



**LINCOLN COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES  
BOARD MEETING MINUTES  
September 24, 2024**

The regular meeting of the Lincoln County Social Services Board was held on Tuesday, September 24, 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 Zoom); Jill Eaddy, and Daphne Ingram. Others in attendance were Matthew Hillman, Director; Kelley Miles, Deputy Director; Ruth Lockman, Business 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, Ben Berkowitz, Food and Nutrition Services (FNS) Employment and Training Coordinator, was present to give an overview of the FNS Employment and Training Program.

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

**Invocation**-Daphne Ingram 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.

**Public Comment**-No public comments were made.

**Minutes**-Minutes from the August 27, 2024, meeting was approved by motion from Dr. Sherry Hoyle, second by Jill Eaddy, with all members in favor.

**Old Business**-Matthew Hillman provided an update on the Recipient Eligibility Determination Audit (REDA)-Round Two. Monthly, twenty cases (10 approved and 10 denied) are randomly selected for review. Mr. Hillman described the logistics of a case DSS is opposing regarding an eligibility error. The REDA is still reflecting the error as a county mistake. DSS plans to continue to petition this finding. Mr. Hillman noted the Medicaid unit is finally almost fully staffed, and workers are doing a great job.

**New Business**-Matthew Hillman introduced Ben Berkowitz, Food and Nutrition Services Employment and Training Coordinator. Mr. Berkowitz gave an overview of the Food and Nutrition Services Employment and Training (FNS E&T) for Federal Fiscal Year 2024 (FFY 24). Mr. Berkowitz explained the FNS E&T program is offered to eligible Food and Nutrition recipients aged 16 and up who meet certain criteria. Services provided are academic counseling; virtual training; case management; financial/registration assistance; transportation; job retention services; resume assistance; job search training; supplies/tools necessary for work/school; and

job retention for up to 90 days. FFY 24 participation included 73 assessments completed; 73 received case management; 60 utilized job search training; 32 received job retention services (6 from FFY 24); 8 participated in education programs; 5 obtained assistances with education related expenses; 30 acquired employment; and 15 secured employments with a salary high enough to reduce or eliminate the need for public assistance. During Mr. Berkowitz's power point, five success stories were shared with testimonies of how the FNS E&T Program had greatly impacted each of their lives.

Board members thanked Mr. Berkowitz for his continued hard work in ensuring the FNS E&T Program is successful.

Matthew Hillman stated DSS has become involved with the Treatment Court of Lincoln County. The mission of this community-centered court is to promote a safe community while providing a recovery based intervention to assist people out of the justice system and into lives of stability. Meetings are held every other week on Friday mornings to discuss available assistance and identify the gaps in resources.

Matthew Hillman explained the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) has distributed emergency placement funding to counties to help provide appropriate requirements for children in DSS custody. These funds are critical because of the complex behavioral health demands of some children in foster care with no place for them to go significant for their needs, and often, they are living in DSS offices. Lincoln County did not need to utilize the amount received in fiscal year 2023-2024, and it was returned to the state. However, in fiscal year 2024-2025 the funding has been used for several children in foster care with no placement options available. Mr. Hillman noted because legislative action is needed to better serve children and families, discussion of emergency placement funding will be before the county commissioners in the future. As more information is received, it will be shared with the Board.

**Budget Reports**-Ruth Lockman explained several line items found on the expenditure/revenue reports received in the monthly Board packets. Training, meals, and lodging (line item 11) is reflecting 85 percent used. This is due largely to the travel of social workers to visit children in out-of-state placement. Partners Behavioral Health will be providing some reimbursement for this expense. Also, Maintenance and Repair Vehicles (line item 19) is showing 72.7 percent utilized. DSS recently had to have a rebuilt transmission installed in one of the county cars. Ms. Lockman stated if there were any questions regarding the reports, to please contact her and she will be glad to clarify.

Matt Hillman noted on the office replacement plan for DSS, it was expected for only ten offices to be painted with new furniture this fiscal year. However, due to price checking and strategically using funds, there will be sixteen offices completed. This will be a moral boost for staff. Within seven years, all offices at DSS should be completed with upgrades.

**Statistical Reports**-Matthew Hillman noted statistical data continues to look great and reflects the commitment to consistent high quality work being done by staff. Mr. Hillman stated if any Board member had any questions regarding the statistical data, to please let him know.

**Other**-Mr. Hillman expressed on Monday, September 30, 2024, Child Welfare staff will be treated to coffee and donuts to celebrate Child Welfare Worker Appreciation Week. Also, the agency cookout will be on Friday, September 27, 2024 from 11:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m. Hotdogs, chips, and drinks will be served. All Board members are invited 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 Daphne Ingram, with all members in favor. The Board entered Closed Session at 2:10 p.m.

**Return to Regular Session**-Dr. Sherry Hoyle made the motion to return to Regular Session, second by Jill Eaddy, with all members in favor. The Board returned to Regular Session at 4:00 p.m.

**Date of Next Meeting**-October 29, 2024

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

This meeting adjourned at 4:05 p.m.

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Date Minutes Approved

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Chrystal Hoyle, Chairperson

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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