

April 20, 2022

At 12:00 P.M., a quorum being present, Mr. Hill called the annual reorganization 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 600 Market Street and the County Clerk was notified.

**Reorganization – Board Members of the Camden County Board of Social Services**

Mr. Hill requested a roll call:

Mr. James H. Rhodes	Present
Ms. Virginia Betteridge	Present
Ms. Gwen DeVera	Present
Ms. Sharrae Morman	Present
Mr. Joseph Ripa, County Clerk	Absent
Commissioner Director Louis Cappelli	Absent
Commissioner Carmen Rodriguez	Absent

Mr. Hill called for election of officers:

Chairman  
Vice Chairman  
Secretary/Treasurer

Ms. DeVera nominated: James Rhodes, as Chairman, Virginia Betteridge, as Vice Chairperson, Ms. Sharrae Morman as Secretary/Treasurer. Ms. DeVera moved to elect the current slate of officers. Ms. Betteridge seconded the motion.

Mr. Hill asked if there were any other nominations.

Mr. Hill stated there being no other nominations he would direct that the nominations be closed. There were no objections to the motion.

Mr. Hill stated that the nominations are:

Chairman – James H. Rhodes  
Vice Chairman – Virginia Betteridge  
Secretary/Treasurer – Sharrae Morman

**OPEN SESSION Public Participation**

Mr. Hill declared that the slate of officers as previously mentioned in the motion is hereby elected for the forthcoming year.

Mr. Hill turned the meeting over to the Chairman, James H. Rhodes and the Open Session resumed.

Mr. Rhodes requested approval of the following items:

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

Mr. Rhodes requested a motion to approve.

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

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**OPEN SESSION (Public Participation)**

The regular meeting of the Camden County Board of Social Services was held on Wednesday, April 15, 2022, at 12:00 p.m. virtually in the office of the Board at 600 Market Street, Camden, New Jersey, with James H. Rhodes, Chair, presiding. The following members were present via teleconference:

Virginia Betteridge, Vice Chair; Sharrae Morman, Secretary/Treasurer; Gwen DeVera

Also present were: Christine Hentisz, Director; Ivory Marrero, Deputy Director; Edward Hill, Esquire; Charles G. Oppermann, Esquire; Paulette Konopka, Fiscal Officer; Christine Colbert, Principal Personnel Technician; Nicole Jefferson, Administrative Clerk; Rich Behm, IT Director; Fred Anderson, System Analyst Supervisor;

Public Attendance via WebEx: Elizabeth Black, TaReema Redd, Simone Moore, Belinda Caban, Chimere Lake, Samantha Sanborn, Audrey Watkins-Kizee, Janette Norcross Dyon Draft, Tiffany Cobourne, Shannon Reeves, Darnell Hardee, Lizzie Jones, Arielis Colon, Deborah Maurer, Jamila Odom-Garnett, Yoresmi Lopez

Mr. Rhodes requested a motion to open the meeting for public participation. Ms. Betteridge moved to open the Public Participation portion of the Open Session, which motion was seconded by Ms. Morman and unanimously adopted.

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

Simone Moore inquired if the Board is considering implementing the newly released information from the Governor regarding a minimum of two-day remote work for employees. Mr. Rhodes stated the Board just received information from the Association of Counties and will be reviewed and evaluated.

Tiffany Cobourne inquired why aren't there any ADA accommodations for clients and employees? Mr. Cobourne stated she went through quite a bit of difficulty to receive a special phone to use in the new reception area because she is hard of hearing. Mr. Rhodes inquired if Ms. Cobourne's accommodations have been met? Ms. Cobourne answered that yes, her accommodations have been met, however this process took months and there is only one booth made available for ADA usage. Mr. Rhodes stated the new reception area was put in place in response to the pandemic, eliminating clients having to be seen at a worker's desk. Mr. Rhodes continued; he understands Ms. Cobourne's frustration with the length of time it took for her accommodations to have been addressed. Ms. Hentisz also stated that all ADA accommodations for employees must be submitted through the Personnel Department. The Agency utilizes a language line interpreter vendor, that also provides sign language interpretation. There are numerous options of service the Agency can use to accommodate any person that needs assistance.

Elizabeth Black inquired what are the eligibility requirements for employees to be able to opt-out of receiving medical insurance benefits? She stated she was told that since her spouse is also under the State NJ Health Insurance plan, that she is not eligible for a reimbursement of funds due to opting out of health insurance. Mr. Rhodes thanked Ms. Black for her question and explained that if an employee/spouse are both receiving publicly funded benefits, then a reimbursement opt-out premium fund would not be issued. Mr. Rhodes continued, that an employee/spouse that opts out, could also save money from not paying the employee cost-share contribution. Ms. Black inquired if there was a policy explaining this? Mr. Rhodes stated that he believes that the policy is in the CWA Local 1084 contract.

**OPEN SESSION (Public Participation)**

Janette Norcross inquired if there is a freeze on promotions at the Agency. Mr. Rhodes replied that he was not aware of any freeze on promotions. Ms. Norcross inquired why are vacancies being fulfilled within the Agency, but there aren't any job postings for certain positions? Ms. Norcross inquired why is the Fair Hearing and Overpayment departments reporting to Mr. Oppermann and why does office services report to Ms. Konopka? Ms. Hentisz replied that the Investigation and Overpayment departments have been overseen by the Legal Department for years, even prior to Mr. Oppermann and Office Services was placed under Ms. Konopka, due to the fact of the previous Administrator retiring last year. Ms. Norcross inquired if the administrators are violating Civil Service policy because they oversee multiple departments? Ms. Hentisz and Mr. Rhodes replied no they are not aware of any Civil Service policy being violated. Mr. Rhodes stated Ms. Norcross may reach out to her union for any other issues regarding this matter.

Mr. Rhodes thanked all for the questions and comments and inquired if there was anyone else that wished to address the Board. Hearing and seeing that there was no one, Mr. Rhodes requested a motion to close the Public Participation portion of the Open Session. Ms. Betteridge 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.

**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 comment on them.

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

Ms. Betteridge moved to approved. 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 210-2022 – Authorizing Premium Pay.....Edward Hill, Esquire**

Mr. Hill presented Resolution 210-2022. It has been two years since the United States, State of New Jersey, and the County of Camden declared a public health emergency in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. At a time of great uncertainty and even fear, Camden County Board of Social Services employees confronted the situation and provided a myriad of services to our residents. In gratitude for the dedication to the community by our outstanding team of Camden County Board of Social Services employees, the proper CCBSS officials be and are hereby authorized to distribute a one-time payment of \$1,000 to full-time employees who are in the payroll system as of March 16, 2022.

Mr. Rhodes requested a motion to approve Resolution 210-2022.

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Ms. Betteridge 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.

**Resolution 211-2022 – Authorizing the Camden County Board of Social Service to Renew its Membership in the Camden County Insurance Fund Commission ..... Edward Hill, Esquire**

Mr. Hill presented Resolution 211-2022. The Camden County Board of Social Services (CCBSS) has determined it is in the best interest of the residents of Camden County to renew its membership in the Camden County Insurance Fund Commission. The existence of the Camden County Insurance Fund Commission is intended to provide Camden County’s various boards, agencies, authorities, and commissions with the opportunity to combine resources to manage their liability and casualty risks and employee health insurance. The membership in the Camden County Insurance Fund Commission shall be for a period not to exceed three (3) years.

Mr. Rhodes requested a motion to approve Resolution 211-2022.

Ms. Betteridge 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.

**Resolution 212-2022— Authorizing the Camden County Board of Social Services to Recognize May 1<sup>st</sup>- May 7<sup>th</sup>, 2022 as Public Service Recognition Week in Honor of the Millions of Public Employees at the Federal, State, County, and Municipal Levels..... Edward Hill, Esquire**

Mr. Hill presented Resolution 212-2022. The Camden County Board of Social Services recognizes its employees for their dedicated efforts on behalf of the citizens of Camden County in meeting its mission to provide timely, efficient, and cost-effective delivery of social, medical, and economic programs in a compassionate and financially responsible manner. The Camden County Board of Social Services values the rights and worthiness of all customers and staff. The success of our mission requires the cooperation, commitment, active participation, and ideas of all our employees. The Camden County Board of Social Services recognizes Public servants include social service workers, teachers, doctors, scientists, nurses, policemen, firemen, safety inspectors, laborers and countless other occupations. Day in and day out they provide the diverse services demanded by the American people of their government with efficiency and integrity.

Mr. Rhodes requested a motion to approve Resolution 212-2022.

Ms. Betteridge moved to adopt Resolution 212-2022 as presented. Ms. DeVera seconded the motion and there being no other discussion on the motion a vote was taken and the Resolution was unanimously adopted.

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**Resolution 213-2022 – Resolution Adopting Meeting Schedule and Designating a Newspaper to Receive Notices for the Camden County Board of Social Services..... Edward Hill, Esquire**

Mr. Hill presented Resolution 213-2022. Mr. Hill stated that the Open Public Meetings Act states that the Board is required to adopt its annual meeting schedule and designate newspapers to receive notices for the Board of Social Services Board meetings.

Mr. Rhodes requested a motion to approve Resolution 213-2022.

Ms. Betteridge moved to adopt Resolution 213-2022 as presented. Ms. Morman seconded the motion and there being no other discussion on the motion a vote was taken and the Resolution was unanimously adopted.

**Resolution 214-2022 – Authorizing the Use of Competitive Contracting Request for Proposals, Pursuant to N.J.S.A. 40A:11-4.1, for the Procurement of Services to Create/Maintain a Website for the Camden County Board of Social Services .....Edward Hill, Esquire**

Mr. Hill presented Resolution 214-2022. N.J.S.A. 40A:11-4.3(a) requires that the governing body pass resolution authorizing the initiation of the competitive contracting process for certain specialized goods and services.

N.J.S.A. 40A:11-4.3(b) requires that the competitive contracting process be administered either by a purchasing agent qualified pursuant to N.J.S.A. 40A:11-9, legal counsel of the contracting unit, or administrator of the contracting unit.

There is a need to authorize competitive contracting process for the procurement of services to create/maintain a website for the Camden County Board of Social Services in accordance with N.J.S.A. 40A:11-4.1(a). the Board of the Camden County Board of Social Services that the Director of the Camden County Board of Social Services and or her designee, with the assistance of legal counsel and/or the Camden County Board of Social Services Purchasing Agent, be and is hereby authorized to initiate competitive contracting as needed for the procurement of the services stated previously.

Mr. Rhodes requested a motion to approve Resolution 214-2022.

Ms. Betteridge moved to adopt Resolution 214-2022 as presented. Ms. DeVera seconded the motion and there being no other discussion on the motion a vote was taken and the Resolution was unanimously adopted.

**Resolution 215-2022 – Declaring Camden County Board of Social Services Solidarity with the People of Ukraine.....Edward Hill, Esquire**

Mr. Hill presented Resolution 215-2022. The unprovoked, unjustified, and illegal invasion of the sovereign nation of Ukraine by Russia under the direction of its ruthless President, Vladimir Putin, has been condemned by the entire world, including the people of Camden County and the Camden County Board of Social Services. The people of Ukraine have bravely resisted the relentless assaults, bombings and crimes against peace waged by Putin and his brutal military,

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**Resolution 215-2022 – Declaring Camden County Board of Social Services Solidarity with the People of Ukraine.....Edward Hill, Esquire**

despite overwhelming military odds and the continuing onslaught of modern Russia military strikes against innocent, unarmed civilian populations. The Camden County Board of Social Services of the County of Camden and State of New Jersey, that we declare solidarity with the people of Ukraine and our Ukrainian brothers and sisters here in the United States, and we demand Putin immediately withdraw his military from Ukraine, renounce his expansionist claims, and rejoin the world of nations to restore war-torn Ukraine.

Mr. Rhodes requested a motion to approve Resolution 215-2022.

Ms. Betteridge moved to adopt Resolution 215-2022 as presented. 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 reported on the current program updates or changes from DFD (Division of Family Development) and DMAHS (Division of Medical Assistance and Health Services).

Ms. Hentisz stated the Agency is still in its “COVID unraveling” period due to many of the waivers issued by DFD have expired. On April 1<sup>st</sup>, all TANF (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families), GA (General Assistance), Food Stamps, and IRF’s (Interim Reporting Forms) that have not been completed have closed. Case workers continue to work diligently in processing and reopening cases that have closed. Ms. Hentisz went on to say, the Agency has experienced an influx of clients and an increase of call volume due clients not being required to complete a recertification for the past two years. Also, the maximum allotment of Food Stamps is set to continue until at least June 2022. Some clients that were previously only eligible for \$20 a month in Food Stamps due to their household composition, have been receiving over \$200 in Food Stamps due to the maximum allotment provision. Ms. Hentisz foresees an increase of questions and concerns from our clients due to this upcoming change and will ensure that our Call Center and eligibility staff are prepped to address these concerns. DFD has also made mention of notifying clients of this upcoming change.

Ms. Hentisz stated that the work participation and job search activity requirements have resumed at the County OneStop. Although clients are not being sanctioned for non-compliance, the referral process to the County OneStop continues which includes job search, schooling/certification, etc. This provision mainly applies to TANF/GA clients. SNAP clients continue to be on a voluntary compliance. The County OneStop have been working along with the Agency to ensure the transition back to work activities for the clients and case workers is as smooth as possible.

DFD has informed that the waivers for housing assistance cases will be expiring soon. The housing department social workers have been prepping and assisting clients for this upcoming change.

Next, Ms. Hentisz provided updates from DMAHS. Currently, the existing waiver of Medicaid redeterminations and non-closing of cases remain in place. It is a possibility that the waiver will be expiring sometime in the summer. This waiver is linked to the federal public health emergency, which differs from the state’s public health emergency that expired last month. Once the federal public health emergency is lifted, the State of New Jersey will be issued a one-year time allotment to clean up any backlogged cases and redeterminations.

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**DIRECTOR’S REPORT (continued).....Christine Hentisz, Director**

Ms. Hentisz provided Agency updates and projects to the Board. The Agency is still in its beginning developing stages of creating a website. Ms. Hentisz thanked the Board for passing Resolution 214-2022, which allows the Agency to procure a web designer for its new website. The user-friendly website will focus on providing vital information and tips for our clients.

Lastly, Ms. Hentisz informed that the DIMS (Document Image Management System) Project has restarted. This project consumes of scanning all document files from case folders into DIMS. With this new project, the goal is for the Agency will work towards becoming more paperless.

Mr. Rhodes thanked Ms. Hentisz for her Director’s Report and asked if there were any questions or comments for the Director.

Mr. Rhodes requested a motion to approve the Director’s Report.

Ms. Betteridge 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.

**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 of March 2022.

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

Mr. Rhodes requested a motion to accept the Fiscal Report for March 2022 as presented in the packet.

Ms. Betteridge 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.

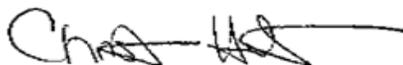
**OLD BUSINESS**

There was none.

**NEW BUSINESS**

There was none.

Mr. Rhodes requested a motion to close the Open Session of the meeting and move to the Closed Executive Session to discuss personnel and legal matters. Ms. Betteridge moved to discuss such matters in closed session. Ms. Morman seconded the motion, and there being no discussion on the motion a vote was taken and the motion was unanimously approved.



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Clerk