

March 15, 2023

The regular meeting of the Camden County Board of Social Services was held on Wednesday, March 15, 2023, 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 Virginia Betteridge, Gwen DeVera, John Kendall, Andres Camacho, Sharrae Morman, Secretary/Treasurer via teleconference Public Attendance via WebEx:

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

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

Chairman Rhodes requested a motion to approve.

Mr. Kendall moved to approve. Mr. Camacho seconded the motion, and there being no discussion on the motion, a vote was taken and the motion was unanimously adopted.

**PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

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

Chairman Rhodes asked if there were any members of the public wishing 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. Commissioner Betteridge moved to close the Public Portion of the Open Session. Mr. Kendall 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 answer.

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

Mr. Kendall moved to approve. Mr. Camacho 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.

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

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

Ms. Hentisz stated there was a lot of discussion regarding Governor Murphy's Budget Address. Ms. Hentisz wanted to inform the Board that there were two items mentioned that may have a direct affect to county welfare agencies. The first proposed change is funding SNAP Navigators. A SNAP Navigator is a contracted nonprofit agency that helps people in applying and completing applications for SNAP. Ms. Hentisz continued that the SNAP Navigators are a huge benefit for welfare agencies and cuts down with the processing times of applications since they are being submitted accurately. The second proposed change is the removal of the General Assistance (GA) 28-day protocol. Currently, the protocol requires all GA applicants to comply with the County OneStop before the GA application is approved. This process has brought many challenges of having to enroll the GA applicant in completing the protocol within the 30-day processing time. The proposed change would be similar to the SNAP work requirement, which is initiated after the applicant has been approved. This process also makes it easier to evaluate and assess the applicant's individual situation. Ms. Hentisz stated the SNAP minimum allotment of \$95 has taken effect this month. The Agency has received some questions regarding the discontinuation of the pandemic benefits, but overall, most clients are aware of the changes to their SNAP allotments.

**OPEN SESSION**

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

Prior to the pandemic, DFD implemented a huge initiative to get the entire state’s SNAP timeliness rate to about 95 percent. DFD is starting to notice a decrease in the SNAP timeliness rate which most likely

is due to the increase in SNAP applicants. Ms. Hentisz continued, that although our agency’s timeliness has slightly decreased, she is happy to report that our Agency has maintained processing SNAP applications at a 90 percent timeliness rate. She commended the staff for their tremendous efforts in keeping the Agency timely and is sure that the Agency can obtain the 95 percent timeliness rate again.

Ms. Hentisz stated DFD is also resuming their annual Management Evaluation (ME) reviews. The ME reviews entails DFD reviewing how the county welfare agencies handles and implements the SNAP program. After the review is completed, the agency is provided a summary report stating what the agency is doing well on and what improvements can be made. Ms. Hentisz stated she will update the Board once the review is complete.

Next, Ms. Hentisz provided updates from DMAHS.

Ms. Hentisz stated since the start of the pandemic, Medicaid redeterminations were not permitted to be closed. This directive was linked to the federal public health emergency, which differs from the state’s public health emergency. Beginning on April 1<sup>st</sup>, the directive for non-closure of Medicaid cases and/or redeterminations will end. Ms. Hentisz stated she, along with the Deputy Director Ivory Marrero, and our Medicaid Administrator, Angel Beebe, have begun meeting with partner agencies to ensure the word is getting to the clients regarding this upcoming change.

Lastly, Ms. Hentisz stated the Agency will be offering soft skills trainings to staff through the Employee Assistance Program provider, Comm Psych. These trainings will be held monthly, with some topics including: Stress Management, Time Accountability, and How to Deal with Difficult Clients. Also, Ms. Hentisz stated, the Agency is in its final stages of scheduling an Active Shooter Trainings with the County Sheriff’s Department. The trainings are tentatively scheduled for mid-April.

Mr. Kendall inquired is the Agency still experiencing a delay in hiring new employees? Ms. Hentisz replied yes there is still a delay, and she doesn’t foresee a new hiring class being available until late fall of this year. Ms. Hentisz continued that the Agency is currently hiring new clerks, which is an easier hiring process since a clerical position is not handled through the Civil Service Commission.

Mr. Kendall also inquired how have the clients responded to the Agency’s move and new location in Cherry Hill? Ms. Hentisz replied overall the response has been favorable, however she is aware that some clients did not know there is a shuttle available from the PATCO train to the Agency. Ms. Hentisz stated the Agency is working to increase the notifications by way of flyers and the Call Center to inform clients that there is accessibility to the Agency by way of public transportation.

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

Chairman Rhodes requested a motion to accept the Director’s Report.

Mr. Camacho moved to approve. Mr. Kendall seconded the motion and there being no discussion on the motion, a vote was taken and the motion approving the Report was unanimously accepted.

**OPEN SESSION**

**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 February 2023.

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 February 2023 as presented in the packet.

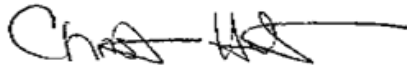
Mr. Camacho moved to accept. Ms. DeVera seconded the motion and there being no discussion on the motion, a vote was taken, and the Report was unanimously accepted.

**OLD BUSINESS**

There was none.

**NEW BUSINESS**

Chairman Rhodes requested a motion to grant the discretionary leave request as was presented in Closed Session. Mr. Kendall moved to approve the request. Ms. DeVera 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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Clerk