

St. Mary's County  
Board of Directors Meeting Minutes  
March 22, 2016

Attendance: The regular meeting of the Board of the St. Mary's County Department of Social Services was held March 22, 2016. Board Members in attendance were: Wanda Brown, Chair; Susie Fowler, Vice Chair; Cynthia Brown; Lynn Fitrell; Rose Frederick; Ella Somerville; Annette Wood; Richard Buckler; Ella May Russell

Quorum: A quorum was established

Minutes: February 23, 2016 minutes were approved

Education Session: Dawn Dent, Finance Officer, spoke in regards to the County Budget. The budget was presented to the County Commissioners on February 5, 2016. There were no new programs and no increases other than in salaries. An explanation of the following positions was explained:

Child Support Enforcement – 3 current positions

Enforcement Agent (Responsible for the enforcement of Court Orders)

Fiscal Accounting Clerk and Offices Services Clerk. There was a decrease in income for new child support agents with a negative difference from last year.

Adult Foster Care Case Manager – This a position paid through County payroll. The position works with Project Home and the majority of customers receive Social Security benefits to help offset costs.

Foster Care Aide – This position is essential to the foster care unit as the aide is responsible for transportation of children to and from visits, appointments, etc. The income for this position is trying to be matched to comparable jobs (school bus drivers, public transportation drivers, etc)

- The following questions were raised: Has there been an increase in the number of younger children in care due to the increase of substance exposed newborns and are referrals being done to the Infant and Toddlers program? How many children coming into care are eventually adopted?
- Mrs. Russell responded to this by stating that the goal of the Agency is to reunite children with their families and that not all substance abuse newborns are removed from the biological parents. It was suggested that at the next meeting, a foster care supervisor speak to the Board regarding the questions raised.

Legal Services Aide– This position is fully funded through County payroll and is reimbursed from State funds. It is responsible for assisting the Agency’s in-house attorney.

An explanation of burial services for the indigent paid through County funds was explained. If the total burial costs are less than \$2500.00, along with meeting other criteria, the family may be eligible for assistance not to exceed \$650.00.

As of this date, an answer has not been received as to the approval of the budget.

Board motions to approve the budget – The motion is approved

No Chair Report at this time.

It is noted that it has been a slow legislative session with few bills passed.

Director’s Report:

The Governor has approved \$13.8 million for the modernization of DHR’s automated systems. This update would enable systems such as CARES and MABS a much needed system upgrade.

The issue of cell phone upgrades has been brought to the Director’s attention. Services workers are requesting the use of smart phones vs. the current phones issued by the agency.

The Assistant Director for Services position, previously held by Jeanne Schmitt, is still vacant. Recruitment is still ongoing and interviews are scheduled for next week. It is explained that the State hiring process is extremely cumbersome and that the current supervisors are doing much more due to vacancies.

A new committee has been established, Overdose Fatality Review Team, due to the heroine epidemic in St. Mary’s County meeting quarterly at the Health Department.

Executive Session: No Executive Session at this time, but will be planned for the next meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:15pm.

The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, May 24, 2016.