

St. Mary's County  
Department of Social Services Advisory Board Meeting Minutes  
November 21, 2017

The regular meeting of the St. Mary's County Department of Social Services Advisory Board was held Tuesday, November 21, 2017.

Members Present:

Michael Blackwell  
Cynthia Brown  
Wanda Brown  
Richard Buckler  
Rose Frederick, Chair  
Ella Somerville  
Annette Wood  
Leisha Wood

Members Absent:

Lynn Fitrell  
Susan Fowler

Also Present:

Therese Wolf, Interim Director  
Kevin Corrigan, Assistant Director for Child Support and Program Oversight  
Lisa Ford, Assistant Director for Services  
Alexis Zoss, Assistant Director for Quality Assurance

A quorum was established and the meeting was called to order at 5:05pm

Approval of Minutes

A motion was made by Richard Buckler to approve the October 24, 2017 minutes, second by Wanda Brown. Motion carries.

Education Session:

There is no education session placed on the agenda.

Chair Report:

Chair reports the retirement of Director Ella May Russell and introduces the acting Interim Director Therese A. Wolf, M.A. Ms. Wolf is currently the Director of Charles County Department of Social Services where she has been for four (4) years. Chair asks Ms. Wolf to give a brief background to the board in which she explains her 35 year background in Child Welfare and Social Services. Board members are asked to introduce themselves to the Interim Director. Chair asks each of the assistant directors to give a brief explanation of their duties.

Chair reports that Ms. Wolf will be providing support to each of the assistant director's in the interim of a new director being appointed.

Wanda Brown brings to the boards attention the involvement of the previous director within the community as well as on committees and boards and her concerns for how this will be handled. Richard Buckler states the importance of relationships with DSS and community partners and questions whether or not a connection has been made with Ella May Russell to discuss her thoughts on assignments. Ms. Wolf comments that the assistant directors will be consuming some of the duties with the goal of them becoming engaged within the county.

Director's Report:

Interim Director Therese Wolf reports that she is currently working with the assistant directors to shift positions previously under the supervision of the director to report directly to the AD's. Ms. Wolf reports the current PIN reconciliation process of filling vacant positions. She will be in contact with DHS / HRDT directly to provide support with hiring due to the number of vacant positions. Ms. Wolf intends to

reach out to other local DSS offices to possibly "lend" workers. Re-allocation of staff is a possibility. The Chair questioned as to whether or not it is possible to do a college tour for upcoming graduates as well as the possibility of tele-working, casual days and an insight to exit interviews noting that there are some things the agency can control pertaining to hiring and some things it cannot. The board questioned incentives for new employees stating the agency cannot work to State level expectations without the required number of qualified staff. Mr. Blackwell thanked Ms. Wolf for her bringing a sense of stability during a time of transition. Chair stated hiring is a high priority and she intends to speak with the County on the subject.

Ms. Wolf has met with Dawn Dent, Finance Officer to review the current budget and will work with AD's to monitor spending stating they, the assistant directors, will have an important role in the request of funding for the upcoming year. Chair asked that the board be briefed on the budget at the next advisory board meeting.

#### New Business

The board discussed the hiring process for a new Director. Chair states the board will be an active part of the decision along with the County Commissioners and DHS Secretary Lourdes Padilla. DHS will advertise the position to conduct a nationwide search. It is estimated that it will be approximately six (6) months before the position is filled. Wanda Brown stated she will research whether or not it is stated in COMAR that the board is to be involved in the decision.

The board has requested the next meeting be held December 21, 2017 rather than December 26, 2017. The board agreed. It is requested that there be an Executive Session during the next meeting. Notification will be sent to the County to state said changes.

#### Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 6:20pm.

The next meeting will be held Tuesday, December 19, 2017 at 5:30pm in the Board Room of the Joseph D. Carter Building  
Generated by N. Sacks