

September 15, 2021

The regular meeting of the Camden County Board of Social Services was held virtually on Wednesday, September 15, 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: Vice Chairperson, Virginia G. Betteridge, Sharrae Morman, Secretary/Treasurer; Gwen DeVera

Also present were: Christine Hentisz, Director; Lauwana Martin, Deputy Director; Edward Hill, Esquire; Christine Colbert, Principal Personnel Technician (via teleconference); Nicole Jefferson, Administrative Clerk; Rich Behm, IT Director;

Public Attendance via WebEx: Bibiana Gutierrez, Janette Norcross

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

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.

Bibiana Gutierrez inquired what is the plan of action for staff members who have toddlers and children that attend daycare and/or school and was instructed to quarantine or shut down by the Department of Health? She stated staff are being told to use their own time and also was denied to work from home.

Mr. Rhodes stated that the COVID-19 leave policy has not changed and there are currently no exceptions.

Ms. Gutierrez also inquired what is the current COVID-19 leave policy?

Mr. Rhodes answered, currently if an employee cannot come to work, he or she needs to submit their own time. Mr. Rhodes also stated that the Board has adapted and accommodated staff since March 2020, however the Board will continue to reevaluate and reassess current policies in relation to COVID-19.

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

Janette Norcross stated that since children under 12 years of age are not permitted to receive the COVID-19 vaccines, and many children are becoming infected with the virus since returning to school, will the COVID-19 policy be revisited?

Mr. Rhodes replied that all COVID-19 policies will continue to be discussed between the Board, County, and Administration officials.

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

Hearing 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 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.

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

Resolution 231-2021 – RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING A SHARED SERVICES AGREEMENT BY AND BETWEEN THE COUNTY OF CAMDEN AND THE CAMDEN COUNTY BOARD OF SOCIAL SERVICES FOR THE PROVISION OF PROCUREMENT MANAGEMENT SERVICES.....Edward Hill, Esquire

Mr. Hill presented Resolution 231-2021.

The Camden County Board of Social Services (“CCBSS) have requested assistance from the County with respect to the management of their procurement process and procedures.

The Qualified Purchasing Agent for the County will be appointed as the Qualified Purchasing Agent (QPA) for the CCBSS and will be responsible for the oversight and management of day-to-day procurement activities for the Inter-agencies and will provide the same with the necessary leadership required to perform the required procurement management services properly, efficiently, and effectively.

The County and CCBSS agree that their mutual public purposes and their best interest will be promoted by the execution and delivery of this Shared Services Agreement pursuant to the powers conferred by the Uniform Shared Services and Consolidation Act.

The term of each Agreement shall be for a period of five years, effective on or about September 1, 2021, with one (1) five-year option to renew to be exercised upon written approval of both the County and the CCBSS

Mr. Rhodes requested a motion to adopt Resolution 231-2021.

Ms. Bettridge 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.

Ms. Morman 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.

OPEN SESSION

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

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 DFD has informed that all SNAP Options/Waivers have been extended until the end of 2021 barring that the 'State of Emergency' continues in New Jersey. Although the 'Public Health Emergency' ended on June 30, 2021, it has been clarified from the federal government, that this will not affect the waivers at this time. Those waivers include accepting telephonic signatures, maximum allotment issuance, extensions for recertifications and Interim Reporting Forms (IRF). The State is looking to permanently stop the requirement for face-to-face TANF & GA interviews. Prior to the Pandemic, the State was in the beginning stages of piloting to eliminate the face-to-face requirement for TANF and GA applications. Since all counties have since implemented not doing face-to-face interviews due to the pandemic for the past 18 months, it has shown that applications are still able to be taken without being done face-to-face.

Ms. Hentisz stated every year a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is signed with DMAHS to delineate what the Agency is responsible for and what the State is responsible for. Also, the MOU explains how the enhanced funds will be distributed to the County. A drafted memorandum was received for next year. Ms Hentisz and her management team are currently reviewing it. Ms. Hentisz stated the MOU is primarily focused on catching up redeterminations. Ms. Hentisz went on to say, thankfully the Medicaid Department has caught up a vast number of redeterminations in the past 9 months. Ms. Hentisz was to report that after the end of September, the redetermination applications will be over 80 percent timely.

Next, Ms. Hentisz stated the federal waiver which prevented any Medicaid case from closing during the COVID-19 pandemic is going to expire in December 2021. This has raised some concern since numerous applicants will be wanting to reapply in January. DMAHS has received guidance from CMS of a possibility of extending the federal waiver past January 2022. CMS also provided information that the closures of these cases will not be done automatically and attempts to contact the clients will be done. Also, the county welfare agencies have one year to complete the applications.

Ms. Hentisz stated the Agency is continuing to update and revise its COVID-19 policies. Recently, President Biden's announcement of vaccine mandates in certain institutions, including those that receive Medicaid funding is being reviewed as to how it would affect the Agency. Ms. Hentisz stated that she will keep the Board and staff updated.

Ms. Hentisz reported that the Agency has been involved in various outreach events with the County and State to ensure clients are receiving the correct benefits during the pandemic. Ms. Hentisz also stated that there has been a lot of concern regarding the moratorium for evictions ending. There are many backlogged evictions from the last 18 months. Staff have been at different outreach events located at the court offices and at Congressman Norcross' office to provide information on the Agency's housing program and county housing assistance programs.

Lastly, Ms. Hentisz stated she attended the County Welfare Directors Association Retreat. This retreat was held as an in-person event. Various discussions and meetings regarding the effects of the pandemic, upcoming bills such as the Re-entry bill, all took place with DFD Directors, DMAHS Directors, and the Commissioner of Human Services. Ms. Hentisz will definitely provide an update to the Board as she receives them.

OPEN SESSION

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

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

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 accepted.

FISCAL REPORT.....Christine Hentisz, Director

Ms. Hentisz stated that each Board member had received copies of the Fiscal Report in their packet for the month of August 2021.

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

Mr. Rhodes requested a motion to accept the Fiscal Report for August 2021 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.

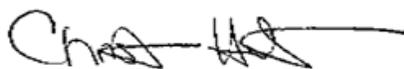
OLD BUSINESS

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. DeVera seconded the motion, and there being no discussion on the motion a vote was taken and the motion was unanimously approved.



Clerk