

## **Board Minutes**

**January 24, 2012**

The regular meeting of the Board of the St. Mary's County Department of Social Services was held on January 24, 2012. Board members in attendance were: Richard Buckler, Chairperson; George Ennis, Ella Somerville, James Farrell, Susie Fowler. Also present were Ella May Russell and Thomas Haina, Assistant Director for Quality Assurance. Absent: Lynn Fitrell, Carol Ann Pingleton, Leisha Wood, Cynthia Brown.

### **Minutes**

The minutes for December 6, 2011 meeting were approved with correction to Ms. Fowler's name.

### **Education Session:**

The educational session was conducted by Thomas Haina, Assistant Director for Quality Assurance. Mr. Haina reported on the following topics:

- Maryland Charity Campaign. The agency exceeded its' goal by raising over \$18,000.
- Point in Time Survey- A real time count of the homeless population in the region, once a year a survey is conducted to track the number of homeless. The staff is made aware of the survey; every customer who comes into the agency on the particular day that the survey is taking place who proclaims that they are homeless will fill out the form. A count is also conduct every year on the number of housing shelters, emergency shelters, transitional housing, safe havens, etc. A count of unsheltered housing is also required (place unfit for human habitation) cars, etc. Each county's homeless board will come up with a plan of how they will count unsheltered housing along with the Point in Time Survey. Shelter providers have to turn into HUD a housing inventory list, matching the number of people with the number of beds they have available.
- PQI-- PQI efforts that are going on within the agency, several committees have been established to help. Communications committee will be updating the resource guide; the guide has not been updated in several years, the agency web page, "S" drive. The Staff Involvement Committee, resolves training issues, such as training requirements, which staff member needs required training, orientation programs for new staff, when does a particular training need to occur and how often. Performance Committee is working to put together an annual report which monitors performance standards.
- DHR is developing a new CPI process which is similar to the one that was completed about 3 years ago. This is a self assessment based on measures. A team will come to the agency, do an overview and interview staff, stake holders, and customers and develop an improvement plan based on strengths they identify and any areas that need improvement. This will happen in the fiscal year 2013.
- DHR is also working on an Accountability Framework, this will be based on how much do we do and how often do we do it from the work that we've done. We will have to look at what they call "the story behind the curve," the way things are

trending (up, down) areas of improvement, partners that are involved in the efforts and come up with an action plan to turn the curve in the right direction.

- Dragon Speak-voice recognition software that will be used by the child welfare case workers. Staff will be able to dictate the case notes (what they normally type) and the software will auto populate into CHESSIE. Staff will have to speak clearly and enunciate each word. Training will begin in mid March and should be up and running by April or May.

### **Chairperson's Report:**

Legislative Sessions scheduled for 1/21/2012 were postponed to 1/28/2012/

### **Director's Reports**

Last three weeks both offices have been very busy with customers, the actual numbers have not been pulled yet.

#### Personnel

New Foster Cares Supervisor, Keisha Atlee has started, still in training.

R.C.'s in welfare to work program had contract with Housing Authority. The contracts with the Housing Authority will not be renewed. The four R.C.'s will now be contract employees with DSS.

Kathy Shurgalla will be retiring at the end of May.

The agency is in the process of hiring new staff, a child support worker, and social worker and Team Leader for L.P.

Ms. Somerville has been helping bring the work participation rate up where it needs to be and working with staff. She has been a big help.

#### Domestic Violence

Mrs. Russell met with Kathie Raley to discuss the increase in domestic violence cases and post traumatic syndrome. The agency is currently trying to make sure that services are in place for people and to help them get the services they need.

#### Emergency Assistance to Families with Children (EAFC)

Emergency Assistance request have been extremely high recently. Adjustments have been made to the customer requirements. There is no additional money at the state level; funds have been cut by 30% for the year. Baltimore City is out of EA funds.

#### Women's Network Advisory (WAN)

Congressman Hoyer has a committee comprised of women in Southern Maryland. They have been looking at women and poverty. There is a meeting with the Congressman on February 23.

A video will be put together of the women of each county regarding what their issues are, what has happened to them, what their needs are, and what resources are needed.

**New Business**

Meeting adjourned at 6:15 PM.

The next meeting will be on February 28, 2012.