



DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

Advisory Board
January 25, 2024

1. Welcome

2. Approval of Minutes for 2 November 2023

3. Director's Time: Nicole Kirven

- a) Holiday Party Success
- b) Hiring Statistics, Interns & Volunteers
- c) Move to Customer Service Center (9800 Godwin Dr.)
- d) Opioid Abatement Funding
- e) Departmental Reports: Housing, Family Services, Benefit Programs, and Financial & Support Services
- f) Advisory Board Members' Community Observations, Praises and/or Concerns

4. Old Business: Trevor Hensley

- a) Holiday Giving 2023-Status Update
- b) Foster Care Recruitment
- c) Community Trainings-Fire & Rescue
- d) Community Trainings-MCPS

5. New Business

- a) FY25 Budget-Nicole Kirven
- b) CPMT Letter to the Directors
- c) Prince William Leadership -Volunteer Opportunity Selection: Nicole Kirven

6. Adjournment

Next Advisory Board meeting: Thursday at 6:30p.m. on 28 March 2024. **Location: City of Manassas Public Works, 8500 Public Works Drive, Manassas VA 20110**

Department of Social Services Advisory Board Meeting

January 25th, 2024 @ 6:30 PM – MC Airport 1st floor Conference room

Manassas DSS
9324 West Street
Manassas, VA 20110

Social Services Advisory Board members present: Larry Cain, Robyn Johnson, Irma Mejia Lewis, & Michelle Tapia. Damita Gilliam Frye A quorum was present.

Members Absent: Benjamin Berger, Yajaira Balcarcel, & Council Member Ralph Smith

Staff present: Catrina Ewen, Cicely Harvey, Trevor Hensley Carly Baughn, Nicole Kirven, Kimberly King-Anderson, Meaghan Turner, Michele Childs, Natasha Ruiz

Others: None

Call to Order: At 6:33 pm, Larry Cain, Advisory Board chair convened the Social Services Advisory Board meeting held on Thursday, January 25, 2024.

Public Present: None

Additions to Agenda: None

Welcome:

Review of Minutes:

The minutes from November 2nd, 2023, were reviewed and motion to approve the minutes as presented by Larry Cain, second, Damita Gilliam Frye. Motion passed without opposition.

DIRECTOR TIME:

- a. Holiday Party Success – I just wanted to say thank you for everyone who came out to our Holiday party. We had some hardcore bingo winners at our table. Also thank you for those that helped and participated in our Christmas in July. Thank you for those who gave financially. We had some great gifts for the kids and really great responses from the children. We were able to address and ensure that everyone of our foster kids and prevention kids received a token during that period of time. We will be at it again, so you have not heard the last of us.
- b. Hiring Statistics, Interns & Volunteers- We are looking at, by the 12th of February that we will be down to just one position. That one vacant position is actually one that was added on. This is not a long-standing position. This is a unique position that is grant funded. There maybe one more position that will be grant funded, that will depend on the City Council moving forward on approving opioid abatement. It has been a balance between the Police Department and Social Services that has taken on extra programs to ensure that our residents get what is needed. More to come on that one. Definitely want folks to know how excited we are about this. We are also excited about our interns. We have two right now, one up for graduation and one 1st year. They are doing very well, very successful. Our intern program is growing. We are looking at the possibility of adding an additional intern over time. Maximum will be 4 that we have at one time.

R. Johnson-Where and how do you find your interns?

Manassas DSS
9324 West Street
Manassas, VA 20110

N. Kirven-George Mason has been a really good powerhouse. They have a great Social Work Service program. Also, sometimes word of mouth. I have gotten a couple of applications from other schools and some online schools. The online is a little more challenging, because it requires a little more hand on. If you know anybody that is interested, we try to do it in the beginning of each semester.

- c. Move to Customer Service Center – We are moving to 9800 Godwin Drive in September of this year. City Council did move forward on approving the move in October. However, there are some logistics that we have to work out. Currently all of City Hall is in the Customer Service Center, while City Hall is being renovated. We anticipate renovations being done by April. So, we have a little bit of time to make a couple of renovations to the building to where it will meet our needs for Social Services. There are multiple meetings happening right now, discussing where the school is being moved and where Social Services will be moving in a couple of years. We are addressing concerns to make certain we are meeting the needs of our clients. How are clients are getting back and forth? What things can we put in place to assist? We are in conversation with Omniride, also looking at a drop boxes and a satellite office. All options are on the table right know. If you have any ideas, please let us know.
 - d. Opioid Abatement Funding–I presented to City Council regarding opioid abatement today. We applied for the grants, and we were rewarded. However, we still have to have approval from City council to accept the funding.
 - e. **C. Baughn**- We are looking to incorporating some of our interns to start with opioid abatement until we get this built off the ground. We are looking for a Harm Reduction Specialist for the community. That would be providing educational resources, contacting resources and working to coordinate Medicaid cab transportation. While also working with Prince William County and what they are developing. We are using the same type of money pool, just breaking it down a little different. They are building an outpatient treatment center, new facilities, new programs and peer to peer support. We are working on the harm reduction side of identifying the needs in the schools and the community. Getting everyone access to the different types of resources, like Narcan use. Our Fire department gives out Narcan, but we would like to be a part of that somehow collaborating the same with the police department. Another thing that we Are semi exploring is pouches that you can sealed, you can rip open, put the fentanyl in them and it takes away the touch exposure. Potentially having those dropped off at different locations. That is kind of the base where we are at right now.
- N. Kirven**- Bringing funding directly into the city that can be used for city residents and collaborating with The Greater Prince William is something we have never done before. Usually, we have heavily relied on Prince William to provide those services. We are building the capacity to where we are able to stand on our own with the supports of Prince William. I am very excited that we are having those conversations with City Council to make the decision as to whether or not that is the direction that

Manassas DSS
9324 West Street
Manassas, VA 20110

they would like to go in. Now to come to the table and say, hey this is what can be done, and this is how we can directly impact the citizens of the City of Manassas.

D. Gilliam Frye-What would that program look like for the residence here?

N-Kirven-Information referrals and Harm Reduction. Harm Reduction is the key. We are going to normalize that it is ok to have Narcan in your purse and know it is ok to talk about substance abuse issues. We would rather have it treated than not. We like to ensure folks understand in the community. It is not just working with Social Services, it is also working with the Police Department.

C. Baugh- We want to normalize it is ok to call 911. People do not want to call and abandoned ship versus being able to support.

N. Kirven- Last piece is trying to ensure the Good Samaritan Rule and folks know it is ok. If approved, we will be presenting on February 12th. So hopefully everything goes well.

e. Department Reports

Housing

M. Childs -We have 336 leased right now. We continuously are pulling off the wait list to fill the slots. We are having difficulty that we have never experienced before. Finding people on a brand-new list.

I. Mejia Lewis-You mean you cannot find the people?

M. Childs- Can not find them. They are not responding, or you find them, and they don't come in. Which I have never seen that problem in 31 years.

I. Mejia Lewis - And this list is new? Are you thinking about re-opening?

M.Childs- April of last year. We are calling and emailing, any information that was put on the forms. Not until it goes down to 0 again. We still have 600ish on the list right now.

Family Services

T. Hensley- We are finally fully staffed in the unit. We still have to get some people trained and comfortable in their positions. February we will be finishing with Motivational Interviewing which has been a several month process. March is Social Worker Appreciation Month. April is Child Abuse Prevention Awareness Month, We plan to do pinwheels again this year. So, we are asking for volunteers. If you would like to join us on Center Street downtown.

C. Baughn-It has been nice to actually have and develop an on-call intake training and sit down with our entire team. We sent a child home to a parent this month. Foster care as a whole we are doing a little bit of a shift. We are starting to get into independent living. Fostering future skills. That is because we have some 15-year-olds that are not going to be adopted or not willing to be adopted. That is their choice in the state of Virginia They are looking at colleges and programs, which we pay out if the Chafee funds. We are working on the Title IV-E grant application that is due in March. The grant can help us in foster parents training. It can also send staff to training for more therapeutic based and recruitment training. We are really trying to have another big

Manassas DSS
9324 West Street
Manassas, VA 20110

push to get some local homes, to keep our kids in local areas Most of our kids in foster care are outside of our community and we would love to keep them in their communities and schools. Hopefully with this grant we can take some higher need children by getting additional trainings.

Benefits

C. Ewen -We currently have 3 vacancies in our unit. We do have 2 new BPS starting on January 29th and another coming February 12th. We were granted a new position for a self-sufficiency, that we are screening applicants now. SNAP updates, as of October 1st if you are 18-52 with no dependance or not meeting an exemption, you need to be working in order to receive food stamps allotments. Also working at least 20 hours a week to keep their benefits. Because there is a time limit which is 3 months in order to maintain it. You would have to be working 80 hours in a 30-day period and we do have to verify that information. Our total case number for SNAP right now is 1763. Medicaid, we are unwinding from the pandemic. We are basically back to normal business, processing current and overdue Medicaid renewals. We are currently down to 981 overdue cases. November 1st Virginia started their own system. We are away from the federal market to a Virginia state base exchange. Which is not the greatest. It is a work in progress. Medicaid case numbers were 5865 and enrollees 11,950.

TANF/View

C. Harvey- We have started to see a slight decrease in the TANF applications that are coming. As of today, we have 52 active TANF cases and 31 view cases. Our Manassas city DSS was recently selected by the state to give a testimonial because we have the Full Employment Program. Our Parnter with the Full Employment Program is Habitat Restore on Hastings. If they hire someone who is enrolled in the program depending on what tier and how many hours, they receive \$1000 a month. The employer does for hiring them. We kind of have a relationship with Habitat Restore. They call and say I have 3 vacancies. Who could you send me, and we send clients over.

N. Kirven- I was having a great time tooting our own horn about this with the City Council. One of the things that they did bring up was the possibility of opening up for our groundskeepers and some of our entry level positions to our clients. Seeing the levels of success and seeing that it can be done outside in Habitat Restore that they are now saying, we want to bring this program here directly for the City of Manassas.

D. Gilliam Frye-Is the Habitat Restore the only one?

C. Harvey - The one in the City of Manassas in the northern region is the only one that has a partnership with DSS agency.

N. Kirven- That is correct. It is very small but a powerful unit in our community. Mr. Wendell Drummond has that same passion in going out into the community. He has been able to get his foot in the door where none of us have been able to. Our goal is to be small but mighty and powerful out in the community.

We currently have 8 clients enrolled in the program for childcare for day care cases.

Manassas DSS
9324 West Street
Manassas, VA 20110

We have 179 and we are serving 283 children. Fuel and Energy programs ended on November 15th. We had a total number of 146 applications with 122 of those applications being approved. Crisis started November 1st, this program assists clients with repairs to their heating unit. Starting on January 1st, crisis can help clients who have current shut off notices. To date we have received a total of 30 applications with 7 approvals. We do not currently at this time have any refugee cases.

N. Kirven- Medicaid unwinding has been a huge task, we started off with 2600 with new applications coming in and renewals on top of that each month. So every time you finish up with the renewals, next month comes another drop. We will be doing this for the next couple of months, until April 1st. It's not just our agency, it is all the local DSS. Our workers are working very hard and doing well to get it down.

CSA

M Turner- We are currently serving 35 children for fiscal year to date, which is July 2023 until now. 15 of those children are from Manassas City Schools, 16 from foster care, 1 from CSB and 1 from Court Services Unit. We have spent expenditures through January 3rd of \$ 737,803.11 and we have an obligated fund balance of \$1,744,516.00. Just a little behind, but hopefully we will be returning more children home. We are working to get that down.

N. Kirven- We keep tabs on it. If we need to go back to City Council, we can. We have already gone to the state, the funding for state is always there. LaTanya has done a great job. Trying to predict our future as to how much we will need. So, I definitely wanted to put it out there as to ensuring we are financially savvy and making sure we are doing the right things with the funding.

Customer Service

K. King Anderson- December walk-ins were 1030 people. So far for January we had 916 as of today. We did add to our DSS check-in mode of transportations since we are moving all the way across town. Most of the clients have driven or got a ride that was 115, uber or shared ride was 7 and walking was 25. The Uber riders you figure it will be more expensive for them. We are finally fully staffed, so that is a good thing.

R. Johnson- Is there a bus route that goes over that way.

N-Kirven-The bus route stops at the judicial center, so I call it the 3-mile gap. The Judicial Center to the Customer Service Center it is 3 miles. Yes, we are working with Omniride and various options.

D. Gilliam Frye- From my understanding with Omniride you can call and request a diversion plan. You can call in to schedule a diversion plan so the bus can pick you up and take you to a place that is not the regular route.

R. Johnson- Maybe if they have enough of those, they would see the need.

N-Kirven The piece with the divergent plan is you have to actually sign up and be eligible for it. So, it just getting folks more information about it, that is the goal. Which we are trying to do with having conversations with Omniride. Giving them the opportunity to put messaging out first and we follow up. You probably saw that they

Manassas DSS
9324 West Street
Manassas, VA 20110

are doing a continued initiative regarding food insecurity. Where you can drop off food over at 9800, it is kind of their way of slowly getting votes and helping our food shelter. There are multiple things happening with construction. The buses have had to make different routes and so some of the current bus stops are no longer active. I do not foresee changes when we move over and then again in a couple of years. So they will have to take in consideration the different construction areas on top of adding in our move to the customer service center.

D. Gilliam Frye- I lived in Manassas for 25 years and there have never been bus service on that side.

N-Kirven- We are having discussions, there is a City Council liaison that sits with PTRC that was invited to the retreat to hear how things are going. We are building those relationships. It is very important that we get this right. We understand that this is a shared problem.

D. Gilliam Frye- Any consideration for Social Service to provide a shuttle?

N-Kiven- That is on the table, all solutions are on the table. It has been what makes the most sense? Kim is leading the charge and keeping the data in our check-in system, so we know what is needed.

M.Tapia- I feel like if we were a tighter community, we could probably have a group of volunteers and have a schedule.

N-Kirven- Possibilities I like that. No stone left unturned. You think it up, we take it and put it into consideration. The worse suggestion is the one not brought forth.

f. Advisory Board Members' Community Observation. Praises and/or Concerns

R. Johnson- I got to meet two social service workers that were at Osborne. I was going to the basketball game, but I forgot something was going on in the auditorium. Different presentations for the community and then they have different vendors.

C. Ewen- It was the E3 series. It is different topics each month. This month it was Human Trafficking.

D. Gilliam- I have a student at Osborne, I was informed on our weekly call, what is the E3 series?

N-Kirven-The police department has won 2 or 3 different awards for the E3 series (Engage Educate Empower). It helps in providing outreach in the community instead of the only time that the police are available is when there is something bad. Here is something that they are doing good that can build relationships. It started out as a small, but I think we got a little powerhouse going on.

R. Johnson That is an excellent idea because you are touching a lot of families and especially families who care, if they are willing to come to an event on a Tuesday night.

C. Baughn-February 21st ,5:30-8:00 in Internet Safety and Bullying, March 20th is Youth Violence and April 17th is Mental Health and it is open to the community.

M.Tapia- Is this part of the school or is this a police program?

Manassas DSS
9324 West Street
Manassas, VA 20110

C. Baughn-It is a Police program. E3 is engage, educate and empower. Officer TJ leads and host it. So many other people from the community come out to help. Tons of vendors with information to pass out.

R. Johnson- That would be good for mentoring groups.

D. Gilliam Frye-Do you ever consider putting a banner on Center Street? To promote activities or whatever. Because everyone travels that way.

N-Kirven-No, that's a good thought. I don't think we have ever thought about that. I will check with Patty.

M.Tapia-I am just thinking in terms of foster families and engaging the community a little bit. I think we talked about it last time, foster families and events where we can engage and families that have the resources to become foster families. Is that something you would be interested in hosting? Kind of like CASA doing the gala. The purpose or the mission would be talking about what Social Service does and also recruiting foster families.

T. Hensley- A lot of what we do is, try to participate in events that are already organized. Our next event is the Bee festival. A couple of years ago we got really nice cards that had bees on them to recruit foster homes and handed them out. We do not really host our own events, but we try to piggyback on other existing events in the City.

M.Tapia- Did you keep track of how many people were recruited at the Bee festival.

T. Hensley- We did not per each event. We had several families, that started the process, and they got far along in the process, but it is a hard commitment to make. We had a lot of families drop out.

N-Kirven- Just being honest, some of this is just funding. Unlike a non-profit that has that extra cash slush fund. We try to stretch the dollar with partnering in other community events to ensure every dollar is getting back to the community as quickly as possible.

D. Gilliam Frye- I am glad to hear about the Opioid program. I volunteer at the jail. I see a lack of presence and knowledge of Social Service in the jail. They sent them out in the community for the residence to take care of, so I am glad to see that we are beginning to get in the mindset that we need to take care of our own. They are coming back to the community, and you want them to be better than when they left. I think this program may spark that we will be willing to take care of our own.

N. Kirven- Through the View program we go directly to the jail, to work directly with them. By the time that they are walking out the doors, they already have applications and work boots. We have also gotten request for CDL licenses and helping with cars. At the end of the day, we want to empower them to complete independence. If not, they will remain in the system.

D. Gilliam Frye- Do you ever have seminars or workshops for the local businesses, so they are aware of what you are doing. So maybe they can get involved or be more accountable of some of what happens in their communities.

N. Kirven- We have not I am writing that down because we can recruit in the community Part of it was capacity. When we first started the View/SNAP E&T program it was only .5FTE, only half of a position. Now we have moved to one full

Manassas DSS
9324 West Street
Manassas, VA 20110

dedicated person to now moving to where it will be two people. So now it is a little easier to get out into the community. I do foresee doing that in the horizon because we are building that program.

4. OLD BUSINESS

a) Our Christmas in July

T. Hensley- The state does not give us money for the gifts for the foster kids, so it becomes a budget line issue for us. It was also a capacity issue, we really did not have the staff at the time to really grab the Christmas in July. One of our prevention people Neerja kind of took the reins of coordinating it for us. We hope to do a much more efficient job this year. We will be coming back to you guys asking for help and ideas. We appreciate all the help you did this year and will definitely yell again for this year.

b) **T. Hensley**- Carly has already talked a little about Foster care recruitment and trainings for fire and Rescue.

NEW BUSINESS:

a. Budget

Nicole Kirven –We are moving forward in running a flat budget. That is what we are anticipating for FY 25, no supplementals that is the big piece. City Council and our Interim City Manager, ICM Keen really firmly believes in investing in the resources, meaning the people that we have here in our current positions. That is where our 3% raise occurred. Also looking at the possibility of doing another kind of comparison analysis on what salaries look like in similar cities and counties.

b. CPMT- We are in the process of doing a self-assessment, Meagan is leading the charge in going through and looking at a lot of the polices. One thing that came up is who sits on our board. We sent out letters to each director to make certain they are comfortable with who they were sending to the meetings.

M. Turner- CPMT stands for Community Policy Management Team. There are representatives from Behavioral health, the School system, CSB and DJJ that meet every month. They approve funding I use for CSA. They also come up with other possible ways of doing things differently. They review policies and, procedure. There is not a lot of rotation on the board. I wanted to make sure we reached out to the directoros of each agency, making sure the ones coming to the meeting can make financial decisions.

c. Prince William Leadership-Volunteer Opportunity Selection- The Day of giving is what they are proposing. Micron is looking at giving \$10,000 towards a health and wellness event, with food, healthy statistics, and education.

Next scheduled in-person meeting March 28th, 2024. ****NEW** Location is Public Works, 8500 Public Works Drive, Manassas, VA 20110.**

January 25, 2024 @ 6:30 PM – MC Airport 1st floor Conference room

Manassas DSS
9324 West Street
Manassas, VA 20110

ADJOURNMENT With no further business to discuss, motion to adjourn meeting by I. Mejia Lewis, second by Michelle Tapia. Motion passed. Meeting adjourned at 7:44 pm

Respectfully submitted,
Natasha Ruiz