

January 19, 2022

The regular meeting of the Camden County Board of Social Services was held virtually on Wednesday, January 19, 2022 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; Edward Hill, Esquire; Christine Colbert, Principal Personnel Technician (via teleconference) Paulette Konopka, Fiscal Officer (via teleconference); Ivory Marrero, Assistant Administrator; Joan Quinton, Confidential Aide to Commissioner Carmen G. Rodriguez (via teleconference); Nicole Jefferson, Administrative Clerk; Rich Behm, IT Director;

Public Attendance via WebEx: Audrey Watkins-Kizee, Simone Moore, Jeanette Norcross, Danielle Bonner, Chimere Lake, Cerina Muse, Anita Tucker, other various call-in numbers

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

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.

Hearing and seeing 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.

Resolution 201-2022 –LIHEAP.....Edward Hill, Esquire

Mr. Hill presented Resolution 201-2022. The Camden County Board of Social Services desires to apply for and obtain a grant from the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs for approximately \$29,446.00 to carry out a project to administer the intake and eligibility determination of prospective beneficiaries of the LIHEAP program, including the accurate input of verified client information in the FAMIS for the period July 1, 2021 through June 30, 2022.

Mr. Rhodes requested a motion to adopt Resolution 201-2022.

Ms. Betteridge 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

Resolution 202-2022 –Authorizing a Petty Cash Fund.....Edward Hill, Esquire

Mr. Hill presented Resolution 202-2022. Pursuant to Resolution 224-2018, the Camden County Board of Social Services established the Fiscal Officer is authorized to be custodian of funds for the purpose of petty cash expenditures in the amount of \$200.00 from January 1, 2022 to December 31, 2022.

Mr. Rhodes requested a motion to adopt Resolution 202-2022.

Ms. Betteridge 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.

Resolution 203-2022 –Authorization to Renew a Contract with the County of Camden for Adult Protective Services Grant.....Edward Hill, Esquire

Mr. Hill presented 203-2022. It is the desire of Camden County Board of Social Services to renew its contract with the County of Camden to obtain funding for the Adult Protective Services Department of the Camden County Board of Social Services in the amount of three hundred and seventy-six thousand and eight hundred and fifty-six dollars (\$376,856.00) for January 1, 2022 through December 31, 2022 to carry out vital service functions.

Mr. Rhodes requested a motion to adopt Resolution 203-2022.

Ms. Betteridge 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.

Resolution 204-2022 –Authorizing an Emergency Award of Contract for Deep Cleaning ServicesEdward Hill, Esquire

Mr. Hill presented Resolution 204-2022. It is the desire of the Camden County Board of Social Services to authorize an award of contract to Pritchard Industries, Inc. for deep cleaning services from January 1, 2022 to December 31, 2022, at a cost not to exceed one hundred and sixty-eight thousand three hundred dollars and zero cents (\$168,300.00)

Mr. Rhodes requested a motion to adopt Resolution 204-2022.

Ms. Betteridge 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.

Resolution 205-2022 (walk on)– RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING JUNE 19TH ALSO KNOWN AS JUNETEENTH DAY AS A PAID HOLIDAY PER SECTION 9:12 OF THE CCBSS HANDBOOK

Ms. Morman requested to walk on Resolution 205-2022 which authorizes June 19th also known as Juneteenth, as a paid holiday to be observed on the third (3rd) Friday in June at Camden County Board of Social Services.

Mr. Rhodes requested a motion to walk on Resolution 205-2022.

Ms. Betteridge moved to walk on Resolution 205-2022. Ms. DeVera seconded the motion and there being no other discussion on the motion a vote was taken and the Resolution was walked on to the agenda.

Mr. Rhodes requested a motion to adopt Resolution 205-2022.

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

Ms. Hentisz stated the DFD recently reinstated the monthly meeting with directors earlier this month. On February 1st, many counties within the State will be ending the IRF and recertification waivers. Some counties, including Camden County, have been issued a three-month extension waiver. Ms. Hentisz commended the staff at the Agency for their tremendous efforts in keeping up with the recertifications and IRF's even during the waiver period. Telephonic signatures and no face-to-face requirements will continue to be allowed during the extension. Also, overpayment claims are not being applied to SNAP cases during this waiver period. Ms. Hentisz continued, there has been no determination if there will be an extension waiver applied to housing assistance cases after February 1st. Currently, no housing assistance cases were terminated during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Next, Ms. Hentisz updated the Board on the Afghan refugees that were placed at Fort Dix a few months ago. There are currently about 2000 refugees that still need to be placed. The Agency is continuing to assist the State with any families that wish to reside in Camden County as well as providing information on applying for social service benefits.

Ms. Hentisz provided an update regarding the new requirement of certain employees to be fingerprinted and complete a background check will be begin here at the Agency the first week of February. Ms. Hentisz stated this requirement will need to be completed by July 2022. The State informed that if an employee does not pass the background check, then they would need to be reassigned to a different position that does not require that high level clearance.

Ms. Hentisz stated the State is implementing a new project called the ICARE Project in collaboration with Rutgers University. This project is mainly focused on providing training to caseworkers on how to best handle the LGBTQ+ population. Ms. Hentisz stated that a few staff members have already begun the training and gave great feedback. The next sessions will take place over the next few months.

Ms. Hentisz stated that the work participation and job search requirement waiver is still set to expire on February 1, 2022. The Case Management Department staff are currently working to place all the participants in the proper work activity programs before February 1st. The State has given a tentative date of March 1st, to begin sanctioning clients who do not participate in their work activity/job search requirement.

The State is working on creating a new online application portal and is aiming to have it available within the first quarter of 2022. This newly updated portal will be able to provide applicants real time statuses on pending applications, the ability to upload documents, etc. With these changes and updates, it will certainly benefit both the applicant and the welfare agencies in processing the applications.

Next, Ms. Hentisz stated Governor Murphy recently signed a bill which allows inmates who are nearing their release date to begin applying for benefits and assistance. Fortunately, Camden County has already instituted a re-entry program which has proven to be very beneficial in assisting these individuals.

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

Ms. Hentisz stated there has been much discussion at DMAHS if the Medicaid cases waivers will be extended. Currently, no Medicaid cases have been closed during the COVID-19 pandemic. There is a concern on if these cases are still eligible to receive Medicaid. DMAHS is not completely certain as to how much longer the waivers will be extended. Also, Governor Murphy signed a bill which requires Medicaid statistics to be available to the public. In the next month or so, all Medicaid statistics for 2021 will be uploaded to the state’s website.

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

Due to the recent spike in COVID-19 cases, the Agency has implemented a hybrid work-from-home schedule of one day in the office and one day working from home. At this time, clerical staff are in the office full-time to ensure caseworkers are getting their work assigned to them timely. Also, the Agency’s lobby has been closed to the public due to staffing shortages. Clients who need to pick up an EBT card, mail, or homeless assistance are still being assisted.

Ms. Hentisz informed the Board that the annual homeless population count, Point in Time, will be held on January 26, 2022. The Agency’s Housing Department staff are actively involved with collecting the data of the county’s homeless population and to ensure an accurate count is submitted to HUD. This data effects the funding that is received from HUD.

Lastly, Ms. Hentisz happily announced and introduced to the Board, Ms. Ivory Marrero, who has been promoted as Deputy Director at Camden County Board of Social Services effective January 24th. Ms. Marrero has an extensive tenure at the Agency and Ms. Hentisz is excited to work along with Ms. Marrero.

Mr. Rhodes thanked Ms. Hentisz for her Director’s Report and welcomed Mrs. Marrero as the new Deputy Director and asked if she wanted to say a few words.

Mrs. Marrero introduced herself to the Board and stated she is looking forward in continuing to positively impact the Agency’s servicing programs and ensure that they’re effective for our clients in the community.

Mr. Rhodes asked if there were any questions or comments for the Director or Deputy Director.

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.....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 December 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 December 2021 as presented in the packet.

OPEN SESSION

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.

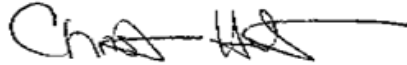
OLD BUSINESS

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