

July 13, 2016

The regular meeting of the Camden County Board of Social Services was held on Wednesday, July 13, 2016 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:

Susan Michielli, Vice Chair; Dr. Leonard Krivy, PhD, Secretary/Treasurer; Gwen DeVera; Ginny Betteridge

Also present were: Shawn Sheekey, Director; Christine Hentisz, Deputy Director; Martin F. McKernan Jr., Esquire, Board Counsel; Sharon Faber, Esquire; MaryEllen Sittner, Personnel Officer; Greg Smith, Sr. Management Assistant; Sharon Hall, Sr. Management Assistant

Public Attendance: George Jackson, President, CWA-Local 1084; Gerald Baker, Vice President, CWA-Local 1084; Renita Singleton, Darnell Hardee, Allegra Reed

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 May Board Meeting.
- The listed expenditures from both Clearing and Administration Accounts.
- The payment of salaries and traveling expenses for June and July.
- Requisition from the County Treasurer for administration expenses for July and August.
- To move funds, to be requisitioned from the State and County Treasurers less monies on hand for assistance payments for the months of July and August.

Mr. Rhodes requested a motion to approve.

Ms. Michielli moved to approve. Dr. Krivy seconded the motion, and there being no discussion on the motion, a vote was taken and the motion was adopted.

**OPEN SESSION  
Public Participation**

Mr. Rhodes requested a motion to open the meeting for public participation. Ms. Michielli moved to open the Public Participation portion of the Open Session, seconded by Dr. Krivy.

Mr. Jackson addressed the Board voicing concerns he had regarding the clerical hiring process over the last two and one half years. Mr. Rhodes advised that matters of a personnel are not typically discussed in an open public meeting and that he would discuss Mr. Jackson’s concerns with the appropriate County people.

Mr. Rhodes asked if there were any additional members of the public wishing to address the Board. Seeing as there was no one additional, 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 of the meeting. 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 ..... Shawn Sheekey, Director**

Mr. Sheekey 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, Mr. Sheekey stated that he or his staff would be happy to comment on them.

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

Ms. Michielli 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.

**DIRECTOR’S REPORT..... Shawn Sheekey, Director**

Mr. Sheekey stated that at last month’s DFD meeting one of the topics of the meeting was the enhanced funding through Medicaid. Although the commitment for the enhanced funding was received and it put CWAs in a better fiscal position, there was still approval being waited upon for some retroactive funding from a portion of 2011. That approval has been received and there will be approximately \$30 million dollars in additional enhanced Medicaid funding will be going out to the counties. For the CCBSS that equates to less than \$2 million dollars. It helps to put the agency in a stable fiscal position. One of the other items that came out of the meeting which will pay dividends in the end is that the State is trying to roll out an asset verification system. This will help with the five year look back on Aged, Blind and Disabled cases. When someone comes into the agency to apply for this program, they are requested to supply five years of financial information. This requires going to the bank and obtaining copies of financial records which can be cumbersome, time consuming, and costly as many of the applicants are elderly and the family members are trying to obtain the required financial documents. The State’s asset verification system will allow CWAs to tap into approximately 97% of the top financial institutions and obtain these records electronically. The rollout of the system is targeted for next month. Mr. Sheekey stated he would provide an update to the members of the Board. Mr. Sheekey stated that there was nothing to report from the County Welfare Directors’ Association (CWDA) meeting.

**OPEN SESSION  
Public Participation**

Mr. Sheekey provided an update regarding the agency's move to a generic workforce stating that he had met with Mr. Jackson and Mr. Baker yesterday and the one continuing problem with the transition is the case bank and the mail that has been and continues to pile up in the agency. Too much time is still being spent on trying to locate client files. It is a monumental waste of time. At the last generic meeting, Ms. Marcy Bennett, Processing Department administrator, stated she would like to try a pilot of dimming cases so that the information is in the system. This led to a larger discussion that efforts to clean up the mail and the files, the agency really needs to begin thinking about digitizing. The move to a new building in two years is also a reason to seriously being digitizing files and paper work so that thousands of files don't need to be moved. Mr. Sheekey stated that some overtime and other steps will be taken in order to get the overwhelming amount of paper product and case files. Ms. Hentisz is scheduled for a meeting with the case bank next week as it is believed that some staff are not being utilized properly. This initiative will take several months of a concentrated effort to deal with this big issue which is crippling the agency and making clients having to keep coming back to supply multiple copies of their paper work.

Mr. Sheekey stated that partner's meetings have been conducted for the better part of a year and a half. Yesterday a meeting was hosted with the Mental Health Association of Southwestern Jersey, Northbrook (the old Lakeland Hospital), they have a mental health division, in an effort to keep the lines of communication open because they have a lot of issues when they deal with the agency's housing department. Freeholder Rodriguez had requested to continue these conversations. The attending group was very appreciative when they left because the first time in a long time the lines of communications are being open and there is discussion, which is bring down some of the rancor and anger as the partner groups are seeing that some of their issues are being addressed. In February, a partners meeting was held at the college in which over 120 people participated. Mr. Sheekey stated that there are plans to do this again in October in order to talk about the changes that have taken place at the Board and that they agency is a work in progress. Mr. Sheekey stated that Camden has come a long way when compared to other agencies in terms of the dramatic changes the staff has helped to bring about.

Mr. Sheekey stated that there is a lot of misunderstanding when people don't know the rules. People don't understand when they get denied for housing. A lot of people don't understand that the agency does temporary housing placements and is not a permanent housing agency. What unfortunately has happened is that because there is a lack of affordable housing, people put in temporary placements have had those placements rolled over from year to year to year. The State has condoned these pilots so you have someone who has been housed by this agency and other counties for four or five years and so it then looks like we are a housing agency because the person has come to the agency and they were always housed. The State is trying to undo that perception. This is where the Department of Community Affairs needs to come in and meetings need to be held with other homeless groups in the county. The ultimate problem is not being solved, a band aid is only being put on a solution when the problem is lack of an affordable housing for lower income people.

Mr. Sheekey stated that FNS and the State have asked Camden to be one of three counties in New Jersey to participate in a collaborative which Mr. Sheekey thinks puts the agency on a better footing to be one of the leading counties of the State.

**OPEN SESSION  
Public Participation**

Ms. Hentisz stated that Camden, Essex, and Atlantic Counties are the three counties selected to do a national collaborative to improve food stamps at a national level. The three states involved are New Jersey, North Carolina, and California. Each state got to pick three counties. All three of these states are county administered states. The counties are the ones that issue the food stamps. Although they are state programs they are county administered. This will be approximately an eighteen month long process of speaking to other states and other counties on best practices and how to improve the programs; what works in New Jersey, what works in California. Touching on all aspects of the program, new applications, recertifications, interim reporting, verifications, and things like that. Each county was able to pick up to four staff members to be on what has been touted as the 'travel team' to travel to these other states and these other counties to discuss with the FNS and state people of other counties and have three days conferences on how to make improvements. Ms. Hentisz stated that the Camden County team will consist of her, one of the supervisors of the case bank, Angela Beebe; one of the agency's processors, Arcadio Alvarado; and one of the agency's trainers, Cheryl Behnett-Ali. When the group comes here to look at our agency's processes, we can have as many people as we like included in those discussions. Since FNS is paying for all of the travel involved, they are limiting all of the agencies involved to four people for the travel teams.

Mr. Rhodes requested a motion to approve the Director's Report.

Ms. Michielli moved to approve. Dr. Krivy seconded the motion and there being no discussion on the motion, a vote was taken and the motion was unanimously adopted.

**FISCAL REPORT..... Shawn Sheekey, Director**

Mr. Sheekey stated that each Board member has received copies of Fiscal Reports in their packet for the months of May and June 2016. Mr. Sheekey stated that receipts exceeded disbursements and the agency is in pretty good financial shape. If anyone had any questions he would be happy to have them addressed.

Mr. Rhodes requested a motion to accept the Fiscal Report for May 2016 as presented in the packet.

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.

Mr. Rhodes requested a motion to accept the Fiscal Report for June 2016 as presented in the packet.

Ms. Michielli moved to approve. Ms. Betteridge 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**

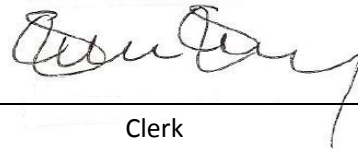
**OLD BUSINESS PUBLIC SESSION**

There was none.

**NEW BUSINESS PUBLIC SESSION**

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 adopted.



Clerk