

May 16, 2012

The regular meeting of the Camden County Board of Social Services was held on Wednesday, May 16, 2012 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; Stephen Sykes, Deputy Director; Martin F. McKernan Jr., Esquire, Board Counsel; Frank DeMonsi, Esquire; MaryEllen Sittner, Personnel Officer; Mary Ann Pagano, Fiscal Officer; Greg Smith, Sr. Systems Analyst; Joan Quinton, Confidential Aide to Freeholder Carmen G. Rodriguez; Sharon Hall, Administrative Clerk

Public Attendance: George Jackson, President, CWA-Local 1084; Cheryl Behnett-Ali, Vice President, CWA-Local 1084; Michelle Byrd, Secretary, CWA-Local 1084; Renita Singleton, Chief Shop Steward, CWA-Local 1084; Peter Mason, Financial Secretary, CWA-Local 1084; Juanya Hines, Shemilahia Diaz, John Kline, Carol Ritchards, Anita Tucker, Lucille Wakefield-Moore, John Worley, Tim O'Neill, and Brenda Horsey a foster parent for Crossroads program

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 place 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.
- To move 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.

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

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Public Participation**

Mr. Rhodes requested a motion to open the meeting for public participation. Ms. Michielli moved to open, seconded by Dr. Krivy.

Mr. George Jackson, President of CWA-Local 1084 addressed the Board regarding an incident of a client brandishing a concealed gun to a worker last week. As most people are aware, Camden has been cited by the media as being the second most dangerous city in the United States of America. Mr. Jackson stated that concealed weapons such as knives have been brought into the agency in the past and most likely on a regular basis. This issue has been addressed in the past and approval was given for metal detectors but that there would need to be some reconfiguration of the lobby and then nothing ever happened. Mr. Jackson stated that with this latest incident it is felt that it is past time for action at which time the worker affected by the incident addressed the Board and provided details concerning her experience of having a client at her work area and exposing the concealed gun to her. The worker stated that the client voiced to her that, "anyone can come into the building with any weapon that they like". The worker stated that the client then proceeded to lift his shirt showing that he had a gun in his waistband. The worker stated that she was very alarmed and she wants the agency to have metal detectors. The client she saw prior to the one with the gun was very upset and was screaming and cursing at her and if that previous client was the one with the gun what could have happened? The worker stated she did not know what to do with the client who had the gun other than proceed with the interview and wish him a good day because she didn't want to think of making him angry and him possibly pull the gun out and start shooting. There is something that the agency needs to do about that.

Mr. Jackson stated having metal detectors would be a deterrent right there just as in City Hall. He doesn't know of any other public agency around that a person can walk right in without metal detectors. Mr. Jackson stated that he is aware of a reassessment of the security but today when he stood in the lobby for a few minutes he noticed was that the CCBSS lobby is just free for all. The first thing usually seen when someone walks into a public agency is that there is some sort of agency representation or security. Mr. Jackson stated that that is not the case in the CCBSS lobby and he hopes that is changed immediately. At the least to have some type of security present when people first walk into the door of the agency as well as someone to help provide client information and direction. Mr. Jackson stated the bottom line is that all this needs to be tackled immediately as the last thing everyone wants is for something tragic to happen. Mr. Jackson passed out red pens with the statement and reminder that red is a representation of blood and no one wants that to be shed due to a lack of metal detectors.

Mr. John Kline stated that his son comes into the building approximately four times a year for lunch. He stated that his son comes armed as he is a cop. His firearm is visible and he has never been challenged once in the six years that Mr. Kline has been employed with the agency.

Mr. Tim O'Neill, Supervising Clerk in the Food Stamp Department, distributed and provided an oral narrative to the members of the Board highlighting the need for a safe and healthy workplace per PEOSHA for public workers and that the CCBSS and County of Camden are more concerned with the enforcement of, in his opinion, petty policies and are more of a priority than the health and safety of their employees. Mr. O'Neill stated that fortunately the worker kept her head in regard to the episode that occurred last week and the client left peacefully and the worker is safe. Mr. O'Neill states in his narrative that the situation could have been and would have been prevented if a metal detector had been installed in the County Administration Building as was promised over two decades ago and as recently as five years ago.

Mr. Rhodes stated that he agrees that this is a serious matter and the administration has changed security companies very recently with Camden County College an assessment is being conducted and it has been asked to be expedited. Measures to be considered could include a possible detector and wands. And, there will be forward movement based on recommendations from the security professionals once obtained. There will need to be discussions with the union's in terms of

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work flow as well as with Building and Operations as to how to accomplish this. Mr. Rhodes stated that this is a serious matter and it will be dealt with accordingly.

Mr. Jackson added that even if the agency had a thousand guards, human eyes do not have x-ray vision; therefore, metal detectors deter that immediately. Mr. John Worley stated that this is one instance that is known of because the client was brazen enough to show his weapon whereas most people who come in here are not. Metal detectors will act as a deterrent as people who are concealing a weapon would not likely bring it in due to the threat of outstanding warrants. Anything could happen when people are in a captured area.

Ms. Wakefield-Moore stated that she was a victim five or six years ago and she was really hurt and back then she had asked that metal detectors be placed in the agency. She stated that the worker was very lucky because if that client had been irate and pulled the gun and shot her, her baby would be without a mother and her life would have been gone. Workers are really being put in a bad situation as there are a lot of irate clients that come in here and that the law is looking for.

Mr. Peter Mason stated that the agency is a type of perfect storm because there are also people with mental health issues that come here and doesn't feel that time needs to be wasted on studying and analyzing the matter.

Mr. Rhodes stated that the study is not a delay and he was not implying such. He takes this as a serious matter and it is important to get it right. To do that security professionals need to be relied upon to advise and get it right.

Mr. Sheekey stated that he had spoken to Ed Carney who is the new Director of Security and responsible for the County security measures and told him that something needs to be done immediately. Mr. Sheekey stated that there have been many ongoing issues including access to the building after closure, poor lighting in the stairwells and other building and security concerns that he is committed to addressing.

Ms. Brenda Horsey, a foster parent for the Crossroads Second Chance program - a program that assists teenagers with babies - addressed the members of the Board regarding issues in obtaining benefits. She has had to come to the agency, in one instance, for nine days straight. No one seems to know what the Crossroads program is and she did not get paid for four months straight. These teenage parents are coming into her home as a last stop before going out on their own. She helps teach them how to cook, clean and care for their babies. The teenagers come with no diapers, no food for their babies, nothing. She also works part-time and has had family members provide her with food to help. She stated she calls the agency constantly and doesn't get any calls back as well as discourteous service. The teenagers are supposed to get assistance through the agency. Their families won't help them and that is why they are with her. Problems are particularly in the TANF program.

Ms. Cheryl Behnett-Ali stated that the problems seem to be training related and suggested retraining the Intake Department staff on the Crossroads program. Mr. Sheekey requested that Ms. Horsey obtain one of his business cards from Ms. Hillenbrand of his staff and contact him should she experience problems in the future.

Mr. Rhodes requested a motion to close the public participation portion of the Open Session.

Dr. Krivy moved to close the public participation 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.

**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

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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 State and Federal Policies.

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.

Resolution 211-2012 – Shared Services Agreement with Camden County College for Security Services ..... **Frank DeMonsi, Esquire**

Resolution 211-2012 provides for a Shared Services Agreement between Camden County College and the Camden County Board of Social services under the Uniform Shared Services and Consolidation Act for the provision of security services by the College’s Office of Public Safety to maintain public safety and security at the BOSS’s principal business, 600 Market Street, Camden, New Jersey 08102. The term of agreement shall be for a one-year period commencing on or about May 1, 2012 and terminating April 30, 2012, with a two one-year options to renew.

Mr. Rhodes requested a motion to approve Resolution 211-2012.

Ms. Betteridge moved to approve. Ms. Michielli 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 he had nothing new to report from the Division of Family Development and County Welfare Directors’ Association meetings held in May as most discussions related to housecleaning items.

Mr. Sheekey did mention that he and his other 20 CWDA (County Welfare Director’s Association) colleagues were in discussion regarding having a representative from the New Jersey Association of Counties (NJAC) assist with addressing issues at the state level, as this is an organization that operates to the benefit of all of the Counties. By way of example, in the case of Adult Protective Services, funding levels have not changed for years and now the County has to bear the increased costs. His assistance was asked for not only keeping the CWA directors apprised of some of the more important issues that affect county welfare agencies but county budgets in general. Mr. Sheekey stated that the CWDA wants to build a relationship with the NJAC.

Mr. Sheekey provided the Board members with a security initiative update. The agency is now about a week and a half underway with new security and there is a lot of good feedback on how the security is being rotated throughout the building and the professionalism of the public safety officials. One concern with the rotation is there are periods of time when the front desk is not manned. Mr. Sheekey stated that he will address this with Mr. Ed Carney as he feels that visible deterrent is important. At this time there is not a Customer Service Representative at the lobby desk because that worker had to be moved into a critical area. Not having anyone at the Customer Service Desk is not the level of service that the agency wants and Mr. Sheekey stated he hopes to have the vacancy at the Customer Service Desk filled in the near future.

As mentioned in previous meetings, Mr. Sheekey stated that the volume of customers in the Food Stamp Department have steadily risen causing severe crowding in the Food Stamp waiting area. This area has begun to be upgraded as an investment back into the building. Staff from the Sanctions Unit has been moved upstairs and the wall to that area removed

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To enlarge the waiting area to nearly double its original size thereby allowing a more comfortable and less cramped waiting area for customers. Other reception areas throughout the agency will be updated and uniform signage will be developed and posted in all reception areas for better direction of customers throughout the building.

Mr. Sheekey informed the Board members that the Red Cross Good Neighbors' Award Dinner was moved to Thursday, June 14, 2012 at 6:00 p.m., Tavistock.

Mr. Sheekey mentioned that he is on the Board of Trustees at the WIB and that their annual meeting will be held on Wednesday, June 27, 2012 at 10:00 a.m. at the Cherry Hill Hilton.

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

Ms. Betteridge 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.

**DEPUTY DIRECTOR'S REPORT ..... Stephen Sykes, Deputy Director**

Mr. Sykes stated that the business process analysis initiative continues in order to find efficiencies in the agency where resources may be reallocated or be put to better use. That includes staff. The written report is almost complete.

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

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.

**FISCAL REPORT ..... Mary Ann Pagano, Fiscal Officer**

Ms. Pagano stated that each Board member has received in his or her packet copies of Fiscal Reports. Ms. Pagano mentioned that the expenditures are still in line with the pro-rated budget. If there were any questions, she commented that she would be happy to address them.

Mr. Rhodes mentioned that the County had introduced its budget last night and some relief was received for the BOSS.

Mr. Rhodes requested a motion to accept the Fiscal Report as presented.

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.

**OLD BUSINESS PUBLIC SESSION**

There was none.

**NEW BUSINESS PUBLIC SESSION**

There was none.

Mr. Rhodes requested a motion to close the Open Session and move to the Closed Executive Session to discuss personnel and legal matters. Dr. Krivy moved to discuss such matters in closed session. Ms. Betteridge seconded the motion, and there being no discussion on the motion a vote was taken and the motion was unanimously adopted.

  
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Clerk