

June 19, 2024

The regular meeting of the Camden County Board of Social Services was held on Wednesday, June 19, 2024, at 12:00 p.m. in the office of the Board at 101 Woodcrest Road, Suite 161, Cherry Hill, New Jersey, 08003 with James H. Rhodes, Chair, presiding. The following members were present:

Commissioner Betteridge; Vice Chair, Andres Camacho; Sharrae Morman, Secretary/Treasurer; John Kendall (via zoom); Gwen DeVera

Public Attendance: Stephen Johnson, CWA Local 1084 President, Tamila Carr, CWA Local 1084 Vice President, other various CWA Local 1084 Members in-person and via Zoom

Also present were: Christine Hentisz, Director; Ivory Marrero, Deputy Director; Edward Hill, Esquire (via zoom); Rich Behm, IT Director; Fred Anderson, IT Supervisor, Jaritza Nunez, KB Clerk Typist III; Paulette Konopka, Fiscal Officer; Susan Purvin, Esquire; Charles Opperman Esquire

At 12:00 p.m., a quorum being present, Chairman Rhodes called the meeting to order, and announced that in compliance with the Open Public Meetings Act, the Courier Post Newspaper was notified of the Board Meeting; notice of the agenda was posted in a prominent location at 101 Woodcrest Road, Suite 161, Cherry Hill, NJ 08003, and the County Clerk was notified.

Chairman Rhodes requested approval of the following items:

- Minutes of the May Board Meeting
- The listed expenditures from both Clearing and Administration Accounts
- The payment of salaries and traveling expenses for June.
- Requisition from the County Treasurer for administration expenses for July.
- Movement of funds to be requisitioned from the State and County Treasurers less monies on hand for assistance payments for the month of July.

Chairman Rhodes requested a motion to approve.

Vice Chair Camacho moved to approve. Ms. DeVera seconded the motion, and there being no discussion on the motion, a vote was taken and the motion was unanimously adopted.

**OPEN SESSION
PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

Chairman Rhodes requested a motion to open the meeting for public participation. Vice Chair Camacho moved to open the Public Participation portion of the Open Session, seconded by Ms. Devera and the motion was unanimously adopted.

Chairman Rhodes asked if there were any members of the public wishing to address the Board.

Jennifer Lucas inquired on two vacancies for Specialist and Investigator.

Christine Hentisz stated I believe there is one vacancy for Specialist in Medicaid, we may be looking into that in the Summer but there is not timeframe for the Investigator position. Mrs. Hentisz stated we are currently changing procedures in the Investigations Department and determining what really is needed as well as balancing other departments before we move on to Investigations.

Jeanette Vega is concerned for clients she feels there is not enough resources for client in the waiting room as they are waiting to be seen. There are just nice murals everywhere but no resources for job trainings that we offer, or the One-Stop offers. Ms. Vega also stated Case Management Department has a book full of information that should be accessible to clients so they can get information that they need to move further in life to get off public assistance. She also stated clients are not informed that the agency can pay up to a certain amount of schooling in the field they are interested in. The information is not accessible to client unless they ask for the information.

Chairman Rhodes stated he thinks is a really good idea and we will look into providing resources.

Tamila Carr inquired on Juneteenth being commemorated on the 19th, because that's when the last of the slaves were informed that slavery is over.

Chairman Rhodes stated the States recognition of Juneteenth is third Friday of June and if the State changes it to 19th, we will also change it.

Jasmine Gallashaw presented to the board that she would like to see more done for the community. She would like to know the possibilities around holiday times if we could contract with grocery stores to have turkey and ham giveaways for the community. Also, as the community service co-chair for the CWA we are doing teacher supply drive instead of backpacks for children. I would like to make it a CWA and Camden County Board of Social Services event.

Christine Hentisz stated she love the idea and we will look into it with the community service committee.

Tyniquah Mullen stated we used to have grants from planned parenthood, and that helped with many programs and gave us funding help us service the community. Ms. Mullen would like to know if are we going back to grants and are we going back to reaching out to these different resources.

Chairman Rhodes stated it is a possibility. We recently received a grant from CDBG community development for the homeless trust fund for people who don't meet the criteria for some sort of benefit.

Chairman Rhodes thanked those for their comments and asked if there were any other members that wished to address the Board.

Hearing and seeing that there was no one, Chairman Rhodes requested a motion to close the Public Participation portion of the Open Session. Vice Chair Camacho moved to close the Public Portion of the Open Session. Ms. DeVera seconded the motion and there being no discussion on the motion, a vote was taken, and the motion was unanimously adopted.

The Open Session of the meeting continued.

OPEN SESSION

UPDATE STATE AND FEDERAL POLICIES Christine Hentisz, Director

Ms. Hentisz stated that all Board members would find a synopsis of informational transmittals, procedural bulletins, general assistance procedural bulletins and Division of Family Development instructions in their packet. If there were any questions on any of the material, Ms. Hentisz stated that she or her staff would be happy to answer.

Chairman Rhodes requested a motion to approve the Director’s Update on the State and Federal Policies.

Vice Chair Camacho moved to approve. Ms. DeVera seconded the motion and there being no discussion on the motion, a vote was taken and the motion to approve the Update was unanimously adopted.

Resolution 216-2024 – Resolution of the Camden County Board of Social Services Approving the Corrective Action Plan For the 2020 Annual Audit.....Edward Hill, Esquire

Mr. Hill presented Resolution 216-2024. The 2020 Annual Audit of the Camden County Board of Social Services, conducted by Bowman & Company LLP, contained certain recommendations requiring action. The Corrective Action Plan outlining actions to be taken by the Camden County Board of Social Services, to correct the findings of the 2021 Annual Audit has been prepared in accordance with directives from the County Welfare Agency. The Camden County Board of Social Services has accepted and approved the Corrective Action Plan for the 2021.

Mr. Rhodes requested a motion to adopt Resolution 216-2024.

Vice Chair Camacho moved to adopt. Ms. Devera seconded the motion and there being no other discussion on the motion a vote was taken and the Resolution was unanimously adopted

DIRECTOR’S REPORT..... Christine Hentisz, Director

Ms. Hentisz started her report with state updates from DFD and Medicaid. Ms. Hentisz stated on the DFD side we recently went through a Federal audit for our Food Stamps programs and client access. Although we haven't gotten the official exit information from the audit we received a phone call with the Federal auditors, on their last day, and was happy to report they were very pleased with what they saw here. The auditors randomly interviewed a client in the waiting area and the client was very happy with our services. The auditors also interviewed staff members.

Ms. Hentisz followed with another DFD update: the State is doing a huge look at a problem that is occurring statewide with over verification of benefits for SNAP, TANF and GA. As they are going through some audits, there seems to be a lot of documentation being requested that are not required. The State is looking to doing a training and provide a DFDI clarifying when certain documents are needed to make sure we are not over verifying our cases.

Ms. Hentisz provided update on the telephonic signatures. The Federal Government approved the waiver, to continue using telephonic signatures through June of 2026.

Ms. Hentisz stated summer EBT which is the summer SNAP program for school aged kids. The state did their initial roll out of these funds about a week and a half ago. The state sent out over \$66 million dollars statewide to over 550,000 kids. Ms. Hentisz stated the entire process is being done by the State and the county is not involved in the process other than providing the information to the clients when they have questions. The schools provide the list of names of the kids on free and reduce lunch to the State and the state mails the EBT card and they are also doing the replacement cards.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT (cont.).....Christine Hentisz, Director

The one clarification they gave us this month is this program is specific to the Federal Free and Reduced lunch program there are some schools that receive it through State funding and not Federal funding. Ms. Hentisz stated the State funded schools are not eligible for this program. The State is also working on an auto enrollment for Medicaid recipients to enroll into the free and reduced lunch program. They would then automatically get free and reduced lunch if they are on certain Medicaid programs.

Ms. Hentisz stated another thing that we have been working on with the State is how our clients are handled at the One Stop, and through the Department of Labor. Ms. Hentisz stated there seems to be a lot of confusion regarding what kind of activities our clients can go into depending on what program they are on with us. The State has been trying to work at the State level and really not getting anywhere with it. A lot of the One Stops are locally run and operated differently throughout the entire State. The State is going to set up regional meetings towards the end of the summer and leading into the fall; our meeting will include Cumberland, Gloucester, and Salem Counties. The One Stop, Department of Labors and welfare agencies from those counties will be having one meeting to try to go over things locally, and how that should be done.

Ms. Hentisz stated the last DFD update is there has been an increase on skimming and phishing of SNAP benefits. Our Call Center and interviewers have seen a few reports, and we report them to the State as needed. Ms. Hentisz stated we had a few clients that called recently saying that it was a board of social service employee that was calling them and asking them for information about their SNAP for example pin number and case numbers. We are trying to make sure the message gets out there that we will not call clients asking them for their PIN for their EBT. The other concerning issue is the Federal legislation which allows us to replace benefits that were lost to phishing or skimming expires in October of this year. October there will be no ability for us to replace any benefits that are lost to phishing and skimming.

Next, Ms. Hentisz provided updates from DMAHS.

Ms. Hentisz stated we have been notified there is going to be a change at the leadership level at DMAHS, Assisting Commissioner Jen Jacobs is leaving the State and Greg Woods will be replacing her. The Director's Association is going to invite Greg to one of their meetings to go over things with him and our relationship with the State. We received information from the state that the Memorandum of Understanding that we have with DMAHS for our enhanced funding will be continued for the rest of the year. Our funding will not be cut for the next funding. During COVID they increased what they were giving us and have to end that at some point. A lot of counties are still working their way through unwinding and cleaning up Medicaid cases from Covid. The year long process technically ended in April of this year, although every county in the State is still trying to clean up those cases. The Medicaid Department is doing a lot of work in getting to as many cases as they can. Ms. Hentisz stated the State is going through an audit from CMS regarding unwinding. It will look at children that were terminated off Medicaid on March 31st, and if those terminations were done correctly. We do not do Family Care here at the board so we should have very minimal interaction. The information the State is getting is there will be a lot of these audits coming over the next year regarding, Covid money and the Waivers, and how they were used in the State of New Jersey.

Ms. Hentisz provided an agency update.

We are about halfway through our de-escalation training for staff on how to deal with clients that are not the easiest to deal with. We have been getting feedback on the training and how it's been going. Some good and some feedback on how the next training can be better. We will be trying to do this as an ongoing training every couple of years.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT (cont.).....Christine Hentisz, Director

The update on the file storage clean-up staff are going through all the boxes coming back from GRM. Ms. Hentisz stated if you walk through our second floor right now, it looks like there are boxes everywhere. We have about 250 boxes a week being delivered here that we must go through and determine if we can destroy it or keep it. We are continuing to work with the County on a long-term plan on where the cases we must keep will be going to go.

Lastly, Ms. Hentisz provided updates on County Welfare Director's Association. Two primary things they are working on with the State is on staffing standards for all our programs. The State is taking a hard look at staffing in all the counties. They need to make sure how they determine staffing standards is being done correctly. The staffing standards are 30, 40 years old and don't really reflect the work that we do and how it's done. The State is looking to change some of the standards and try to best utilize the money is coming down to make sure that we are staffed properly. Also, they continue to work with civil service on better ways, to improve how we work with civil service, on getting our lists more timely and ensuring that the tests reflect what we're doing here. The Civil Service has a new Commissioner. They are trying to see what we can do to improve the relationship between the welfare agencies and civil service.

FISCAL REPORT.....Paulette Konopka, Fiscal Officer

Ms. Konopka stated that each Board member had received copies of the Fiscal Report in their packet for the month May 2024.

Ms. Konopka stated that if anyone had any questions, she would be happy to address them.

Chairman Rhodes requested a motion to accept the Fiscal Report for May 2024 as presented in the packet.

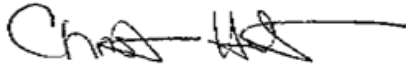
Vice Chair Camacho moved to accept. Ms. DeVera seconded the motion and there being no discussion on the motion, a vote was taken, and the Report was unanimously accepted.

OLD BUSINESS

There was none.

NEW BUSINESS

Chairman Rhodes requested a motion to approve the three revised agency policies as were presented in Closed Session. Mr. Kendall moved to approve the request. Vice Chair Camacho seconded the motion and there being no discussion on the motion, a vote was taken, and the motion was unanimously adopted.



Clerk