

February 15, 2023

The regular meeting of the Camden County Board of Social Services was held on Wednesday, February 15, 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:

Gwen DeVera, John Kendall, Andres Camacho, Sharrae Morman, Secretary/Treasurer

Public Attendance via WebEx: Ana J. Tynetta M.

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

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

Chairman Rhodes requested a motion to approve.

Mr. Kendall 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**

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 Ms. DeVera and the motion was unanimously adopted.

Chairman Rhodes asked if there were any members of the public wishing 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. Mr. 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 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.

Chairman Rhodes requested a motion to approve the Director's Update on the State and Federal Policies.

Mr. Kendall 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 204-2023—Authorizing an Award of Contract (HCES-CAT/SER-21-14), for Audio Visual Equipment.....Edward Hill, Esquire

Mr. Hill presented Resolution 204-2023. The Camden County Board of Social Services desires to authorize an award of contract to Washington Professional Systems for Audio Visual under Hunterdon County Educational Services Commission Co-Op Contract HCESC-CAT/SER-21-14 at a cost not to exceed Ninety-Five Thousand Five Hundred and Sixty-Eight Dollars and Seventeen Cents (\$95,568.17).

The proper Board officials are hereby authorized to execute all documents necessary to effectuate an agreement with Washington Professional Systems located at 109 Gaither Drive, Mt. Laurel Township, NJ 08054, which is an approved vendor for Audio Visual Equipment, at a cost not to exceed Ninety-Five Thousand Five Hundred and Sixty-Eight Dollars and Seventeen Cents (\$95,568.17).

Chairman Rhodes requested a motion to adopt Resolution 204-2023.

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

As Ms. Hentisz reported last month, the discontinuation of maximum SNAP allotments takes effect March 1, 2023. At the beginning of the pandemic, all SNAP recipients were issued the maximum allotment of SNAP benefits for their household. DFD has disseminated notices to clients alerting of the upcoming change. There is no recourse for clients to request a fair hearing due to this change. DFD is requesting county welfare agencies to review client's cases for accuracy to ensure the original SNAP allotment is correct. The Agency has also informed county and local elective officials. Ms. Hentisz stated the Agency is prepping for the influx of calls from clients regarding the decrease in SNAP benefits.

Ms. Hentisz informed the Board that due to the recent signing of a legislative bill; the SNAP minimum has increased to \$95.

Next, Ms. Hentisz reported of another scam that has been affecting our clients throughout the state. Some clients have unfortunately experienced a phishing scam where they receive a call from what appears to be a DFD representative and are being asked to provide their EBT card information and/or PIN. Ms. Hentisz stated that DFD and county welfare agencies want to assure all clients that no one will contact them to retrieve their EBT card information. Clients should not release this information to no one. DFD has informed that the procedures and guidance to replace stolen benefits from the skimming scam, will now also include instructions and guidance to replace benefits affected by the phishing scam. The regulations to replace both benefits have not been released at this time.

Ms. Hentisz informed the Board that DFD has rescheduled the in-person quarterly directors meeting to be held in March at the Mercer County College. Ms. Hentisz stated that she is looking forward to meeting in person again with the other 20 welfare agency directors and DFD staff.

Ms. Hentisz stated that there have been a few updates to the waiver extensions issued by DFD. The first waiver extension is the non-requirement for an interview for SNAP recipients. This provision has been extended for 12-months. Clients are still able to simply submit their recertification in the mail, without an interview with a case worker. DFD is also looking into an indefinite extension on the ability to accept telephonic signatures for all DFD programs. Due to the public health emergency ending in May of 2023, the flexibility of college student SNAP eligibility will be ending in May 2023 as well.

Lastly, Ms. Hentisz provided an update regarding the P-EBT benefits. DFD has received approval for P-EBT benefits for the 2022-2023 school year. P-EBT benefits will be issued retroactively from September 2022 through current.

Next, Ms. Hentisz provided updates from DMAHS.

Ms. Hentisz stated since the start of the pandemic, Medicaid redeterminations were not permitted to be closed. This directive was linked to the federal public health emergency, which differs from the state's public health emergency. Beginning on April 1st, the directive for non-closure of Medicaid cases and/or redeterminations will end. Ms. Hentisz stated fortunately the Agency's Medicaid department has continued to process redeterminations throughout the pandemic, so our clients are already in the habit of submitting documents for their redetermination applications.

DMAHS is looking to do a data match utilizing SNAP recipients' current information to complete their Medicaid redeterminations. This process would hopefully decrease the number of redeterminations that the welfare agency would need to complete.

OPEN SESSION**DIRECTOR'S REPORT (cont.).....Christine Hentisz, Director**

Ms. Hentisz informed the Board that the move to the Agency's new satellite office will occur this weekend. Fortunately, the new location of 525 Market Street in Camden is a very short distance from our original location at 600 Market Street. Ms. Hentisz went on to say, Deputy Director, Ivory Marrero, has been working closely along with County staff to ensure the transition is as smooth as possible.

Lastly, Ms. Hentisz stated the CWDA (County Welfare Directors Association) continues to have discussions regarding staffing concerns throughout the welfare agencies. Ms. Hentisz stated although there has been some improvement with the Civil Service Commission (CSC), there are still a few challenges with the hiring process and eligibility lists. Recently, the Agency certified a new hire class for 20 people, and only received 5 responses.

Mr. Kendall inquired why is there a delay in hiring from Civil Service lists? Ms. Hentisz replied there is a backlog due to the pandemic and the inability to schedule test sites. However, the general workforce is changing, whereas most job seekers want to work-from-home. Currently, New Jersey welfare agencies do not have a work-from-home or hybrid work schedule in place. There are discussions between CWDA, DFD, and CSC on what can be done to meet the demand of the current workforce.

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. 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 January 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 January 2023 as presented in the packet.

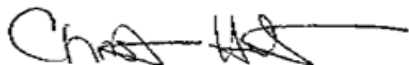
Mr. Camacho moved to accept. Ms. DeVera seconded the motion and there being no discussion on the motion, a vote was taken, and the Report was unanimously accepted.

OLD BUSINESS

There was none.

NEW BUSINESS

Chairman Rhodes requested a motion to grant the three discretionary leave requests as were presented in Closed Session. Mr. Camacho moved to approve the requests. Mr. Kendall seconded the motion and there being no discussion on the motion, a vote was taken, and the motion was unanimously adopted.



Clerk