

Macon County Social Services Board

March 12, 2019

Minutes

Call to Order

Patrick Betancourt called the regular meeting of the Macon County Social Services Board to order in the Administrative Conference Room at the Department of Social Services. Meeting date was revised to meet County deadlines of department budget submissions. Members in attendance were: Lisa Leatherman, Darlene Green, Evelyn Southard, Patrick Betancourt, Secretary to the Board and Cathy Makinson, Business Officer designated to record minutes.

Minutes

Minutes of both January and February were approved on motion of Lisa Leatherman and second by Evelyn Southard.

Financials/ Program Report

Business Officer Cathy Makinson presented Board with projected county savings for FY 18-19 of \$337,241 including \$98,800 in unspent special assistance funds. Cathy then presented the FY 19-20 budget for Board consideration. Budget increased \$132,927 over prior year county funds. This increase includes the two new social work positions, the employee retirement increase, \$6,867 in Senior Center operating costs and \$77,220 state foster care increase. Budget was approved as presented on the motion of Evelyn Southard and second by Lisa Leatherman. Financials were provided in Board books

Old Business

No Old Business was reviewed.

New Business

Patrick provided a copy of the Crawford Senior Center Advisory Committee By-Laws for Board review. He reminded Board that there had been two advisory committees which had over time merged into one advisory committee. Area Agency on Aging (AAA) had attended the recent committee meeting and stated there is a reason to have two advisory committees. First is specific to the Home Care Community Block Grant (HCCBG) that the Senior Center shares distribution of funds with Macon County Transit. The second committee is primarily made up of members whose function is to guide and give advice on Center activities and how the Center can be improved. This second committee is also a requirement of the SCOPE certification. Recently this second committee met and tweaked the by-laws and needed the DSS Board to approve for them to function as related in the by-laws. Board reviewed the document and recommended several revisions which Patrick will take back to the Senior Center and then email to the Board for approval.

Patrick updated the Board on recent media requests and history behind the recent article in the Macon County News in which the writer quotes a GAL volunteer. This same writer had contacted Patrick and requested an interview on the request for two additional child welfare social workers. Patrick requested the questions in writing, which he then responded. The article misrepresented our foster parents and foster children in relative placements. The GAL office was contacted and agreed to meet with Patrick and Social Work Supervisor as they were aware of the article and had some concerns as well. The volunteer had contacted the supervisor and explained the circumstances around the article, expressing he didn't realize he was being interviewed. The GAL staff and DSS have different statutes regarding their work with the child and family. This is the second issue DSS has had with a GAL volunteer and media issues. GAL representative, when asked if they are trained in media response, stated no but that they would be revamping volunteer training to include how to work with the media. Discussion was held regarding training opportunity for GAL staff and volunteers to come and explain their program to DSS staff and prospective resource parents and for DSS staff to speak with GAL volunteers regarding their role with families. In this case, the volunteer is to write a request for the media to redact the article which is

to be reviewed by GAL staff first. Discussion also resulted in the possibility of a joint letter between DSS and the GAL office as a letter to the editor stating the positives of our foster families and caregivers. Suggestion was made to consider an article in the Franklin Press during the month of April which is recognized as Child Abuse Prevention Month. Patrick also mentioned he had been contacted by the Smoky Mountain News with questions centered on the new positions and the impact of opioids on our budget and child welfare. This article was available today and represented a realistic perspective on these subjects.

Closed Session

Evelyn Southard made a motion to go into Closed Session to discuss personnel information as allowed under G.S. 143-318.11. Lisa Leatherman seconded, and motion carried.

Next Meeting

The next meeting is scheduled on Wednesday, April 17, 2019, at 8:30am in the DSS Administrative Conference Room.

APPROVED BY:

Chairman | Date

Secretary | Date