

Board Minutes

October 25, 2005

The regular meeting of the Board of the St. Mary's County Department of Social Services was held on Tuesday, October 25, 2005. Board members in attendance were: Monika Williams, Chairperson; Erika Patregnani; Melvin McClintock; Darlene Johnson; Clair Kollar; Maureen Johnson. Also present was Ella May Russell, Director and Jeanne Schmitt, Assistant Director for Services; Heather Henderson, Program Manager for Foster Care, Jennifer Maddox, Foster Care Case Manager.

Monica Williams, Chairperson, called the meeting to order at 5:20 pm. Quorum was established.

Minutes

Minutes from the September 20th meeting were approved.

Education Session

Foster and Adoptive Home Recruitment – Presented by Heather Henderson and Jennifer Maddox

November is adoption awareness month.

Children enter the Foster Care system due to abuse, neglect, abandonment or choice. Many of the children entering foster care have special needs. Adoptive placements for children with special needs are done through targeted recruitment activities. The board received handouts of these activities, which included the Heart Gallery--an initiative created in 2001 by New Mexico Youth and Children Services and is now going nationwide.

The board was given information on the licensing process for a foster/adoptive home, which takes 4-6 months to complete.

Chairperson's Report

Board Member Resignation

Chairperson, Monika Williams, reported that she had received a letter of resignation from Vice Chairperson, Drew Hardgrove. Ms. Williams asked for nominations from the board for a new Vice Chairperson. Mr. Melvin McClintock accepted the nomination from the board and was unanimously elected by the board.

Director's Report

CALVEX

The County did well with the CALVEX drill and there were only minor recommendations from the Federal observers.

Public Action Committee

The Public Action Committee is a small group that raising funds for other civic groups. On Thursday, October 20th, the group presented a check for \$250 to the agency to be used for the needs of Hurricane Katrina victims.

Personnel Update

Debbie Walsh, Program Manger for Child Protective Services (CPS), is leaving for a promotional position at Charles County DSS. The agency will be recruiting for this position; past history is that CPS supervisory positions are difficult to fill.

A new addition to staff is Cathy Zumbrun, Assistant Director for Program Performance and Oversight. In this position Ms. Zumbrun will be responsible for Family Investment and Child Support program performance measures, Procurement, Information Technology, and Building Services.

The agency is presently recruiting for two social work supervisory positions, two social work caseworkers, one child support, one office clerk, and an Administrative Aide position.

Program 10 Contracts

The agency is in the process of creating a contract with the Housing Authority for four caseworkers to work intensely with Temporary Cash Assistance (TCA) customers to obtain and retain employment. It is expected that the contract will be approved soon.

Committee Schedules

Each board member received a listing of the up coming meetings of the Citizen Review Board for Children, Citizen Review Panel for Child Protection, and Child Support Circuit Court schedule. Members are welcomed to come to any of the meetings and observe the processes. The Director is available to answer any questions or concerns that the board members may have on the processes.

Agency Audit by the Office of the Inspector General

The agency will begin its bi-yearly audit process by the Office of the Inspector General on November 9th with an opening meeting. The purpose of the audit is to identify system issues or weaknesses and make recommendations. The audit could take several months. An exit interview will be held at the end of the audit to clarify any questions the OIG or the agency may have before a draft report is released.

Adjournment

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

Respectfully submitted,
Bonnie S. Abell