

Board Minutes

June 28, 2011

The regular meeting of the Board of the St. Mary's County Department of Social Services was held on June 28, 2011. Board members in attendance were: Richard Buckler, Chairperson; Leisha Wood, Vice Chairperson; Lynn Fitrell, Susie Fowler, James Farrell, George Ennis, Clair Kollar. Also present were Ella May Russell. Absent: Cynthia Brown, Ella Somerville.

Minutes

The minutes from the March 22, 2011 meeting were approved.

Education Session: No Education Session

Chairperson's Report: No Report

Election of Officers

Clair Kollar, Nomination Committee Chair, reported two nominations—Richard Buckler, Chairperson; Leisha Wood, Vice Chairperson. Mr. Buckler and Ms. Wood both accepted the nominations.

Nominations were open to the floor. There were no nominations.

Mr. Farrell moved to accept the slate of officers as presented. Ms. Fitrell seconded the motion. Motion unanimously passed.

Director's Report

Appointment of Secretary of Department of Human Resources (DHR)

Governor O'Malley appointed Theodore Dallas as Secretary of the Department of Human Services. Mr. Dallas was previously the Director for Public Welfare in Pennsylvania. In Pennsylvania Family Investment is separated from Child Welfare.

Secretary Dallas is in the process of hiring a Deputy Secretary, Executive Director for Child Support and Executive Director for Family Investment.

Secretary Dallas attends the monthly Director's meeting.

Legislative Meeting

Ms. Russell attended the Legislative meeting in Annapolis on June 23, 2011. The State is in a deficient which means more funding cuts and positions abolished. At this time do not know the effect it will have on DHR. DHR has stopped all in-state and out of state travel for conferences.

Legislative analyst's are requiring more reports.

Services

For the past eight months the agency has been reorganizing Child Welfare to make use of staff that are here. Hilary Laskey, Team Leader for Leonardtown, is also managing Foster Care. Tammy Loewe was previously the Foster Care Program Specialist has moved to the Child Protective Services Program Specialist. This is a position that is very difficult to recruit for. Alice McCreight, Family Services Program Specialist, will also manage Services Intake staff.

Six new works have been hired in Child Welfare. They will require six to eight weeks of training and must pass the Maryland Competency Test before they can work.

Four Child Welfare staff are in the Catholic University Masters Social Work program and have been placed in other positions for their Internship placements. One worker is placed outside of the agency the other three were placed in Child Protective Services, Family Services, Foster Care.

Child Protective Services Ruling

Sandra Barnes, Attorney General for DHR, challenged a ruling by an Administrative Law Judge that St. Mary's County DSS had no jurisdiction to investigate a child abuse incident that happened in St. Mary's County due to the fact that both the victim and perpetrator lived outside of Maryland.

The case was heard in the Court of Appeals and the Administrative Law Judge ruling was overturned. This is especially important for counties such as Wicomico and Worcester that have an increase in Child Protective Service reports with an influx of vacationers.

Personnel

Kevin Corrigan will return to the agency as Assistant Director for Program Planning and Oversight. Kevin was previously with the agency as the Child Support Program Specialist. He will be overseeing Program 10, audits, and Child Support program.

Michelle Armsworthy, Child Support Program Specialist, left for Calvert County. The agency is presently recruiting for the position.

The Assistant Director for Family Investment position has been offered to Joanne McDonald. Ms. McDonald will be starting July 8, 2011.

Presently have two Child Welfare vacancies.

Ella Somerville, former Assistant Director for Family Investment (FI), has come back to work in the agency two to three days a week to work with FI staff.

Summer Youth Employment Program

The agency has placed four youth whose families receive Temporary Cash Assistance (TCA) in subsidized job placements for the summer. These placements are at the Lexington Park and Charlotte Hall libraries.

Maryland Leadership Program

The agency has one Foster Care child attending the Maryland Leadership Program at Washington College. Previous attendees showed great growth after completing the program.

Lexington Park Lunch Program

The agency is working with the Lexington Park Elementary School and Lexington Park Library in the Lexington Park Lunch Program. This program serves children up to age 18 by providing lunch and an activity through the summer. Students in Title 1 schools are used to being provided two meals a day, this program helps fill the gap in the summer.

The agency has purchased 100 vouchers for parents of the children to attend and receive lunch also.

Ms. Fowler, Principal for Lexington Park Elementary, reported that they are averaging 40 children per day and most are pre-school or elementary level. She also reported that the school was soliciting books for the free give away. They have received 800-1000 books to date.

New Business

The Board said farewell to Clair Kollar. Ms. Kollar had served on the Board for six years. Two years as Chairperson.

Meeting adjourned at 6:15 PM and moved into Executive Session.

The next meeting will be on September 27, 2011.