



**LINCOLN COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES
BOARD MEETING MINUTES
November 25, 2025**

The regular meeting of the Lincoln County Social Services Board was held on Tuesday, November 25, 2025 at 1:30 p.m. in the Board Room of the Social Services Building. The members present were Alex Patton, Chairperson; Daphne Ingram, Vice Chairperson; Dr. Sherry Hoyle; Jill Eaddy; and Mike Devine. 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, Business Operations Supervisor/Designated Clerk to the Social Services Board.

Call to Order-Alex Patton called the meeting to order at 1:30 p.m.

Invocation-Matthew Hillman gave the 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 October 28, 2025 meeting was approved by motion from Daphne Ingram, second by Mike Devine, with all members in favor.

Old Business-Matthew Hillman stated the federal government shutdown ended on November 12, 2025, when Senate amendments H.R. 5371 was signed into law by President Trump. The new law funds most federal government agencies until January 30, 2026. Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) funding in North Carolina is secured through September 30, 2026, thanks to recent federal budget actions (FY 2026 Appropriations Act). During the shutdown, Mr. Hillman expressed he took pride in the response of our community. Agencies such as United Way, Christian Ministries, faith-based communities, etc. stepped up to help with food storages and in different areas of need. During the shutdown, Lincoln County Government supported their employees by stating they were not exploring any furloughs.

Matthew Hillman acknowledged that while the federal government shutdown has concluded, the Department of Health and Human Services has not yet received the Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2026 Low Income Energy Assistance Program (LIEAP) Block Grant Notice of Award from

federal partners. Until the notice is received, no counties in North Carolina will be able to proceed with any additional LIEAP applications, beyond those issued through Auto-LIEAP. Mr. Hillman added a news release was going out to make the citizens of Lincoln County aware of the current LIEAP situation.

Matthew Hillman explained that currently the federal government covers approximately 50 percent of the administrative cost of SNAP. Under the One Big Beautiful Bill Act House Resolution 1 (OBBA H.R. 1), the federal contribution will be reduced to 25 percent with a 75 percent increase going to the non-federal share. Under H. R. 1, states with payment error rates above six percent will pay a cost share that covers 5 to 15 percent of benefits. States with a payment error rate under six percent will not be responsible for benefits. Mr. Hillman, noted Business Manager Ruth Lockman, had prepared extensive H. R. 1 spreadsheets depicting the various scenarios of error rates, county cost, federal cost, and long-term projections. Since H. R. 1 will be impacting other counties across the state, Mr. Hillman explained he shared Ms. Lockman's spreadsheets with other counties to allow a unified effort to advocate on a county level.

Next, Matthew Hillman stated the Child and Family Specialty Plan (CFSP) was set to launch on December 1, 2025. The CFSP is a single, statewide N. C. Medicaid Managed Care health plan designed to support beneficiaries in receiving integrated and coordinated health care they need, including mental health services, and continue to work with their doctors if placements move them across the state. Blue Cross Blue Shield of North Carolian was awarded the CFSP and will be managed under Healthy Blue Care Together. Mr. Hillman noted Medicaid Program Manager Tiffany Barnette and Placement Services Program Manager Jason Hughes had been working together to ensure that Lincoln County is fully ready for CFSP. There have been three different readiness check list completed. Lincoln County staff have articulated each foster child's needs. A case manager with Healthy Blue Care Together will be on site a few days a week during the transition phase.

New Business-Matthew Hillman noted November is Adoption Awareness Month. Jason Hughes, Placement Services Program Manager, expressed the Foster Care Adoption Ceremony was held on Friday, November 7, 2025 at DSS. There were a total of 36 foster care and private adoptions which included several teenagers and sibling groups. The event was a great success and was treasured by all attending. Mr. Hughes presented a slide show of all the children adopted in 2025. Certificates were given to all the families. At the end of the event, each child released a butterfly. Attendees then returned to have refreshments and time of fellowship.

Matthew Hillman stated Jason Hughes, Placement Services Program Manager, would share information regarding the Foster Care 18 to 21 Program. Mr. Hughes stated this program is an NC program that allows youth who were in care at age 18 to continue receiving foster care services and support until they turn 21. The program helps youth transition into independent living by providing ongoing support that includes financial assistance, case management, and availability to resources for education, employment, and housing. Youth in foster care at age 18 may be eligible for foster care services if they are enrolled in secondary, post-secondary, or vocational education; participated in a program to help with employment; employed at least 80 hours per month; or are incapable of completing the educational or employment requirements

due to a medical condition or a disability. Mr. Hughes noted Lincoln County DSS currently has 14 enrolled in the Foster Care 18 to 21 Program. Normally, the program averages 10 participants. Recently, social workers attended a Foster Care 18 to 21 Program event in Caldwell County, N. C. which was very informative. Lincoln County DSS would like to host a similar event in the future.

Matthew Hillman expressed that Lincoln County DSS now has an on-site Outpatient Clinician from Support, Inc. There has been past therapist on-site at DSS which has been very valuable. Staff are extremely excited about having this resource available again. The clinician is very engaging and has a serving attitude. This is a definite support system for our clients, as well as employees. Mr. Hillman stated in the future he would like to partner with Lincoln County Health Department and have the clinician serve both agencies.

Matthew Hillman explained that Lincoln County Government is moving toward a more modern timesheet plan. The Time and Attendance Program has been introduced to county employees. All staff are using the training phase to learn the procedures. There is still a lot to do to work out the issues. There is a plan to go live in the Time and Attendance Program in February 2026.

Budget Reports-Ruth Lockman stated Board members should have the expenditure/revenue reports in their Board packets. She noted county numbers had not yet been uploaded for November 2025 in Munis. Lincoln County Government is still going through an audit with Martin Starnes. Lincoln County DSS should be at around 37 percent in expenditures year-to-date. Areas highlighted included overtime pay and maintenance and repairs on vehicles. There was a lot of overtime pay in the first 3 months of Fiscal Year 2025-2026 with staff having to stay with children at DSS because of no placement options. Ms. Lockman explained the various scenarios regarding DSS vehicles, including recent wrecks and the ages of the vehicles.

Statistical Reports-Matthew Hillman stated Lincoln County DSS statistical data continues to be good. On Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) Child Welfare Services-Foster Care Goal 2, the county will provide leadership for ensuring that 40.5 percent of children who enter foster care in a 12-month period are discharged to permanency within 12 months of entering foster care, Lincoln County DSS fell short of the expectant margin. Mr. Hillman stated this goal is a catch-22 situation. If families are rushed through treatment to meet the 12-month standard, they are most likely not to succeed long term. Also, included in the percentage for November 2025, there were three cases of children in foster care less than a year that aged out. Those numbers would not be counted in the percentage total of the MOU goal. Mr. Hillman expressed numbers say one thing but the stories behind them tell another.

Other-No information presented.

Closed Session-No Closed Session needed.

Date of Next Meeting-Friday, December 12, 2025 at 10:00 a.m. following the Christmas Agency Breakfast beginning at 8:30 a.m.

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

This meeting adjourned at 2:10 p.m.

Date Minutes Approved-December 12, 2025



Alex Patton, Chairperson



Matthew Hillman, Director

Respectfully Submitted:



Denise S. Dula, Designated Clerk
Social Services Board

Cc: file copy