

August 21, 2019

The regular meeting of the Camden County Board of Social Services was held on Wednesday, August 21, 2019 at 12:00 p.m. in the office of the Board at 600 Market Street, Camden, New Jersey, with James H. Rhodes, Chair, presiding. The following members were present:

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

Not present: Dr. Leonard Krivy, PhD, Secretary/Treasurer

Also present were: Christine Hentisz, Director; Charles G. Oppermann, Esquire; Paulette Konopka, Fiscal Officer; Christine Colbert, Principal Personnel Technician; Donnette (Molly) Brown, Human Resource Manager; Nicole Jefferson, Administrative Clerk

Public Attendance: CWA Local 1084 members: Joshua Nix, Allegra Reed, Josefina DeVera, Audrey Watkins-Kizee, Cerina Muse, and Simone Moore

At 12:00 p.m., a quorum being present, Mr. Rhodes called the meeting to order, and announced that in compliance with the Open Public Meetings Act, the Courier Post Newspaper and the Philadelphia Inquirer were 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.

Mr. Rhodes requested approval of the following items:

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

Mr. Rhodes requested a motion to approve.

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.

**OPEN SESSION  
PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

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, seconded by Ms. DeVera and the motion was unanimously adopted.

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

Ms. Audrey Watkins-Kizee addressed the Board to inquire as to why her educational leave request was denied on May 29, 2019. She also went on to inquire what is the timeframe and process for an educational leave request decision to be received. Mr. Rhodes thanked Ms. Watkins-Kizee, and although he did not have her educational leave request information readily available, he stated that generally there is a process internally before it appears before the Board. Mr. Rhodes went on to say, there are various factors that are taken into consideration before a decision is made. Such general factors are, but are not limited to: whether the internship can be completed on-site, staffing within the department, and optional weekend and evening scheduling. Mr. Rhodes stated that he will further discuss Ms. Watkins-Kizee inquiries with Administration.

Ms. Josefina DeVera stated she previously spoke to CWA Local 1084 President, Jon Worley, and brought to him the concerns of the cleanliness of the agency. Ms. DeVera went on to say, last February, she told Mr. Worley that she was going to purchase an air purifier for her workspace area. Ms. DeVera stated she was advised by Mr. Worley to get a doctor's note and submit to the Personnel Department. Currently, Ms. DeVera has not received a response from the Personnel Department.

Ms. Colbert and Ms. Brown stated they will look into Ms. DeVera's request as the Personnel Department receives a vast amount of accommodation requests. Ms. Brown went on to say, there is a process between the agency and Camden County Buildings and Operations in regards to some accommodation requests. Accommodation requests also need to be discussed with the Legal Department and Administration.

Ms. Hentisz stated that she and Kelly DeLuca, Office Services Manager, have been meeting monthly with the cleaning company and addressing reported issues. Ms. Hentisz stated it is imperative that employees report any building related issues to [building.maintenance@camdenbss.org](mailto:building.maintenance@camdenbss.org) Also, Ms. Hentisz reminded Ms. DeVera, that a vacuuming schedule was sent out to staff a couple of weeks ago. If anyone notices that their workspace area/department was not vacuumed to report it.

Ms. DeVera lastly wanted to address the security issues and the recent incidents of clients getting to non-client areas of the building. Ms. Hentisz stated that she and Chief of Security, Paul Montes, are addressing these recent incidents.

Seeing that there was no one additional, 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.

**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.

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

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 to approve the Update was unanimously adopted.

**OPEN SESSION**

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

Ms. Hentisz provided updates to the Board from the Division of Family Development (DFD) and Division of Medical and Health Services (DMAHS) meeting.

Jennifer Langer Jacobs was appointed as the new Director of DMAHS. Ms. Hentisz and the other county welfare directors had the pleasure of meeting Ms. Langer Jacobs at this month’s directors’ meeting.

Ms. Hentisz went on to report, the State budget for July 1<sup>st</sup> included an increase in TANF (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families) & GA (General Assistance) allotments. Effective August 1<sup>st</sup>, there was a 10% increase to TANF, the retro-payment for July was issued later on in the month of August. GA recipients will receive their increase effective September 1<sup>st</sup>, including any retro payments. The new increases will affect SNAP allotments, and any adjustments will be done systematically. Ms. Hentisz also stated that due to the increases, her staff will be recalculating housing assistance payments and overpayment recoupments.

Next, Ms. Hentisz reported about the SNAP Categorically Eligible Proposal from the Trump Administration. The proposal is seeking to eliminate the automatic eligibility of certain SNAP recipients. Ms. Hentisz stated information was received from DFD that there may be a possible impact from this new proposal. 36,000 cases may be affected state-wide and may lose their SNAP benefits, with 3,000 of those being in Camden County due to the change of categorically eligible criteria. This proposal will also bring about having to complete a resource test for every SNAP applicant. The proposal may also affect SNAP recipients who receive heating and utility assistance and free/reduced school lunches. A separate application would need to be completed for each assistance program, rather than the current automatic eligibility process. As more information comes from the federal government, Ms. Hentisz will be sure to update the Board.

Ms. Hentisz was very pleased to report to the Board, Camden County has passed the FNS TOP audit review.

Ms. Hentisz went on to inform that the County Welfare Director’s Association (CWDA) will be having their retreat September 12<sup>th</sup> and September 13<sup>th</sup>. The Commissioner of Human Services, Carole Johnson, along with the directors of DFD and DMAHS will be attending.

Ms. Hentisz stated that she has been working along with the administrators on having Strategic Planning Sessions. Ms. Hentisz and her management staff are working together to plan their two-year, five-year, and ten-year vision plans for the agency.

The One-Stop building will be moving from Mt. Ephraim Ave in Camden, to Woodcrest on September 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> 2019. 20 staff members from the agency will be transitioning to the offices in Woodcrest. Ms. Hentisz also stated the County and the Improvement Authority is looking to provide shuttle services from the train station and bus stop to the office building.

Ms. Hentisz went on to say, she along with the Deputy Director, Lauwana Martin, are continuing to meet weekly with certain administrators regarding each contingency that was placed on the 2019 Budget. Ms. Hentisz feels very confident that she and her staff will be able to meet and exceed these conditions by the end of the year.

Lastly, Ms. Hentisz stated that she and 6 staff members are happy to be assisting at the county’s third annual Homeless Resource Fair that will be held on Thursday, September 26<sup>th</sup>, at the Cathedral Kitchen.

**OPEN SESSION**

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 approving the Report was unanimously adopted.

**FISCAL Report ..... Paulette Konopka, Fiscal Officer**

Ms. Konopka stated that each Board member had received copies of the Fiscal Reports in their packet for June and July 2019.

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 Reports for June and July 2019 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.

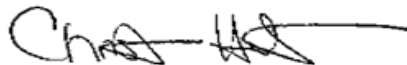
**OLD BUSINESS**

There was none.

**NEW BUSINESS**

Ms. Betteridge requested that the Board be updated as to how the new immigration laws could possibly affect the current clients, as well as clients applying in the future. Ms. Betteridge stated the media's information can be very confusing and misleading.

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. DeVera 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