

November 29, 2023

The regular meeting of the Camden County Board of Social Services was held on Wednesday, November 29, 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:

Vice Chair, Andres Camacho, Sharrae Morman, Secretary/Treasurer (via WebEx), John Kendall, Gwen DeVera (via WebEx)

Public Attendance: Jennifer Lucas

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

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 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.

Chairman Rhodes requested a motion to approve.

Mr. Kendall moved to approve. Vice Chair Camacho 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. Mr. Kendall moved to open the Public Participation portion of the Open Session, seconded by Vice Chair Camacho 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 if there was an update on desk locks? Ms. Hentisz replied there have been a few issues with the locksmith being able to provide desk locks on used office furniture. However, the Agency is going to continue to try to resolve the issue with locksmith or will be seeking a new locksmith that will be able to complete the task.

Jennifer Lucas also inquired with the upcoming ending of the ABAWD (Able Bodied Adults Without Dependents) waiver, will the Agency be providing training for the ABAWD program? Ms. Hentisz replied, DFD will be administering ABAWD trainings, however the Agency has not received the training dates just yet. Also, there is additional discussion on if Camden County must comply with the ABAWD program. Once the Agency receives further information Ms. Hentisz will be sure to inform admin.

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. 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.

Vice Chair Camacho moved to approve. Mr. Kendall 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

Resolution 222-2023—(walk-on) Resolution Authorizing an Agreement, By and Between the Camden County Board of Social Services and the Law Office of Susan M. Purvin for the Provision of Legal Services.....

Mr. Kendall presented Resolution 222-2023. Ms. Hentisz explained the Agency has been without a Board solicitor since the passing of Martin McKernan. After an extensive search and interviewing of candidates, the Board has made the selection of Ms. Susan M. Purvin Esq., as its newly appointed Board counsel. Ms. Purvin is set to begin on December 1, 2023 and will be providing counsel for the Agency and handling contract negotiations.

After discussion and review, Mr. Rhodes requested a motion to walk on and adopt Resolution 222-2023.

Mr. Kendall moved to adopt. Vice Chair Camacho 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 information and updates to the Board from DFD (Division of Family Development) and DMAHS (Division of Medical Assistance and Health Services).

The ABAWD (Able-Bodied Adults Without Dependents) program is resuming on January 1st for the State of New Jersey. The ABAWD program mandates a minimum 20-hour work requirement or job search for SNAP recipients. The resumption of the ABAWD program is due to recent federal law changes. DFD can issue waivers to certain counties based on their unemployment rate, however there is no information yet if Camden County will need to comply or not. DFD will be conducting either in-person or virtual trainings on the ABAWD program.

Next, Ms. Hentisz stated DFD has released a SNAP Navigator program. This program allows non-profit and other social service agencies to become official SNAP navigators in assisting SNAP applicants. SNAP Navigators do not process applications or determine eligibility; however, they help the applicant in ensuring they have the appropriate documentation before submitting the application to the welfare agencies.

DFD will also be providing customer service training to staff early next year. Ms. Hentisz is looking forward to this new training as she has heard the trainer is very good and caters each training course to the specific county’s needs.

Ms. Hentisz stated that recent legislation from the State, requires DFD to have county dashboards published on the State website. These dashboards showcases county progress and statistics including: timeliness and applications/redeterminations for SNAP and GA.

Next, Ms. Hentisz provided updates from DMAHS.

The Agency’s Medicaid Department is still focusing on the Medicaid ‘unwinding’, which is the continuous review of Medicaid redeterminations that were open during the pandemic. The Medicaid staff are vigorously working through the heavy and increased volume of case work. DMAHS has reported there is about a 50% no response rate state-wide. Ms. Hentisz stated she greatly appreciates the Medicaid staff’s hard and diligent work on getting as many applications processed as possible. Ms. Hentisz stated the unwinding is due to end in April, so she hopes our numbers will begin to stabilize. DMAHS reminded county welfare agencies to prioritize new applications. Ms. Hentisz stated our Medicaid department processes both redetermination and new applications concurrently.

OPEN SESSION

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

DMAHS has changed their Health Benefit Coordinator (HBC) contracts. Currently, DMAHS has an HBC contract with Conduent. Conduent will now have the ability to accept telephonic signatures for Medicaid applications, as well as mailing out pre-filled redetermination applications.

Ms. Hentisz provided Agency updates and projects to the Board. Ms. Hentisz along with Deputy Director Marrero have been working with the County on the Homelessness Initiative. Recently, Ms. Hentisz, Deputy Marrero, and Housing Administrator Stephanie Moore attended and spoke on the panel at Commissioner Betteridge’s Homelessness Conference. Ms. Hentisz stated the conference provided an excellent opportunity to have great discussions with other agencies. Also, Ms. Hentisz has met with a few county coordinators and Chairman Rhodes for a more in-depth discussion on how to combat the pressing issue of homelessness in Camden County.

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

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 October 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 September 2023 as presented in the packet.

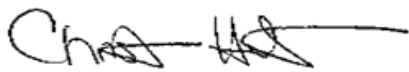
Mr. Kendall moved to accept. Vice Chair Camacho seconded the motion and there being no discussion on the motion, a vote was taken, and the Report was unanimously accepted.

OLD BUSINESS

There was none.

NEW BUSINESS

Chairman Rhodes requested a motion to grant the discretionary leave requests as were 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.



Clerk