

November 17, 2021

The regular meeting of the Camden County Board of Social Services was held virtually on Wednesday, November 17, 2021 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:

Via Teleconference: Commissioner Carmen G. Rodriguez, Sharrae Morman, Secretary/Treasurer; Gwen DeVera

Not Present: Vice Chairperson, Virginia G. Betteridge

Also present were: Christine Hentisz, Director; Edward Hill, Esquire; Christine Colbert, Principal Personnel Technician (via teleconference) Nicole Jefferson, Administrative Clerk; Rich Behm, IT Director; Fred Anderson, System Analyst Supervisor; Paulette Konopka, Fiscal Officer (via teleconference) Joan Quinton, Confidential Aide to Commissioner Carmen G. Rodriguez

Public Attendance via WebEx: Audrey Watkins-Kizee, Simone Moore, Cerina Muse, Vanessa Munoz

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

Mr. Rhodes requested a motion to approve.

Commissioner Rodriguez 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. Commissioner Rodriguez 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.

Simone Moore stated she has noticed that many staff members are being written up or disciplined by their supervisors for coming to work late. Although staff are using their accrued time to cover their lateness, Ms. Moore inquired why are they being disciplined?

Ms. Hentisz replied that she was not aware of an uptick of staff being written up due to arriving late to work. Ms. Hentisz continued; the lateness policy has remained the same since the pandemic began. Ms. Hentisz stated that she will investigate the matter with the Personnel Department.

Ms. Moore also inquired if Juneteenth will be recognized as federal holiday next year? Mr. Rhodes replied that adding Juneteenth as a federal holiday for the County is being considered, however no final decision has been made just yet.

Next, Ms. Moore inquired if the County was approved for 'hero pay'? Mr. Rhodes replied that the County has not been approved for 'hero pay'.

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

Cerina Muse inquired if there have been any changes to the cleaning protocols of the building? Ms. Muse stated she works on the third floor and almost rarely sees the cleaning company sanitizing or wiping down the common touchpoints throughout the departments. Ms. Muse stated that since all staff are required to report to work, the lack of cleaning/sanitizing is a concern for her.

Ms. Hentisz replied, the previous protocol of touchpoints being cleaned every two hours has stopped, however the sanitizing mist of the entire building continues to be done every Saturday.

Mr. Rhodes stated that the Agency continues to follow all recommendations from the County Health Department. Cleaning materials/ hand sanitizers are also provided throughout the Agency. Ms. Hentisz stated staff can request more cleaning supplies/materials through Office Services.

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

Hearing and seeing that there was no one, Mr. Rhodes thanked the staff members for their questions and requested a motion to close the Public Participation portion of the Open Session. Commissioner Rodriguez 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.

OPEN SESSION

The Open Session of the meeting continued.

UPDATE STATE AND FEDERAL POLICIESChristine 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.

Commissioner Rodriugez 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 234-2021 –APS Overtime Policy for COVID-19 Funding.....Edward Hill, Esquire

Mr. Hill presented Resolution 234-2021. The Camden County Board of Social Services is desirous of accepting Adult Protective Services (APS) Covid-19 funds in the amount of one hundred and nineteen thousand, three hundred and eighty-two dollars and no cents (\$119,382.00) for the Adult Protective Services Department of the Camden County Board of Social Services, for this Agency to carry out vital service functions.

The Adult Protective Services Covid-19 grant requires an overtime policy dedicated to APS. “All employees shall be compensated at 1 ½ times their regular straight time hourly rate of pay for all hours worked beyond their normal workweek of 35 hours. All overtime must be authorized and approved by the Director, Deputy Director, or designee, in advance.

In addition, this policy is specific to the Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplement Supplemental Appropriations Act (CRRSA) for the grant period of April 1, 2021 to September 30, 2022.”

Mr. Rhodes requested a motion to adopt Resolution 234-2021.

Commissioner Rodriguez 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 provided an update to the Board of the Agency’s continued response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Ms. Hentisz reported on the current program changes from DFD (Division of Family Development) and DMAHS (Division of Medical Assistance and Health Services).

Ms. Hentisz stated there has been no updates or changes with the SNAP Options/Waivers. The waivers are still set to expire in January 2022. Although staff are completing redeterminations with clients, SNAP cases are still unable to be closed due to not completing a recertification. Ms. Hentisz stated that welfare agencies

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

throughout the state are waiting on clarification from DFD on how to handle Emergency Housing cases that have not closed due to the pandemic.

Ms. Hentisz stated that there will be a new requirement for some staff to be fingerprinted and complete an additional background check. This new requirement is due to a federal law that was passed a few years ago but is now just being implemented in New Jersey. Employees who have access to the Federal Tax Information (FTI) will need to complete the fingerprinting and background check.

Ms. Hentisz stated the Agency's Medicaid Department is continuing to make great improvement with clearing up the Medicaid backlogged applications. New applications are still under 90 days overdue. Also, as of November 1st, the Medicaid redeterminations are currently at 95% timely. This huge accomplishment of 95% timely redeterminations has not been reached within the Agency in over a decade. Ms. Hentisz was very pleased to report this information to the Board and commended the Medicaid department for these huge accomplishments.

Next, Ms. Hentisz stated that she is working along with the County Health Department in discussing how to possibly reconfigure the client lobby. With colder temperatures approaching, it would be ideal for more clients to be allowed in the building. The Agency continues to work along with the County Health Department to ensure the Agency is up to date with policies and procedures to keep staff and clients safe.

Lastly, Ms. Hentisz reported that she has been involved in discussions and meetings with other directors within the County Welfare Directors Association (CWDA) regarding common issues with the Civil Service Commission (CSC) being delayed in promotions due to COVID-19. Many employees have been in a provisional promotion longer than usual, which affects their eligibility to take a promotional exam and get certified. The CWDA has reached out to New Jersey Associations of Counties (NJAC) to assist in getting exceptions to those who are still provisional due to the major delay of promotional exams being scheduled because of the pandemic. Ms. Hentisz stated she will provide more updates to the Board in the months to come.

Mr. Rhodes thanked Ms. Hentisz for her Director's Report and commended the Medical Department for their tremendous efforts. Mr. Rhodes asked if there were any questions or comments for the Director.

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

Commissioner Rodriguez 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 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 October 2021.

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 October 2021 as presented in the packet.

Commissioner Rodriguez 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.

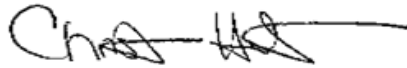
OLD BUSINESS

There was none.

NEW BUSINESS

There was no motion to grant the educational leave that was presented and discussed.

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. Commissioner Rodriguez 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.



Clerk