feedback to Public Affairs and they have also been contacted by HHS in Maryland regarding their work on this project.

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It was acknowledged that Ms. McGhee just celebrated her two year anniversary with the department. Ms. Schultze stated Ms. McGhee had taken the department light years beyond where it had been.

On behalf of Ms. Brisendine, Ms. Luca thanked Public Affairs for their work on this project.

Nominating Committee Report

Ms. Rigby, Chair of this committee, asked members to contact her, Mr. Brown or Mr. Culpepper if they are interested in serving in an office. Ms. Simon-Owens asked to ensure Ms. Rengnerth and/or Mr. Martin is copied on correspondence. The slate will come to the Board for voting in June 2008.

Ad hoc Committee Reports

Public Comment Process

Peppy Linden, Chair of this committee spoke to the Board on several areas of interest which included the following recommendations.

Recommendations:

Recommended that Mr. Martin, the particular office director involved in the regulation, and one Board member be involved in the public input process with regard to training. Staff would be encouraged to attend one hour annual training.

The committee suggested the public comment section of the proposed regulation (Townhall page) should include background information such as who was involved in writing or rewriting the regulation (outside of DSS staff); what method was used to contact the interested party list; what groups of contributors were involved, etc.

It was suggested that people impacted by the regulation should be reminded annually and on an early basis that the public participation guidelines exist and the importance of how they can be included in the process. This will be reevaluated next year.

ON MOTION DULY MADE (Ms. Luca) and seconded (Ms. Hornsby) moved to approve the recommendations and recommend to the Commissioner there be one hour annual training in the public participation process as recommended by the committee. Motion carried with all in favor.

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Updates and New Initiatives Guidelines

Marilyn Rigby, Chair identified four areas of interest: accessing VDSS staff and related resource/technical assistance staff; requesting information about new initiatives, programs, reports for the Board agenda; receiving program updates and reports before or in tandem with regulations being reviewed; and gaining information about program in addition to the social services network that are related to our mission in localities where we meet.

Recommendations:

Request for reports, information continue to be requested through the office of Legislative and Regulator Affairs; each Board member identify their agenda items at the end of each Board meeting during the Board member comment period and/or inform the Board Chair of their interest and the Manager of the Office of Legislative and Regulatory Affairs; agenda will continue to be planned during the agenda planning meeting; continue to receive reports, updates, in time to assist Board members in being better informed about regulations being reviewed; and continue to request that that the localities showcase initiatives beyond the social services network that might be of interest to the Board.

ON MOTION DULY MADE (Mr. Brown) and seconded (Ms. Hornsby) moved to accept the recommendations to approve the recommendations as reported by the committee. Motion carried with all in favor.

New Member Orientation and Acclimation Process

Brenda Hornsby, Chair provided copies of correspondence between the Chair and new members for approval. Seasoned members could mentor new members.

Recommendations:

Proposed links on the Board website would include roles and responsibilities; a link to the department Mission Statement; Board bios (position, region served, email, term expiration date, appointed by particular Governor—not be over 100 characters max); staff duties related to the Board (Ms. Rengnerth, Mr. Martin, Mr. Wilson, Asst. Commissioner Schultze, and Commissioner Conyers); regulatory process; minutes; organization chart link; travel reimbursement; committee description and affiliations; link to Office of the Attorney General for FOIA and conflict of interest DVD training; financial disclosure form link; and link to divisions within the department (applicable to regulations the Board approves).

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New member orientation meeting would be expanded to invite the regional director from the area the new member resides.

***ON MOTION DULY MADE** (Ms. Linden) and seconded (Ms. Rigby) moved to approve the recommendations as presented by the committee. Motion carried with all in favor.*

Unfinished Business

Mr. Martin provided an update on the Board website. There was much discussion regarding this “new page” and it being available without prior Board approval. Ms. Linden requested this be further discussed at the April Board meeting after it is viewed.

Mr. Martin explained this is a “trial page” to see if it would be utilized by the members and could be taken down as easily as it was created.

Ms. Simon-Owens requested members to view the site and provide feedback. Commissioner Conyers requested the “link” information.

Ms. Rigby stated that the Board needs to keep the boundary in the forefront and ask the Commissioner to have his staff assist us.

Commissioner Conyers agreed with Ms. Rigby and stated that establishing “rules of the road” will be beneficial not only to him but any future Commissioners as well. Commissioner commented that Mr. Martin and Ms. Rengnerth do a good job as delegated to them by the Office of the Commissioner.

Ms. Hornsby commented that it had been helpful to have staff work with the committees and thanked the Commissioner for graciously allowing staff to work with the Board.

Ms. Simon-Owens thanked the committees and staff for their work.

Ms. Luca confirmed with Mr. Martin that the legislative form regarding drug testing for VIEW participants had been tabled and later announced the bill had “died”. This was due to a slight cost factor attached.

New Business

None

Future Meeting Schedule

April 16-17	Roanoke TBD
June 18-19	Winchester LDSS
August 20-21	Montgomery LDSS
October 15-16	Norfolk LDSS
December 10-11	Prince Edward LDSS

Board Member Comments

Members thanked Commissioner Conyers, Mr. Martin, Ms. Rengnerth, Mr. Wilson and department staff for their assistance to the Board.

Members thanked the Chair for a job well-done.

Ms. Luca said she recently received a copy of the Child Day Care Provider Training syllabus and was interested in feedback to these classes. Commissioner Conyers agreed to have Child Care Development speak to this at a future meeting.

Ms. Hornsby commented on a piece of information received by the Board that stated Virginia isn't doing enough to protect its children in some facilities. Due to free enterprise, it may be difficult to gain support in expanding the regulatory role.

Due to a great deal of interest in the Leadership Academy, Commissioner suggested that the Training Director look at the Board meeting schedule to see if the next Leadership Academy could meet in the same timeframe and location of a Board meeting to give members an opportunity to visit.

Adjournment

With no further business to discuss, the meeting adjourned.