



DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

Advisory Board
July 27, 2023

1. Welcome

2. Approval of Minutes for 25 May 2023

3. Director's Time: Nicole Kirven

- a) Many Thanks! (29 Years of Service)
- b) Retirements: Administrative Coordinator, Anita Brown & Human Services Assistant III, Cecilia Lazarides
- c) Elder Abuse Prevention Month (June 2023)
- d) Foster Care- Carly Baughn
- e) "A Forever Family" (Manassas City Book Club Meeting) 29 July 2023
- f) Departmental Reports: Housing, Family Services, Benefit Programs, and Financial & Support Services

4. Old Business: Trevor Hensley

- a) Christmas in July 2023
- b) National Night Out
- c) Resource Fair
- d) Foster Care Recruitment

5. New Business

- a) Budget-LaTanya Buckhalter
- b) Building-Nicole Kirven
- c) Volunteer Opportunities: Nicole Kirven
 - 1. Festival Salvadoreno
 - 2. City of Manassas Public Library New Book Club

6. Adjournment

Next Advisory Board meeting: Thursday at 6:30p.m. 28 September 2023. **Location: Manassas Airport, 10600 Harry J. Parrish Boulevard, 1st. Floor conference room.**

Department of Social Services Advisory Board Meeting

July 27, 2023 @ 6:30 PM – Public Works 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, and Councilmember Ralph Smith. A quorum was present.

Members Absent: Benjamin Berger, Yajaira Balcarcel, and Damita Gilliam Frye

Staff present: Anita Brown, LaTanya Buckhalter, Catrina Ewen, Cicely Harvey, Trevor Hensley, Nicole Kirven, Kimberly King-Anderson, Cammie Robinson, and Meaghan Turner.

Others: None

Call to Order: At 6:35 pm, Larry Cain, Advisory Board chair convened the Social Services Advisory Board meeting held on Thursday, July 27, 2023.

Public Present: None

Additions to Agenda: None

Welcome:

Review of Minutes:

The minutes from May 25, 2023, were reviewed and motion to approve the minutes as presented by R. Johnson, second, M. Tapia. Motion passed without opposition.

DIRECTOR TIME:

- a. Many Thanks! (29 years of Service) The agency has been fortunate to have several long-time staff members. Lorri Jackson, Family Services Specialist II who is the Intake Specialist has been with the agency for 29 years.
- b. Retirements: Administrative Coordinator, Anita Brown & Human Services Assistant III, Cecilia Lazarides. Two of our long-time employees are retiring, Anita Brown, who has been with the agency for 24 years and Cecilia Lazarides who has been with the agency for 15 years in the Customer Service area.
- c. Elder Abuse Prevention – In the month of June, the agency had the opportunity to bring attention to Elder Abuse Prevention (attach A). To start out the month, a proclamation was given at the June 12th Council meeting. While attending the Pershing Army band performance at the Harris Pavilion, 90 purple ribbons were given out. The purple ribbons are worn in recognition of Elder Abuse Prevention.
- d. Foster Care-Carly Baughn- Stepping in Carly Baughn is Cammie Robinson, Family Services Specialist II (Foster Care). Cammie is new to the agency, but not new to social work. She has been a foster care worker for 6 years. The agency works as a team, and this was very evident recently when workers from different aspects of Social Services came together to aid a child in need.

*A 5 yr. old child, “Johnny” with medically diagnosed autism spectrum disorder came into foster care on May 29th. Johnny is non-verbal but understands what is being said to him. He is highly intelligent and can bring you to what he wants. He is now in his 5th foster home placement since coming into care. For those who

Manassas DSS
9324 West Street
Manassas, VA 20110

have not heard the term “displaced youth”, it means that there is not a placement for a youth in care. During the time that there is not a placement for the youth, the team comes together to fill in the gaps. Often this means providing care for the youth in the agency office. For the last week and a half, the team has provided 24 hr. care for this child. Day time in the office and nights at local hotels. The Family Service team (which is down 3 workers) along with members of senior management and staff from the other units rotated shifts, providing coverage. All the while, still doing their regular work. This type of event is not unusual, the entire state of Virginia is experiencing hardships with finding placements for children, especially for children with any type of a disability. It took over a week and a half to find a placement for Johnny, due the special needs that he has.

The agency will continue to build their foster families in Manassas. As always anyone interested in becoming or knowing someone who would like to become a Foster Parent, please reach out to the agency. There is always a need for more foster homes as you can never have too many. If you or know of anyone who is interested in becoming a foster family. You can click the Ur code below for more information or reach out to Trevor Hensley at ralph.t.hensley@dss.virginia.gov.



- e. “A Forever Family” (Manassas City Book Club Meeting) July 29, 2023 (attach B)
The Manassas City Public Library held a book reading on July 29th at 1:30 pm. The Board members present received an informational postcard containing information about the event. This book reading includes the book “A Forever Family”. The focus of the book is foster care and is written by someone who has firsthand experience with fostering in Manassas.

Departmental reports:

- a. Housing- The Housing Unit is fully staffed after filling the vacant part-time Housing position. This worker comes with 30 years of housing experience. Audits of the housing program continued to be at 100%. Workers are busy pulling folks from the wait list that was open back in April.
- b. Family Services- As mentioned previously, to care for the mentioned child, workers from every unit in the agency participated in shifts to assist with caring for the child. A couple of years ago the Governor established a Safe and Sound task force to assist localities in placing children. To break down recent event by man-hours: It took roughly 180 staff hours divided by 40 hrs. per week, that equals 1 full time person working 4 ½ weeks just to maintain this

Manassas DSS
9324 West Street
Manassas, VA 20110

child in a hotel and in the office, not including workers who continued their regular work schedule.

There are currently 3 total vacant Family Service Specialists, 2 Family Service Specialist II (APS & FC) and 1 vacant Family Services Specialist III (CPS) positions. The Family Services unit did welcome a new Family Services Specialist II, LaTawsha, whose main work will be CPS.

c. Benefit Programs- Updates:

Currently the Benefit Unit has 1 vacancy for a Benefit Programs Specialist II position and will have another vacancy as of August 3rd.

- Interviews for TANF applications and resumed as of June 3rd. TANF cases as of July 25 was 64 cases and 34 VIEW cases.
- SNAP – As of July 25, SNAP cases are 1,790 and as of June 1, 2023, interviews are now being conducted on all new applications, renewals, and reviews. It takes approximately 20-30 minutes to conduct interviews. In the SNAP E&T program there are 13 actively participants, but remember that under this program, participation is voluntary.
- Medicaid- As of July 25th, the agency has 5,971 cases. Currently there are 2,018 cases that are overdue as of July 16, 2023. This is a decrease from the 2,800 last reported.
- Daycare- The state has increased income limits and extended some of the guidelines/policies regarding the program to include job search. There was also a time limit on daycare assistance that has been removed. To date, there are 177 cases, serving 278 children.
- Energy assistance: The cooling assistance program began on June 15 and ends August 15th. The program assists clients with electric bills, as well as AC repairs or cooling unit repairs. To qualify for assistance, the household must have a vulnerable person in the home. A vulnerable person is a child under the age of 6, a disabled person or someone who is 60 years old or older. As of July 16th, a total of 80 applications submitted, 2 were approved for services on their cooling units, 59 were approved for payments on their cooling bills and 19^l were denied as they did not have a vulnerable person in the home.
- Refugee assistance- The agency has 1 refugee assistance case which is due to close August 2023.

d. Finance/Support-

Customer Service: The Customer Service Unit will be short one staff person as due to retirement on August 31st. For the month of June, the agency served a total of 1,007 clients coming in and answered 1,624 calls.

Manassas DSS
9324 West Street
Manassas, VA 20110

Children Services Act (CSA): The FY24 Budget for CSA has been released. All localities received less funding than the previous year. Last year the funding for CSA was \$1.7 million and this year the allocation was \$950,000. In the early part of July, notice was received of the new foster care basic maintenance payments. Any increases to Foster Care basic maintenance payments are received at this time of year. Two weeks ago, the Governor rescinded the increases and set FC basic maintenance payments back to the previous year's amount. Last week, noticed was given to localities that a cap of 2% increases in payment for services on Private Day education was to be observed. Any increases over the 2% would have to be paid by either the schools or through local only funds. Private Day costs for the city increased 4.63%, which means that 2.63% would have to be covered by the schools or locality. Currently this means that approximately \$30,000 would come from either the schools or the locality.

OLD BUSINESS:

- a. Christmas in July 2023-To get ahead of the season, the agency is working with several organizations to donate gift cards that will be used to purchase gifts for foster children in December. The goal is \$2,500, with \$1,300 having been received at this time. If the Board knows of anyone interested, please feel free to contact the agency's point of contact which is Neerja Jain. Information will be sent out to Board members who wish to share this donation opportunity with others.
- b. National Night Out-The agency will have a table at the Community's National Night Out on August 1st. on the Museum lawn. To provide information and answer questions.
- c. Resource Fair- Manassas City Public School resource fair will be on August 12th at Metz Middle School. The agency will have staff and information at this event.
- d. Foster Care Recruitment- Foster Parent recruitment efforts are continuing through various community events. As always anyone interested in becoming or knowing someone who would like to become a Foster Parent, please reach out to the agency. There is always a need for more foster homes as you can never have too many. If you or know of anyone who is interested in becoming a foster family. You can click the Ur code below for more information or reach out to Trevor Hensley at ralph.t.hensley@dss.virginia.gov.



Manassas DSS
9324 West Street
Manassas, VA 20110

*CASA is having a fund raiser event that allows for others to have informational booths at their event. Possibly DSS could have a booth there to provide information about Foster Parenting? Board member Michele Tapia to provide information.

NEW BUSINESS:

a. Budget-LaTanya Buckhalter

The new fiscal year began on July 1, 2023. For Manassas City Dept of Social Services the budget is \$8 million dollars. \$2.6 million comes from the General Fund, the remaining comes from state and federal revenues. The expenditures and revenues must balance.

Expenditures:

- 61% of the budget is personnel-45.5 FTE
- 37% is services and supplies
- 2% is internal service charges

Revenues

- 41% comes from federal
- 32% comes from the general fund
- 27% comes from the state

Last year, \$83.56 million went back into the community through the department's managed programs. Last year only \$2 million was used from the General fund and that was due to salary savings from vacant positions.

One concern this year, is CSA. \$1.4 million dollars is budgeted for CSA this year. The CSA budget for last year has not been closed yet, since invoices for services during FY23 can be paid up to September 30, 2023. Currently expenditures of \$1.8 million dollars for services in CSA have been paid. A total of 39 youth was served through CSA in FY23.

- 14 youth from Manassas City Public Schools (IEPs)
- 19 youth from Manassas DSS
- 1 youth from Court Services
- 5 youth from Community Services Board

The salary cost savings will not be an option in new year as critical positions are filled. Private Day placements continue to be the larger costs in CSA. The Office of Children's Services (OCS) has stated that due to the General Assembly not having passed the budget amendment, CSA must revert to the previous year's rule on the private day cost increase. This means that private day placements service costs can only increase by 2%. This is in contradiction to what was anticipated. Due to the delay, providers had already set their rates at an increase of 4.63%. Directions received from the state to localities were to ask providers to resubmit their rates not to exceed 2%. Providers are under no obligation to change their rates. If the costs are over the 2%, the overage then falls onto the local school system or locality. For this fiscal year, 12 youth from Manassas City Schools (IEP) with obligated funds of over \$1 million.

July 27, 2023 @ 6:30 PM – MC Public Works Conference room

Manassas DSS
9324 West Street
Manassas, VA 20110

- b. Building-Nichole Kirven-The lease for the DSS office space is up in fall of 2024. Discussions are taking place to consider all options.
- c. Cooling stations- With temperatures being very high, discussions are taking place about setting up local cooling stations. DSS has been in talks with members from the Interfaith Collation. There was one church that has indicated an interest in providing a cooling station site. More information to come.
- d. Volunteer Opportunities: Nicole Kirven
 - 1. Festival Salvadoreno- The agency will have a table with information for this event on Sunday, August 6th. 10 am to 6pm
 - 2. City of Manassas Public Library New Book Club- The library is putting together a book club if anyone is interested in joining. As a reminder a member of the DSS staff will be doing a book reading on July 29, 2023 @1:30pm.

Next scheduled in-person meeting November 2, 2023. ****NEW** Location is Manassas City Airport, 10600 Harry L. Parrish Boulevard, 1st floor conference room, 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 7:55 pm

Respectfully submitted,

Anita Brown