

Department of Social Services Advisory Board Meeting

July 28, 2022 @ 6:30 PM – First Floor Conference room

Manassas Regional Airport
10600 Harry Parrish Blvd
Manassas, VA 20110

Social Services Advisory Board members present: Larry Cain and Damita Gilliam Frye. A quorum was not present.

Members Absent: Yajaira Balcarcel, Benjamin Berger, and Katherine Hawkins

Staff present: Anita Brown, LaTanya Buckhalter, Michele Childs, Catrina Ewen, Trevor Hensley, Nicole Kirven, and Kristi Rophael

Others: None

Call to Order: At 6:40 pm, Larry Cain, Advisory Board chair convened the Social Services Advisory Board informational meeting held on Thursday, July 28, 2022.

Public Present: None

Additions to Agenda: None

Welcome: Members and DSS staff took this time to introduce themselves.

Review of Minutes:

The approval of the September 23, 2021, January 27, March 24, May 26, 2022 minutes deferred to the September meeting due to quorum not being present.

Presenter(s): Kristi Rophael – Family Services Specialist III. Adult Services (AS) and Adult Protective Services (APS). Ms. Rophael is the only AS/APS worker in the city currently. APS pertains to those individuals who are:

- 60 years and older
- 18 years to 59 who are * incapacitated

*An incapacitated adult is one who is impaired by Mental illness, Intellectual disability, Physical illness or disability, advanced age, other causes, or adult who lacks sufficient understanding or capacity to make, communicate or carry out reasonable decisions regarding his/her well-being.

These adults may be the victims of neglect by others or self, exploitation, or abuse. When a report is received, again this can be done by mandated reporters, which are comprised of the same professionals as CPS. In the past, when financial exploitation was suspected it had to be over a certain dollar amount before the police were involved but policy recently changed and any suspected financial exploitation cases will involve working in the police department. Banks are taking a more proactive approach in reporting suspected exploitation of elderly/disabled clients. Wells Fargo is one that commonly contacts the agency if something suspicious is occurring with an account.

With APS it is important to remember that they are “adults” and may not want assistance. Upon meeting with the client, if they indicate that they do not want assistance, the worker will have to abide by their wishes. The worker will try to make them as safe as possible. If an individual is determined to be incapacitated and unable to make the decision for themselves,

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then the worker will try to locate family members or acquaintances that can become guardians for the person. If no family members or acquaintances are willing or able to become guardians then an emergency guardian is appointed. Social Services may be appointed as the guardian.

Social Services does not like to remove adults from their homes and seeks alternatives to allow them to stay in their homes. Some adult services such as companion care, meals on wheels, utility assistance, etc. allow elderly or disabled adults to remain in their homes. Funding for these services is very limited.

Currently, Ms. Rophael has 8 cases and the City is guardian to 2 Individuals in long-term care facilities of which, any decisions regarding their care Ms. Rophael is contacted. Most of the cases received are due to self-neglect. The agency also monitors guardian reports for the City. Anyone in the city who has a guardian must submit a guardianship report annually. Currently, there are 39 guardianships in the city. Ms. Rophael and a nurse from the health department conduct Long-term care Uniform Assessment Instrument (UAI) screenings. These screenings are conducted to assess an individual for assistance either in the home or in a long-term care facility. The results are sent to Medicaid for services based on the reporting.

DIRECTOR TIME:

a. Getting to know the community – With COVID restrictions lifted, the Department had the opportunity to get out in the community at the Honey Bee Festival held at the Liberia House on June 25, 2022. The Department looks forward to attending more events and sharing what services are available.

- DSS Commissioner Visit – DSS Commissioner Dr. Danny Avula visited Manassas DSS on July 11, 2022. He is traveling around the state to get to know communities and how each DSS operates and their needs.
- A meeting with the Interfaith Council is scheduled for Friday, July 29th. It is hoped that the Department can network with community partners to assist with items such as Foster Parents' recruitment, and referrals for temporary assistance with clothing, food, and employment.
- Manassas City Schools Resource fair – Scheduled for August 6th. The Department plans on attending to provide information about services that is available to City residents.
- New internal Check-In system – In the month of August, a new check-in system will be placed in the DSS lobby. This new check-in system will streamline the process for clients coming into the office and why they were there and how we can better serve them in the future.
- Faster Families – Electronic referral system that anyone with a phone can access. If someone is interested in becoming a foster parent, they can complete an online screening tool to allow him or her to know their readiness in taking on a Foster child.

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The screening tool is free and approved by the state. They do have to have a 50% or higher score to move on to the next step.

- Referral System: Review of the referral system in our community. Making connections and streamlining the process with electronic communications. MCPS has added new Resource Officers at schools the process of communicating with them will be more streamlined.

b. Departmental Reports:

Benefits: Catrina Ewen, Benefit Programs Unit

Public Assistance programs consist of SNAP (food assistance), Medicaid, TANF (Temporary Assistance to Needy Families, Child Care Assistance, and Virginia Initiative for Education and Work program (VIEW)).

The Benefit Unit currently has 2 vacancies, and posting for the position will begin on August 5, 2022. Benefit Programs Specialist III and Self-Sufficiency Specialist (VIEW). Four new Benefit Program Specialists undergoing training.

The public health waiver that has been in place due to COVID is now set to expire on October 13, 2022, if not extended. The Interview waiver is set to expire on September 30, 2022, if not extended.

By the numbers:

Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) cases-83

SNAP (Food Assistance) cases –1,600

Medicaid cases – 5760 cases and 11,240 individuals

Child Care – cases- 143

Virginia Initiative to Employment/Work (VIEW) – 50 clients 40 regular and 10 transitional cases. With waivers in place, those coming into the program are doing so voluntarily.

Refugee cash assistance (RCA) – no cases at this time but are expected as more refugees come into the area.

Cooling assistance begins on June 15 and ends on August 15. At this time, there is a limit of \$600 per household to receive assistance. This assistance helps pay utility bills or repair existing equipment. 93 applications have been received.

The City operates a utility assistance program called Operation Roundup. If you are a city resident, the information is usually included with your utility bill. If you round up your utility bill, those additional funds go into the program to assist, those residents who need help with their utility bills.

Administration: LaTanya Buckhalter-Assistant Director-Admin/Fiscal Unit

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Currently, there are two vacancies in the Admin/fiscal unit. A Fiscal Specialist and a Human Service Assistant. The Department has a flat budget with the City and State.

The Children's Services Act budget was reduced for FY23 to \$1 million from the state but \$1.4 million from the City. Last year, the state allocated \$1.3 million for the CSA budget, and \$1.3 million was expended. At a previous meeting, T. Robinson the CSA coordinator for the City explained that the funds for CSA are a pooled set of funds. Funds from DSS, Community Services, Department of Juvenile Justice, and Manassas City Schools are pooled together to serve youth in the city. At the beginning of the new fiscal year, July 1, the foster care renewals are staffed for funding. There are currently 15 children in foster care encumbering over \$300,000. The 7 School IEPs encumbered over \$300,000. 3 children from Community Services encumbering \$59,000. There is a Family Assessment and Services Team (FAST) meeting each week that staffs cases for services under CSA funding. It is anticipated that all the funding will be encumbered quickly. If all funds are expended, it is possible to go back to the state and request additional funding.

Housing: Michele Childs-Housing Choice Voucher Program Supervisor

Currently, 94% of housing vouchers are under lease and the remaining are searching. This is a high percentage compared to the rest of the state given the market. The housing program had a waiting list that was last open in 2014. It was at that time, that 4,500 persons applied. The staff has been working on getting the number down but it has been difficult due to no responses. As of May 2022, staff began updating the waiting list at which time there were over 2,200 persons still on the waiting list. Currently, there are only 236 left on the list if a voucher becomes available.

Update on Housing paper to electronic files: Approximately 90 boxes of files were picked up on June 9th. The Virginia Housing Authority has not indicated when the electronic files will be available. In order to continue processing changes to cases, some files have had to be recreated.

Services: Trevor Hensley – Service Program Manager

There is one vacancy in the Services group. A job offer has been made and the position will be filled soon. Two areas of focus, recruiting Foster families and Prevention.

There is not a locality in Virginia that has enough foster families, so it is an area of focus for Manassas DSS. Another area of focus is on Prevention. Far too long in Virginia, a child had to be removed from their family before funds were available to spend on helping a child & their family. The idea is to assist families on the front end. Prevention works with families to help them over the obstacles that are leading to disruption in the family. A parent could be overwhelmed or experiencing substance abuse, in need of mentoring, etc. The agency is continuing to begin building relationships in the community. Mr. Hensley shares a Quarterly Local Agency Dashboard report with the Board members present. (attachment a)

c. Health and Human Services Survey – A Health and Human Services survey will be coming out to City residents soon. All city residents are encouraged to complete the survey and turn it

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in. Results from the survey will assist City departments in their services and information provided to residents.

OLD BUSINESS:

NEW BUSINESS:

a. Volunteer opportunities- Discussion has begun surrounding the upcoming holiday season and assisting those in need. DSS will continue working with Fire and Rescue on holiday gifts for the Foster Children and those families in need. Building relationships with the Interfaith Council to assist those in need.

Next scheduled in-person meeting September 22, 2022.

ADJOURNMENT With no further business to discuss, meeting adjourned at 7:30 pm

Respectfully submitted,

Anita Brown