

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

The regular meeting of the St. Mary's County Department of Social Services Advisory Board was held Tuesday, February 27, 2018.

Members Present:

Michael Blackwell
Richard Buckler
Lynn Fitrell
Susan Fowler
Annette Wood
Cynthia Brown

Members Absent:

Rose Frederick
Wanda Brown

Also Present:

Alexis Zoss, Assistant Director for Operations
Stacy Haynes, Human Resources Manager
Jennifer Neff, Adult Services Program Specialist

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

Approval of Minutes

A motion was made to approve the January 23, 2018 minutes, second. Motion carries.

Education Session:

Jennifer Neff, Adult Services Program Specialist spoke to the board regarding the 2016 Paul Hastings Award. DSS won first place for the implementation of the Medical Respite Program and was awarded a prize of \$1000. The Medical Respite Program works in conjunction with MedStar St. Mary's and Three Oaks to assist the homeless who meet criteria when being discharged from MedStar after suffering from an acute illness. The program has received twelve (12) referrals do date in the current fiscal year, five (5) of which have been accepted into the program. The resident not only has to be homeless, have suffered from an acute illness but also cannot be outside of the medical capabilities of the facility. The award money was utilized by providing training to adult services staff for certification in Medical Case Management. Per Rose Frederick, Chair, MASSB Treasurer, the cash award has not been spent as it is still being accounted for. Dawn Dent, Finance Officer, is brought into the meeting to further explain. Mrs. Dent states that the training was paid for out of local county funds and that the award money will be used to reimburse that account. The Board will follow up with Rose Frederick as to the procedure for repayment of county funds.

Michel Blackwell spoke to the board regarding the Opioid epidemic. The Rotary Clubs recently held a panel discussion. There were discussions from across economic lines. The library has hosted an eight part series in conjunction with the Health Department all relating to the Opioid epidemic. Employees of the libraries have been trained to administer Narcan.

Alexis Zoss and Stacy Haynes spoke to the board regarding Human Resources updates.

There have been five resignations (2 Services staff / 3 Family Investment staff) since mid January. There have been three new hires. The current vacancy rate is 10 in the area of Services; 11 in the area of Family Investment. There are 14 Services interviews scheduled and 21 Family Investment interviews scheduled. There is a 25% vacancy rate in both areas. Several staff have resigned due to moving out of the area or have transferred to other State employment.

Michael Blackwell questions whether the vacancy rate poses a challenge to effectively serve customers. Alexis Zoss responds that the vacancy rate does in fact cause some degree of a challenge but the agency is able to meet the needs of our customers. The adjustment of customer service hours has allowed staff to gain a higher level of customer service. The agency plans to survey both the public as well as staff regarding the change in office hours; results will be shared with the board.

Stacy Haynes explains that the hiring process begins in Baltimore; once the position has been approved the agency is able to advertise locally. The hiring of internal employees allows for a higher employee retention rate. Internal movement creates good morale with staff. There is a challenge in getting new employees to work for the agency; distance and housing options pose a concern.

Chair Report:

The Chair is absent from the meeting. Susan Fowler, Vice Chair, states there is no Legislative update at this time.

Director's Report:

In the Interim Director's absence, Alexis Zoss presents the board with agency organizational charts. The charts, taken directly from the Workday system, displays each division with current listings of all agency positions. The board reviews and requests to be updated monthly regarding the hiring status of vacant positions.

New Business

- Interviews for the vacant Director position have been postponed due to the legislative session.
- The board is invited to attend the Social Work event
- Cynthia Brown announces the Commission on Women will hold the annual event on March 15th. Janice Walthour will receive the Lifetime Achievement award.

Adjourn

- A motion to adjourn. The meeting was adjourned at 6:28pm.

The next meeting will be held Tuesday, March 27, 2017 at 5:30pm in the Board Room of the Joseph D. Carter Building

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