

St. Mary's County
Department of Social Services Advisory Board Meeting Minutes
March 27, 2018

The regular meeting of the St. Mary's County Department of Social Services Advisory Board was held Tuesday, March 27, 2018 at 5:30pm in the board room of the Joseph D. Carter building.

Members Present:

Michael Blackwell
Richard Buckler
Lynn Fitrell
Susan Fowler
Annette Wood
Leisha Wood

Members Absent:

Wanda Brown

Also Present:

Therese Wolf, Interim Director

A quorum was established and the meeting was called to order at 5:30pm

Approval of Minutes

A motion was made to approve the February 27, 2018 minutes, second. Motion carries.

Education Session:

There is no education session.

Chair Report:

Three bills have been sent to Legislation there is no word yet as to whether or not they have passed. The bills include children previously in foster care who were adopted and a tuition waiver for children previously in foster care. The legislative session started out looking as though it would be big but in fact was not.

The county commissioners have completed the budget which will include a 2% increase for school employees. There will be a public meeting April 17th at Great Mills High School.

Director's Report:

HR Report presented – February and March data

Family Investment lost 5 employees, 3 new employees were hired.

There are currently 21 vacancies

The agency has received 2 resignations this month. Salary continues to be an issue regarding retaining staff. One staff has resigned to accept a position with a contractor. A counter offer has been presented to retain the staff member. There has been no answer yet as to an approval regarding the offer from DHS.

Five (5) services staff have been hired and 3 internal moves.

There is one pending termination of an employee currently on probationary status.

Stacy Haynes, Human Resources Manager, has been dealing with complicated HR issues; DHS is supporting her during the learning process.

Great Mills High School Reunification

There is an expectation that each local DSS have a plan regarding the process of unifying family during an event. There are some counties that do not have a reunification plan. There is one designated person to be contacted by the Emergency Operations Center. Kevin Corrigan is the designated employee for St. Mary's DSS, secondary contact is Alexis Zoss. There is a designated group of social workers assigned to assist. The team sent to the Forrest Technology Center consisted of social workers, supervisors, Assistant Directors and family investment staff. DSS's role is second to the Health Department. During the reunification event, DSS staff were assigned specific duties to include logging people in who were arriving, showing students and parents to the waiting areas and assisting in the rooms where students were awaiting parents. DSS staff stated there was confusion due to the nature of the situation. Staff also suggested that the agency improve in-house communication, meaning that a plan needs to be in place with remaining staff so that the agency can continue to operate. Staff suggested that there be an area in the agency for de-briefing. It was suggested that during such an event, those assisting could be easily identified by wearing an object such as a colored vest or badge. On the Thursday following the event, DSS arranged for an on-site therapist to speak with staff. The EOC will be hosting a de-brief session.

In 2011, DHS conducted a safety audit of both the Leonardtown and Lexington Park offices. There was no follow up stating any concerns at that time. Director Wolf has requested a current safety audit which could possibly be conducted in the coming week. The security audit/review will be shared with the board upon completion.

Director Wolf has requested a new IT position, justified by the needs of the agency. There is no answer yet to the request.

It has been requested by Director Wolf that the agency attorney, Dan Armitage, begin to have a more active role. Dan is currently involved with child and adult guardianship cases, attending court on a regular basis representing the agency. Staff should be involving the attorney regarding all matters requiring a legal perspective.

Supervisors are required to update all staff MS-22 job descriptions. They should first come to the Director for review / approval. The due date is April 17th. The Director will complete the review by the end of May. There will be a discussion during the April all-staff meeting regarding MS-22's and Performance Evaluations (PEP). Staff should have an understanding of the internal process.

New Business

Director Wolf requested the Board advise her of topics they would like to discuss at future meetings. Rose Frederick, Chair, stated that it would be nice to be introduced to Supervisors to know them and get a sense of what their role is at the agency. It is suggested that Dan Armitage attend to speak on his role. Richard Buckler would like the board to receive an update on personnel issues monthly.

Adjourn

- A motion to adjourn. The meeting was adjourned at 6:45pm.

The next meeting will be held Tuesday, April 24, 2017 at 5:30pm in the Board Room of the Joseph D. Carter Building
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