



**LINCOLN COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES
BOARD MEETING MINUTES
June 25, 2024**

The regular meeting of the Lincoln County Social Services Board was held on Tuesday, June 25, 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; Jill Eaddy, Daphne Ingram, and Cathy Davis. 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, Meredith Eller, Adult Services Supervisor and Thelma Runyon, Adult Protective Services Supervisor, was in attendance to give an overview of Adult Services.

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

Invocation-Matt Hillman gave an invocation.

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

At this time, Dr. Sherry Hoyle turned the meeting over to Chrystal Hoyle.

Public Comment-No public comments were made.

Minutes-Minutes from the May 28, 2024, meeting was approved by motion from Dr. Sherry Hoyle, second by Daphne Ingram, with all members in favor.

Old Business-Matthew Hillman provided an update on the Recipient Eligibility Determination Audit (REDA)-Round Two. Each month, twenty cases (10 approved and 10 denied) are randomly selected. DSS was expecting the first month of the audit to be from cases in May 2024. However, cases pulled went back for all of April 2024. This was a switch not expected. The Continuous Quality Improvement team had been focusing on May 2024 cases. Additional internal controls have been put in place, and DSS is expecting the second month of the audit to be better. The REDA will last for ten months. Mr. Hillman noted DSS currently has five audits being done throughout the agency. Managers and workers continue to do a great job. Mr. Hillman noted DSS will continue to keep the Board up to date on all the audit findings.

Matthew Hillman explained Lincoln County had been chosen as a pilot county for the Family First Prevention Services Act (FFPSA). The objective of the FFPSA is to enhance services to families to help children and youth remain at home and reduce the use of congregate care placements by increasing options for prevention services, increased oversight, and requirements for placements, and enhancing the requirements for congregate care placement. The State intends to convert the current capacity of Intensive Family Preservation Services (IFPS) into the HOMEBUILDERS model. HOMEBUILDERS is an evidence-based program designed to strengthen families, keep children safe, and prevent unnecessary out-of-home placement. This model provides intensive crisis intervention, counseling, and life-skills education for families who have children at imminent risk of out-of-home placement or have children in out-of-home placement that cannot be reunified without intensive services.

New Business-Jennifer Sigmon, Adult Services Program Manager, introduced Meredith Eller, Adult Services Supervisor and Thelma Runyon, Adult Protective Services Supervisor. Ms. Eller and Ms. Runyon gave a power point presentation. Older Americans Month and Elder Abuse Awareness Day is recognized to reflect on the contributions of older Americans and protecting every senior's right to live their golden years with dignity and respect. Older Americans Month was established in 1963 when only 17 million Americans had reached their 65th birthday. Every president issues a formal proclamation for the month of May. Statistics of older adults in Lincoln County include 47 percent of Lincoln County residents were 60 plus in 2021, and that is expected to grow to 60 percent by 2041. Nine percent of adults 65 plus in Lincoln County live below the poverty level, and an additional 19 percent live below 200 percent of the poverty level. Over 250 adults aged 60 plus in Lincoln County are raising their grandchildren. Lincoln County received 312 reports in the past year alleging abuse/neglect/exploitation. Other topics covered were signs of elder abuse, intervention, Adult Services Programs in Lincoln County, and challenges in Adult Services. Pictures of Adult Services staff members and job positions were displayed.

Board members commended Ms. Sigmon, Ms. Eller, and Ms. Runyon for the presentation and their dedication to the older population.

Next, Denise Dula presented the Low Income Energy Assistance Program (LIEAP) and Crisis Intervention Program (CIP) Outreach Plan. The annual plan must be approved by the Social Services Board. The plan outlines the outreach efforts to notify the community regarding the Low Income Energy Assistance Program and Crisis Intervention Program. The programs are advertised letting the public know how, when, and where they can apply for services. Lincoln County DSS has two planned outreach meetings. The first meeting will be on Tuesday, July 23, 2024, at 10:00 a.m. at DSS. The second meeting will be on Thursday, November 7, 2024, at 10:00 a.m. at DSS. These meetings are for outreach plan committee members and vendors. Board members are welcome to attend the meetings. The Low Income Energy Assistance Program and Crisis Intervention Program Outreach Meeting was approved by motion from Cathy Davis, second by Dr. Sherry Hoyle, with all members in favor.

Matthew Hillman discussed SUN Bucks which is North Carolina's newest food assistance program beginning in summer 2024. The program will provide grocery-buying benefits to qualifying families with school-aged children during the summer months. Benefits can be used

to buy healthy foods at places like grocery stores, farmers markets, and some online retailers. Qualifying families will receive a one-time payment of \$120.00 per eligible child for the summer. SUN Bucks issuances will occur every two weeks from late June through September as new children are determined eligible. Households with an active FNS case will get SUN Bucks on their existing EBT card. All other households with different kinds of benefits, such as Medicaid or TANF, will be mailed a new SUN Bucks card.

Matthew Hillman noted an update in the Lincoln County Personnel Policy in the last several months involving county safety sensitive positions. All employees shall be subject to random and unannounced testing. The selection of employees shall be made by a scientifically valid method of randomly generating an employee identifier from the appropriate pool of safety-sensitive positions including employees driving county cars on a regular basis.

Matthew Hillman stated the Food and Nutrition Management Evaluation (ME) will be on Tuesday, July 16, 2024, and Wednesday, July 17, 2024. Food and Nutrition Services program regulations subsequent to the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 require the state to conduct Management Evaluation Reviews in each county. The objectives of the review provide a method of monitoring and assessing internal controls, strengthen program operations, and managing a continuous flow of information between the county, state, and federal government to develop solutions to problems in program policy and procedures.

Matthew Hillman explained in a “*Dear County Director*” letter dated May 30, 2024, Food and Nutrition recertifications are being waived for four months, beginning June 1, 2024, and ending October 31, 2024. The interview at recertification is only waived for the beneficiaries who have case identifier numbers ending with an odd number. Also, allowing alternative methods for recording telephonic signatures for two years beginning July 1, 2024, and ending on June 30, 2026. This waiver allows for recording telephonic signatures through means other than creating an audio recording of the client’s verbal attestation.

Next, Mr. Hillman gave an overview of Inter-County Regional Work. Lincoln County is in region 2 and is currently having quarterly meetings with Gaston County. These meetings have been productive in working through disagreements and small-detail issues. Conflict of Interest cases are being discussed in length. Also, Burke County has provided helpful information to assist in a Guatemala case Lincoln County has open. The ongoing collaborations have exemplified cooperative efforts toward best practices and facilitating relationship building across counties.

Budget Reports-Ruth Lockman stated there has not been much change since the last budget update. Draw down from 1571 reimbursement has been maximized. We will be closing out Fiscal Year 2024 where predicted. The cost saving is significant due to various factors of Medicaid Expansion, lap salaries, supplant of Medicaid funding, etc. End of Fiscal Year Projections will be done during the Social Services Board Meeting on July 30, 2024. Ms. Lockman expressed if anyone had any questions to please give her a call.

Statistical Reports-Matthew Hillman stated statistical data continues to look great and reflects the hard work of our managers and staff. Mr. Hillman expressed if Board members had any questions regarding the reports to please reach out and he will be glad to explain.

Other-Matthew Hillman expressed the Agency Connection Committee (ACC) will be hosting an Agency Carnival for staff on July 25, 2024, from 12:00 p.m.-2:00 p.m. in the back parking lot of DSS. There will be popcorn, snow cones, nachos, and cotton candy to purchase. Also, “Pie in the Face” fundraiser for all to enjoy. Board members are welcome to attend.

Closed Session-Chrystal Hoyle expressed a need for Closed Session. Chrystal Hoyle stated the Board would enter Closed Session pursuant to *G. S. 143-318.1*. Jill Eaddy made the motion to enter Closed Session, second by Cathy Davis, with all members in favor. The Board entered Closed Session at 2:20 p.m.

Return to Regular Session-Cathy Davis made the motion to return to Regular Session, second by Dr. Sherry Hoyle, with all members in favor. The Board returned to Regular Session at 2:50 p.m.

Date of Next Meeting-July 30, 2024

Motion to adjourn by Jill Eaddy, second by Cathy Davis, with all members in favor.

This meeting adjourned at 2:55 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