

HANOVER COUNTY
SOCIAL SERVICES ADVISORY BOARD
New Member Orientation
MINUTES
September 22, 2015

I. CALL TO ORDER

Dr. Crossen-Powell called the meeting to order at 1:36 p.m.

The following Board members were present: Sheila Crossen-Powell, Robert “Rick” Richardson (3:03 p.m.) and Page Sening. Also in attendance: Tamara Temoney, Assistant Director; Dennis Walter, Deputy County Attorney; Jacque Althizer, Budget Management Analyst Senior; Ginny Ferguson, Quality Assurance Coordinator; Tyler Taylor, MSW Intern and Robin Riley, Administrative Assistant.

II. INTRODUCTIONS

Dr. Crossen-Powell said that Dr. Richardson is the interim School Board Superintendent and would be delayed for this meeting. Ms. Sening was introduced.

Orientation binders were provided to the new Board members.

III. BASIC INFORMATION

a. Member Roster

Dr. Crossen-Powell reviewed the Board member roster and contact information. Board members can be reappointed by the Board of Supervisors at the end of their term. Members may serve two consecutive four-year terms. At some point in the future, DSS may have joint meetings with the CSB Board, however, this is not yet scheduled.

b. Meeting Dates

Board meetings are held on the fourth Tuesday bi-monthly; July, September, November, January, March and May of the fiscal year.

c. Rules of the Board

Mr. Walter introduced himself. He is the Deputy County Attorney with the County Attorney’s office and provides legal support for DSS, along with several other attorneys. Mr. Walter has been with the County 14 years and began working with this Board about 6-7 years ago. He advises on parliamentary and legal questions. Mr. Walter briefly summarized and discussed each section of the Board Rules. The DSS Board is an eight-member Advisory Board and operates on a modified *Roberts Rules of Order* to ensure the meetings go smoothly. Agendas and meeting packets are usually sent to members 2-3 weeks prior to the meeting. Minutes from the previous meeting are included. If members have any questions about the Board packets, please contact Ms. Riley for information. The Board’s role changed from administrative to advisory effective July 1, 2010. Mr. Walter discussed how the Board formerly

had to approve and sign adoption consent orders and that the Director can now perform this action. The main role and function of the Board is to work with the Director and advise the Board of Supervisors on matters. Board meetings are held every other month, on the fourth Tuesday (except for November when there is usually an agenda item to move the date to the third Tuesday due to the Board of Supervisors' schedule). Meeting time is 3:30 – 5:30 p.m.; however, this time frame can be extended by vote. The official schedule is adopted at the July meeting. A quorum of five members must be present in order to conduct a meeting. Additional duties include advising County Administration of the appointment of a new Director, annually reviewing budgetary items and, if there is ever a vacancy for the Director's position, advising on the selection of a new Director. The Director is a non-voting member of the Board and cannot be Chair or Vice Chair. FOIA requests and other correspondence related to the Board should be sent to the Clerk of the Board who will give to the Director for handling with Mr. Walter.

Responsibilities and local Board member requirements were reviewed. Board members should have an active role in promoting interagency relations by acting as liaisons and public educators. Personnel issues are handled by County HR, and the Board will be informed of changes in HR procedures. Confidentiality is a vital component, and identity of customers must always be protected.

A paper copy of FOIA requests should be kept in a file. Mr. Walter distributed information on the Public Records Act. The State also publishes the *Local Board Member Handbook* (copies provided to Board members). If there are any questions, please call or send an email to Mr. Walter, and any discussion will remain confidential under attorney/client privilege. Mr. Walter handed out business cards with contact information.

Dr. Crossen-Powell asked Ms. Althizer to set up County email addresses for the Board members.

IV. BACKGROUND

a. Brief History

Dr. Crossen-Powell discussed a brief history of the Virginia Department of Social Services (VDSS) which began in 1646 as a workhouse for the poor. Poor Farm Park was actually a County-run working "poor farm". Alms Houses were in most Virginia parishes and counties in 1760. In 1982, the General Assembly changed the name from Department of Welfare to Department of Social Services and separated it from the Department of Corrections. Mr. Walter said the House Committee of Health, Welfare and Institutions has not changed its name. There are currently 120 local DSS agencies in Virginia. Some of the smaller agencies merged with neighboring localities. The State Board of Social Services is appointed by the Governor with the assistance of the Secretary of Human Services.

b. Structure of the VDSS – Organizational Chart

Dr. Crossen-Powell reviewed the State organizational chart, operating divisions and regional offices. Hanover DSS is part of the Central Region, and Mr. Paul Oswell is the Director for the Central Region. Mr. JR Simpson is the Chief Deputy Commissioner.

1. Advisory Board Excerpt from VDSS Local Board Member Handbook

Advisory Board powers and responsibilities as established by the State were discussed. Each voting district in the county has a representative on the Board with one at-large member from the Board of Supervisors. Hanover DSS follows the County's personnel policies, and each year, a classification/compensation plan is submitted to the State. This plan includes a copy of the County's policies.

c. Structure of the HDSS

1. Vision, Mission and Values

The current mission statement of HDSS is:

H. O. P. E. - Helping Others; Promoting Empowerment

A competition was held in 2007 with input from DSS staff members. The winning entry was selected by an outside panel of judges. The Vision and Values statements were changed to parallel the County's.

Vision

A community inspired by its people, tradition and spirit where citizens are encouraged to form a strong foundation for themselves and their families.

Values:

Accountability
Innovation
Integrity
Respect

2. Organization Chart

Prior to 1990, HDSS was part of VDSS, and in 1990, became partially deviating to County HR policies. In 1993, HDSS expanded to incorporate more County policies including classification and compensation. Effective 1/1/03, the agency became fully deviating except for computer systems which were managed by the State. DSS is now moving to County IT shared support and hopes to complete the transition by the end of the month. County Administration will now be able to access calendars, and DSS employees will be able to access the County shared "T" drive.

The Director was under the Administrative Board until the change to Advisory Board on July 1, 2010 under Ordinance 10-13 *(in part)*:

“An ordinance to amend the Hanover County Code, Chapter 2, Article III, Division 2, Sections 2-39 and 2-40, related to the Hanover county Board of Social Services to establish the Director of the Hanover Department of Social Services as the Local Board, to create an Advisory Social Services Board, and to provide for the powers and duties of the Advisory Social Services Board; and to disestablish the existing Hanover County Social Services Board as the Local Board.”

The Director now reports to the County Administrator.

The Business Operations Team (BOT) will be included on the chart.

d. HDSS and Hanover County Administration

1. DSS Annual Report – FY 2015

Ms. Ferguson discussed Benefit Program Performance, a chart with comparative peer counties' measurements (peer counties designated by Hanover County Administration). Medicaid reviews timely are an issue statewide. There have been vacancies in the Benefit Programs unit. New workers were hired from other localities, and they are helping with these reviews. Expedited SNAP must be processed within seven days. Regular SNAP and TANF applications have a 30-day processing time. The SNAP program has reached a sizeable majority of eligible people in the county. At least one in 8 or 9 people are receiving assistance from DSS. A separate application is required for each program because profiles in VACMS do not “talk” to each other. Ms. Ferguson said a Geo-Map was done to identify areas of the County where SNAP benefits are being received. Dr. Crossen-Powell said that method infringed on confidentiality so has not been used again.

There are two VIEW Employment Services workers. Measurements in some cases have statistics mixed in that are not Hanover's. Ms. Ferguson gave examples of different factors affecting measurements. Dr. Crossen-Powell said there are many challenges in the VIEW program, i.e., clients with no job skills, no skill base, little or no employment history, criminal record, quitting jobs after a short period of time.

TANF measurements have shown a significant decrease of 36% from 2011-2015. Hanover does not have affordable housing.

The new benefit program customers measurement is done manually and counts those customers previously unknown to Hanover or elsewhere in the State. This information is at the request of the County.

Energy Assistance is trending downward. Federal funding continues to decrease.

Cooling assistance funding:

2011 - \$600

2014 - \$100

2015 - \$200

DSS will not know the amount of the heating benefit until after all applications are received and processed. The State automatically sends applications to previous recipients. Special welfare funds are received from a group in the County for elderly people who do not meet the eligibility criteria for assistance.

Service performance statistics are measured against comparative peer counties. The numbers are affected by types of issues children have when they come into foster care. HDSS tends to get a majority of older children aged 14+, and they frequently come from detention. Foster care children must be visited once a month with 50% of the visits taking place in the home. There are no foster homes in the State of Virginia at this time. Parents sometimes have serious substance abuse issues which makes it difficult for children to return home.

CPS numbers, particularly for reports, have increased. Reports are not always valid but still have to be screened which is time consuming. There have been vacancies in the CPS unit for about a year. For abuse/neglect reports, the child must be under 18, the alleged abuser must be in a caretaker position and the incident must have occurred in Hanover's jurisdiction. The State is looking at appeals and how many founded cases have been overturned. Hanover has only had two cases overturned at the State level in the past 11 years. Dr. Richardson asked what is the process at the State level for a case being overturned. Dr. Crossen-Powell said the case is reviewed by attorneys and is usually overturned due to a technicality, i.e., incorrect categorizing or classifying of the type of abuse or neglect. Mistakes are sometimes made at the local level.

DSS has the legal right to investigate a CPS report. Many of the cases are complicated due to mental health and substance abuse issues. This unit has been down staff members for approximately a year.

APS numbers are up and AS (Adult Services) numbers are down. If a person does not want assistance, DSS cannot help them. UAIs are completed in conjunction with the Health Department. Completion time is now being measured by the day of visit instead of the day request is received.

Foster care is somewhat up. Since April, 2015, ten children have come into care. Some children have aged out of the system.

Child care funding is now controlled by the State. Numbers are up.

The number of applications filed on line is increasing. 80% of client interviews are now done by phone. Customer volume in the lobby for FY 2015 was 15,541.

In looking ahead, the VACMS system continues to have issues. The term, ABAWDS, was explained: Able Bodied Adults without Dependents who are only eligible for SNAP for three months unless they go to work. Dr. Richardson asked what constitutes “able-bodied”? A client must provide proof of their inability to work if they cannot work at least 20 hours per week.

The following items were briefly reviewed. Detailed information is contained in the Orientation binder.

V. Services and Benefits

a. Mandated/Non-Mandated programs

1. Energy Assistance
2. SNAP and SNAP script

b. Children’s Services Act (CSA) – presentation will be given at the next Board meeting

VI. Budget Process

VII. Equal Opportunity Employment/Non-Discrimination; Statement of Ethics (*Hanover County Human Resources Policy Manual*)

VIII. Performance Dashboard – will be discussed during the regular Board meeting

IX. Questions/Discussion: Please contact Dr. Crossen-Powell with any questions or for additional information.

X. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 3:30 p.m. by Dr. Crossen-Powell.

Sheila Crossen-Powell, Director