

Board Minutes January 30, 2007

The regular meeting of the Board of the St. Mary's County Department of Social Services was held on Wednesday, January 30, 2007. Board members in attendance were: Clair Kollar; Erika Patregnani; and Judy Gilman, Patrice Gaymon, James Farrell, Maureen Johnson, Melvin McClintock. Also present was Thomas Hania, Assistant Director for Quality Assurance and Ella May Russell, Director.

Erika Patregnani, in the absence of a Chairperson, called the meeting to order.

Minutes

Minutes from the June 27, 2006 and October 25, 2006, meeting were approved.

Welcome

New Board members, James O. Farrell and Patrice Gaymon were welcomed.

Education Session

Thomas Hania, Assistant Director for Quality Assurance, presented information on the agency's progress toward accreditation. The agency is presently in Phase II of the accreditation process and is awaiting its report from the Council on Accreditation. The report will outline areas of strength and areas that need to be strengthened before the agency can receive accreditation.

Accreditation will ensure best practice and customer service standards are used in the day to day work of the agency. Maryland is the first state to accredit public welfare agencies.

Board Member Report's

Erica Patregnani, Legislative Liaison for St. Mary's County Board of Social Services, introduced a letter drafted by the Maryland Association of Social Service Boards (MASSB) to increase social work salaries in the state of Maryland. The MASSB would like each local board to send the letter to their local legislative representatives.

House Bill 1133 requires Maryland to meet Child Welfare League of America standards and lower social work caseload ratios. The Department of Human Resources (DHR) is mandated to fill all social work positions within two years. Social work salaries in Maryland need to be higher to compete with the surrounding areas such as Washington D.C. which pays \$10,000 more per year to social workers and as incentive for social workers to work in the rural regions.

The motion to send the draft letter on behalf of the St. Mary's County Board of Social Services was made seconded and passed unanimously.

Director's Report

Secretary Brenda Walker Donald

Governor O'Malley announced the appointment of Brenda Walker Donald as Secretary, Department of Human Resources. Secretary Donald will be confirmed on Monday, February 19, 2007. She was the Deputy for Health and Human Services in Washington D.C.

Legislative Hearings

Mrs. Russell reported on a TANF briefing she participated on for the House Appropriations, and the Child Welfare Accountability, and Child Support overview to the subcommittee in which she also participated.

Wheels for Success

Wheels for Success is a demonstration project that the agency is participating in where customers can apply for help with purchasing a car. After the screening process, customers who are accepted may purchase a car through Vehicles for Change. The agency pays \$1200 for each car purchased by a customer. The cars are used cars which are expected to last two years to 6000 miles.

Computer Training Lab

The State recently did training for Family Investment Workers in the agency's new computer training lab. Participants came from St. Mary's, Charles and Calvert counties.

Personnel

The agency is continuing to recruit for two Social Work Supervisor's and a Team Leader position.

Adjournment

With no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at 6:00 pm.

The next meeting will be February 27th.

Respectfully submitted,
Bonnie S. Abell