

Macon County Social Services Board

December 16, 2020

Minutes

Call to Order

Patrick Betancourt called the regular meeting of the Macon County Social Services Board to order. Members in attendance were: Evelyn Southard, Anne Hyder, Patrick Betancourt, Secretary to the Board, Page McCurry, HR Planner/Evaluator and Cathy Makinson, Business Officer designated to record minutes.

Minutes

Minutes were approved on motion of Anne Hyder and second by Evelyn Southard.

Financials

Business Officer, Cathy Makinson, updated the Board on the Energy Programs including Crisis, Helping Each Member Cope, LIEAP and Pandemic LIEAP. Pandemic LIEAP payment approvals and requests were system generated and paid out on Friday, 12/11/20 for the entire amount plus \$7,462 of regular LIEAP funds to meet the state's obligation. Clients receiving Pandemic LIEAP funds met three criteria which were that they received LIEAP last year, were over 60 and were currently receiving FNS. This process has taken a lot of time to evaluate and process those payments. DSS contracted with former employee who assisted the energy programs last year to begin in November, calling the pandemic list and verifying providers and account numbers. Financials were provided in the Board books.

Patrick reminded the Board of his request to county admin of reallocating a social work position to social work supervisor. County Manager had advised Patrick that he would support establishing a new position and to present to the County Commissioners in December. After follow-up with County Manager, Patrick was told to bring the request to County Commissioners in the mid-year budget review in January.

Legal Update

Patrick informed the Board that the lawsuit involving a former foster parent which was dismissed in US District Court, had been appealed in a Motion to Reconsider, which the judge denied. There is a filing period in which this parent can appeal that decision. Attorney does not think the client will appeal and the case should be closed at year end or first of the year. In the second lawsuit filed with the NC Industrial Commission which was expected to be dismissed as the Industrial Commission is not a venue in which actions against non-state agencies are heard, the attorney had received a communication from the Attorney General's office who was going to respond to the client. Our attorney does not feel there is concern that this will proceed any further. Patrick informed the Board that the client in the second lawsuit has chosen to stay in the area for the time being. Recently she appeared in the DSS lobby requesting copies of documents which was denied. She videotaped this conversation with Patrick and later published it on social media along with the letter that Patrick had sent advising any future requests of DSS, be made in writing.

COVID Update

DSS had one employee test positive last month and was just informed this morning of a second employee that has tested positive. Page described the DSS process when they are informed of a positive result. Patrick took part in a conversation with Health Director regarding the distribution of the vaccine once it arrives potentially Christmas week. Health Department will be administering this vaccine through drive-through, similar to the flu drive-through, two days per week to begin with. The vaccine requires a 15 minute observation of the recipient before they are released to leave. Additionally, the Health Department will have to closely track clients as they need to have a second vaccine administered at 21 days. There is concern that clients who experience side effects might not want to come back for the second injection which is needed to be effective.

With the uptick in cases, Page expressed concern regarding the Emergency FMLA that expires on December 31, 2020. Employees who are new or do not have a health balance in their annual and sick leave, may feel they need to come to work sick rather than have leave without pay.

Personnel Updates

Personnel updates include Elsa McCowan, who was hired for the Social Work I Intake position. We still have a vacancy in the foster care social work position. Patrick recognized Page’s completion of OSHR Qualifications Training which will allow her to evaluate applicants.

DSS Board Update

Discussion was held regarding possible replacement for Lisa Leatherman’s board position which will end on June 30, 2021. Patrick is to compile and bring the list of suggested replacements next month for the Board to review and prioritize.

Closed Session

No closed session needed.

Next Meeting

Next meeting is scheduled on Wednesday, January 20, 2021, at 8:30am in the Administrative Conference Room at the Human Services Building.

APPROVED BY:

Chairman | Date

Secretary | Date