

May 18, 2022

The regular meeting of the Camden County Board of Social Services was held virtually on Wednesday, May 18, 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; Ivory Marrero, Deputy Director; Edward Hill, Esquire; Paulette Konopka, Fiscal Officer; Nicole Jefferson, Administrative Clerk; Rich Behm, IT Director; Fred Anderson, IT Supervisor, Christine Colbert, Principal Personnel Technician,

Public Attendance via WebEx: Chimere Lake, Simone Moore, Janette Norcross, Kellie Coyle, Anita Tucker, Tamyra Bevans, Raymond Civitella, Kelli Ellis, Lizzie Jones, Audrey Watkins-Kizee, Yolanda Rhoden, Deborah Randanella, Vivian Roman, Felicia Williams-Craven, Lindsay Tran, Yoresmi Medina-Lopez, Tamika Maldonado, Kelly Mulhern

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 600 Market Street and the County Clerk was notified.

Mr. Rhodes requested approval of the following items:

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

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. Morman and the motion was unanimously adopted.

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

Simone Moore inquired about the satellite office that will be located Camden in relation to the agency's move to Woodcrest. She also inquired during this transition will employees be allowed to work from home.

Mr. Rhodes answered that the satellite office in Camden is for the convenience of clients that are not able to travel to Woodcrest. The satellite office will not be a full-service location, however such services as: picking up mail, EBT replacements, and things of that sort will be available. Mr. Rhodes continued, there are numerous tasks and processes that will be taken place for this move. The Director is committed to hosting Agency town hall meetings to ensure staff are informed of any updates.

Ms. Moore also inquired if the Agency will be providing early retirement packages to certain employees that are not at the required retirement age?

Mr. Rhodes answered the Board has not had any discussion regarding early retirement packages. Also, an early retirement package would have to be approved by the New Jersey Department of Pension and Benefits.

Kellie Coyle inquired if the new facility in Woodcrest is large enough to accommodate the staff of Camden County Board of Social Services.

Mr. Rhodes answered that yes, the facility is large enough to accommodate all staff and its customers.

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 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 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.

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 216-2022 –Authorizing Budget for the Year 2022.....Edward Hill, Esquire**

Mr. Hill presented Resolution 216-2022 which sets forth the total budget for 2022.

Mr. Rhodes requested a motion to adopt Resolution 216-2022.

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 217-2022 –Amending Resolution 213-2022 Adopting Meeting Schedule and Designating a Newspaper to Receive Notices for the Camden County Board of Social Services.....Edward Hill, Esquire**

Mr. Hill presented 217-2022 which amends Resolution 213-2022 due to a few grammatical errors. Mr. Hill stated that the Open Public Meetings Act states that the Board is required to adopt its annual meeting schedule and designates a newspaper to receive notices for the Board of Social Services Board meetings.

Mr. Rhodes requested a motion to approve Resolution 217-2022.

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

Ms. Hentisz stated the Agency is still in its “COVID unraveling” period due to many of the waivers issued by DFD have expired. The Food Stamps recertification waivers for Food Stamps cases ended in April. Case workers continue to work diligently in processing and reopening cases that have closed. Since the pandemic, there has been an enormous influx of clients and applications. Ms. Hentisz went on to say, there have been adjustments to how cases are assigned and other changes to internal processes to ensure the Agency stays on top of this new challenge. Ms. Hentisz commended the case workers, supervisors, and administrators for their tremendous job of handling this task. The TANF (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families), GA (General Assistance), and Housing Assistance waivers are set to end on July 1<sup>st</sup>. The housing department social workers have been begun to prepare and assist clients for this upcoming change.

Next, Ms. Hentisz stated the maximum allotment of Food Stamps is set to continue through August 2022. This provision is tied into the State Health Emergency. There is a big concern state-wide regarding the significant decrease some clients are going to experience once this provision ends. DFD is working on sending out an information to the clients to explain this upcoming change.

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

Next, Ms. Hentisz provided updates from DMAHS. Currently, the existing waiver of Medicaid redeterminations and non-closing of cases remain in place. It is a possibility that the waiver will be expiring sometime in the summer. This waiver is linked to the federal public health emergency, which differs from the state's public health emergency. Once the federal public health emergency is lifted, the State of New Jersey will be issued a one-year time allotment to clean up any backlogged cases and redeterminations. Ms. Hentisz also stated that fortunately the Medicaid Department has already done a remarkable job cleaning up cases these past two years and remain over 95% timely with redeterminations. So, she is more than confident the Medicaid department is prepared to handle this task. DMAHS is also urging for addresses to be correct and updated in the medical systems, to ensure clients receive their redetermination packets on time. Clients may also contact the state hotline to update their address.

Ms. Hentisz provided Agency updates and projects to the Board. The Agency has begun to procure a web designer for its new website. The user-friendly website will focus on providing vital information and tips for our clients.

Next, Ms. Hentisz stated that the DIMS (Document Image Management System) Project is continuing to move along nicely. This project consumes of scanning all document files from case folders into DIMS. With the assistance from the administrators and the file room, the goal is for the Agency will work towards becoming more paperless.

Ms. Hentisz stated that she and Deputy Marrero have begun to process map the Agency and looking to see how the current process and procedures of each department can be improved. The first department is the Case Management Department. Ms. Hentisz will provide updates to the Board as this project continues.

Ms. Hentisz is very excited with the upcoming Agency move. She stated we are still in the early planning and designing stages, however there is an expected move in date to take place this year. Ms. Hentisz is planning on holding bi-weekly town hall meetings in the next coming months to allow staff to ask questions and bring up their concerns related to the move.

Lastly, Ms. Hentisz stated that in response to the NJ Plastic Bag ban, the County Welfare Directors Association (CWDA) is collaborating with New Jersey Clean Communities Council to provide 2500 reusable bags to SNAP recipients. SNAP recipients are unable to purchase reusable bags with their snap allotment. CWDA is discussing how to distribute the reusable bags to the SNAP recipients once the first shipment arrives.

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

**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 April 2022.

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 April 2022 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.

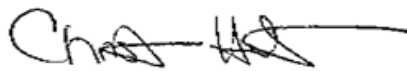
**OLD BUSINESS**

There was none.

**NEW BUSINESS**

Mr. Hill stated that it was the consensus of the Board to grant the discretionary leave request as presented in Closed Session.

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.



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Clerk