



**LINCOLN COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES
BOARD MEETING MINUTES
April 30, 2024**

The regular meeting of the Lincoln County Social Services Board was held on Tuesday, April 30, 2024 at 1:30 p.m. in the Board Room of the Social Services Building. Members present were Chrystal Hoyle, Chairperson; Dr. Sherry Hoyle, Vice Chairperson (via phone conference); Jill Eaddy, and Daphne Ingram. Others in attendance were Matthew Hillman, Director; Kelley Miles, Deputy Director; Ruth Lockman, Business Manager; Mendie Kelly, Children Services Program Manager; Jason Hughes, Placement Services Program Manager; Tiffany Barnette, Medicaid Program Manager; Roni Duckworth, Economic Services Program Manager; Jennifer Sigmon, Adult Services Program Manager; and, Denise Dula, Economic Services Support Supervisor/Designated Clerk to the Social Services Board. In addition, Lauren Whitesides, CPS Supervisor, attended the meeting.

Call to Order-Chrystal Hoyle called the meeting to order at 1:30 p.m.

Invocation-Matthew Hillman gave invocation.

Adoption of the Agenda-Adoption of the Agenda was approved by motion from Dr. Sherry Hoyle, second by Daphne Ingram, with all members in favor.

Public Comment-No public comments were made.

Minutes-Minutes from the March 26, 2024 meeting were approved by motion from Daphne Ingram, second by Jill Eaddy, with all members in favor.

Old Business-Matthew Hillman stated Senate Bill 625 is an act to make various changes to laws affecting juveniles and associated services. This piece of legislation would have significant impact on County Department of Social Services. Since discussed with Board members in October 2023, there has been a shift in language involving removing qualified immunity for government workers which includes DSS Director's, Board members, staff members, etc. The Director's Association is advocating for qualified immunity to remain in Senate Bill 625. Under qualified immunity, government workers can only be held accountable for violating someone's rights if a court has previously ruled that it was "clearly established" those precise actions were unconstitutional. Mr. Hillman noted as more information is received, he will update the Board.

Matthew Hillman expressed a new seven week state pre-service training redesign is being utilized. There has been positive feedback on the training. Participants have reported feeling more ready. Lincoln County has not heard of the training location but anticipating it will be

closer for staff to drive back and forth daily. Another advantage of the new redesign, 4E dollars will be able to be pulled down for reimbursement of training.

New Business-Matthew Hillman noted April is Child Abuse Awareness Month. Mr. Hillman expressed Children Services Program Manager Mendie Kelly would be giving an overview of activities done throughout the month. Ms. Kelly stated emails regarding Child Protective Services have been sent out to all staff members during the month of April. In addition, information was shared on the Lincoln County Government Website and Facebook page. Board members were provided copies of the email handouts. The color blue signifies child abuse awareness. Ms. Kelly explained all DSS staff were encouraged to wear blue on Friday, April 5, 2024. Blue pinwheels have been placed at the entrance of DSS. The blue pinwheel is reflective of the bright future all children deserve and the belief getting it correct early is more beneficial than trying to fix it later. Ms. Kelly gave examples of how to recognize child abuse, who should report child abuse, and a list of what Child Protective Services does daily. Lincoln County Child Protective Services data for 2023 included a total of 1,586 reports received through CPS Intake; 676 reports accepted for investigation/assessment; and, there were 1,847 children reported to be abused and/or neglected.

Next, Mendie Kelly introduced CPS Supervisor Lauren Whitesides. Ms. Whitesides presented a video of a successful case outcome involving a mother and child. The worker associated with the case is In-Home Caseworker Sarah Dodd. The video included Ms. Dodd interviewing the mother and detailing the mother's journey to gain the skills to successfully parent her child. The video was well made and depicted the hard work, emotions, and strategies of Ms. Dodd and the mother during the case. Board members thanked Ms. Whitesides and everyone involved in making this case a success.

Matthew Hillman stated the Recipient Eligibility Determination Audit (REDA) round two-cycle three first sample month is April 2024. The REDA round one-cycle three was done in 2021. Like round one, twenty cases will be pulled for ten months. The cases will include ten approved and ten denied. Lincoln County DSS must achieve 96.8 percent in order to pass the REDA. In preparation of the audit, the Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) team have been reviewing as many cases as possible. The REDA puts enormous stress on all staff members.

In addition, Matthew Hillman expressed a “Dear County Director” letter was received in April 2024 regarding information about future changes to the North Carolina Child Fatality Prevention System. These changes became law via the 2023 Appropriations Act. The Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) is working on steps necessary to implement this legislation. Most of the changes impacting local teams will not go in effect until January or July 2025. Mr. Hillman stated he will email the “Dear County Director” letter to Board members for their review.

Last, Matthew Hillman discussed the Joint Legislative Commission on Governmental Operations. This Commission was established by the General Assembly in 1975. The Commission was tasked with providing legislative review of the State Government's implementation of policies and the expenditure of State funds. With the adoption of the 2023 State Budget (Session Law 2023-134) expansive changes were made to the Commission and its

powers. The Commission's examination, evaluation, and investigative authority now extends to local governments, including all cities, towns, and counties within North Carolina. During the investigation, the Commission can require testimony, access buildings and facilities, and access documents of the county. Hence, any employee of Lincoln County could be contacted by the Commission for information, data, documentation, or testimony related to the investigation being conducted. Mr. Hillman noted steps employees should take if contacted by the Commission. Also during Lincoln County DSS All-Staff Meeting on Monday, April 29, 2024, Lincoln County Attorney Megan Gilbert provided staff members with valuable information regarding Joint Legislative Commission on Governmental Operations.

Budget Reports-Ruth Lockman gave a thorough overview of 3rd Quarter Fiscal Year 2023-2024 projections. Ms. Lockman noted the projected expenses used is 90 percent. This percentage is better than last year. The projected revenue collected is 101 percent. This percentage is due to added upfront Medicaid Expansion funding, underspending of salary line items, etc. Ms. Lockman gave a breakdown of various line items having the most impact due to under/over spending or cognizance of revenues. Ms. Lockman expressed if any Board member has a question regarding a budget line item, to please contact her and she will be glad to explain. Board members thanked Ms. Lockman for the informative presentation.

Statistical Reports- Matthew Hillman noted we continue to reach the standards set forth in the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). When we fall short of meeting the MOU goal, managers put plans in place to achieve the desired outcome. Mr. Hillman stated the Director's Association is discussing the MOU contract and moving away from a two year contract to a one year. This would be greatly beneficial due to policy changes, legislation, etc.

Other-Mr. Hillman stated an email inquiry had been sent to Directors to provide a list of Social Services Board members including mailing addresses, telephone number, email, and term limits. Mr. Hillman expressed he would forward the email to Board members and if there was a preference of email address, telephone number, etc. to use on the inventory form, to please let him know.

Closed Session-No closed session needed.

Date of Next Meeting-May 28, 2024

Motion to adjourn by Jill Eaddy, second by Daphne Ingram, with all members in favor.

This meeting adjourned at 2:15 p.m.

Date Minutes Approved

Chrystal Hoyle, Chairperson

Matthew Hillman, Director

Respectfully Submitted:

Denise S. Dula
Economic Services Support Supervisor;
Designated Clerk to the Social Services Board of Lincoln County DSS
Cc: file copy