

St. Mary's County
Department of Social Services Advisory Board Meeting Minutes
January 23, 2018

The regular meeting of the St. Mary's County Department of Social Services Advisory Board was held Tuesday, January 23, 2018.

Members Present:

Richard Buckler
Lynn Fitrell
Susan Fowler
Rose Frederick, Chair
Annette Wood
Leisha Wood

Members Absent:

Michael Blackwell
Cynthia Brown
Wanda Brown
Ella Somerville

Also Present:

Therese Wolf, Interim Director
Alexis Zoss, Assistant Director for Operations

A quorum was established and the meeting was called to order at 5:30pm

Approval of Minutes

A motion was made to approve the December 19, 2017 minutes, second. Motion carries.

Education Session:

There is no education session.

Chair Report:

The Chair does not have a report

Director's Report:

- Therese Wolf, Interim Director, and Alexis Zoss, Assistant Director for Operations, presented metrics on the Department's staffing, with a focus on retention. Data for the last two years indicates an almost 50% turnover rate also showing that when new staff are hired, they are employed with the agency less than one (1) year. Currently, there are 20 vacant positions which includes the Director position. Of those vacant positions, eight (8) are Services and eleven (11) are in Family Investment. Six new staff have been hired since September. An overview of information from the 14 exit interviews conducted since July was also reviewed.
- Director Wolf presented a summary from the staff survey conducted by the agency's Staff Development CQI Committee in December 2017. Fifty (50) agency staff responded. The data indicated issues around staff safety, building security, training and staff perception of lack of advancement opportunities. There was a general theme of no work/life balance as reflected in lack of flexibility in schedules.
- Director Wolf reported on a four hour learning session conducted by DHS Chief of Staff, Craig Eichler, on January 16, 2018. Attendees included DSS management and supervisory staff. The goal was to create a plan to address concerns identified from the staff survey, beginning with

security. Next steps were identified and implemented at the agency's all-staff meeting held January 18, 2018. Action steps have already been undertaken.

Continued discussion between Interim Director Wolf and Board members generated other ideas around safety and training including a regular "Safety Stand Down" and the possibility of offering Mental Health First Aid for staff. Ms. Zoss reported on the 2018 Training Plan. The Board recognized the steps being taken to take care of staff so they are better able to take care of customers.

- In further addressing work/life balance, Director Wolf spoke of the need to adjust the hours the agency is open. Currently, the agency hours are 8am-5pm M-F, and open two nights a month until 7pm. Data shows there has been little demand for the extended hours. It is recommended that the agency be open from 8am-4:30pm M-F with no late hours.

New Business

- Rose Frederick, Chair, reports that board member Ella Somerville has submitted her resignation

Adjourn

- A motion to adjourn. The meeting was adjourned at 6:45pm.

The next meeting will be held Tuesday, February 27, 2017 at 5:30pm in the Board Room of the Joseph D. Carter Building

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