



DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

Advisory Board
January 26, 2023

1. Welcome
2. New City Council Liaison (Council Member Ralph Smith)
3. Approval of Minutes for 17 November 2023
4. Director's time
 - a) Community Outreach- (Parenting E-3 Series, Presentation to MCPS, Pending Point In Time-Homeless Count)
 - b) Service:
 - 1) 12 Ways of Giving
 - 2) Untrim a Tree-Seniors
 - 3) Giving to the Homeless
 - c) Emergency Preparedness -9 June 2023
 - d) Budget Cycle
 - e) Public Health Unwinding
 - f) Departmental reports: Family Services, Benefit Programs, and Financial & Support Services
5. Old Business
 - a) Foster Care Recruitment
6. New Business
 - a) Volunteer opportunities-
 1. 150th City of Manassas Anniversary
 2. Christmas in July
7. Adjournment

Next Advisory Board meeting: Thursday at 6:30p.m. 23 March 2023. Location City of Manassas Public Works bldg. 8500 Public Works Drive, Manassas, VA

Department of Social Services Advisory Board Meeting

January 26, 2023 @ 6:30 PM – First Floor Conference room

Manassas DSS
9324 West Street
Manassas, VA 20110

Social Services Advisory Board members present: Benjamin Berger, Larry Cain, Damita Gilliam Frye, Robyn Johnson, Irma Mejia Lewis, and Michelle Tapia and Councilmember Ralph Smith. A quorum was present.

Members Absent: Yajaira Balcarcel

Staff present: Anita Brown, LaTanya Buckhalter, Michele Childs, Catrina Ewen, Nicole Kirven, and Kimberly King-Anderson

Others: Devin Vaughan, INOVA

Call to Order: At 6:32 pm, Larry Cain, Advisory Board chair convened the Social Services Advisory Board meeting held on Thursday, January 26, 2023.

Public Present: None

Additions to Agenda: None

Welcome: City liaison Councilmember Ralph Smith. Members and DSS staff took this time to introduce themselves.

Review of Minutes:

The minutes from November 17, 2023, were reviewed and motion to approve the minutes as presented by I. Mejia Lewis, second, B. Berger. Motion passed without opposition.

DIRECTOR TIME:

A. Departmental reports

a. **Community Outreach**

- i. Pending Point in time -Some DSS staff including, Trevor Hensley and LaTanya Buckhalter participated in the program to go out into the community, which includes PWC, Manassas City and Manassas Park to count the homeless population in areas where they were living.
- ii. PE-3 Series – These information sessions are a collaboration with the Police Department. These sessions can include topics such as what do to if a parent suspects their child is using drugs, how to do successful parenting, etc. The department tries to ensure that a worker from the benefit unit and the services unit attend so that if a question arises from either area of expertise, the parent can receive the information there. Further information can be found on facebook about when the sessions are taking place and what that session will cover.
- iii. Presentation of MCPS – An on-training session has been scheduled for January 30, 2023. The training is a collaborative effort between DSS Service workers, MCPS Counselors, School liaisons, and Security officers.

b. Service

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1. 12 Ways of Giving- Each year the City coordinates with community partners opportunities for staff and citizens to give back to the community. Some of those opportunities are going to a nursing home and playing Bingo with the residents, reading books to children at schools, decorating small holiday trees to be sent to senior centers, nursing homes and the like. Photos were shared with Board members of staff participating in some of the events. One of our staff excelled at the giving of her time and was recognized by the City. She was awarded \$1,000 donation to the non-profit or charitable organization of her choice. The organization chosen was Tummy Yum Yum located on West Street, who is known for providing food, water, clothing, etc to anyone in need. The agency did have another worker, Meaghan Turner who was received second place in the 12 ways of giving.
 2. Untrim a tree- seniors-With the donations received, 16 gift baskets were assembled and given to the Meals on Wheels program to be distributed to seniors.
 3. Giving to the Homeless-being able to give to the homeless.
- c. Emergency Preparedness – In the event of a disaster in the City of Manassas that would require opening of a shelter, the City of Manassas DSS is responsible for opening, operating, and staffing of an emergency shelter. The agency works closely with the Manassas City Public Schools, Fire and Police Departments in operating of a shelter. As part of emergency preparedness, the agency conducts an actual hands-on training event for staff. This year, the training event will take place June 9, 2023 at Osbourn High School. More information will be coming out from Amelia, the Emergency Management Specialist with the City Fire & Rescue Department.
 - d. Budget Cycle – It is important to the agency to collaborate with community resources to further serve the city residents. Pooling of funds only serves to be able to provide more for city residents. Some discussion has been going on concerning the homeless population. There is a couple of emergency vouchers for the homeless population, currently available. To clarify, there is the “Prince William area” that includes, PWC, Manassas City and Manassas Park. This can cause some confusion when it comes to jurisdiction. There is a rental assistance program in Manassas Park and also one in PWC but Manassas City does not have one currently.
 - e. Public Health Unwinding-The agency is experiencing an uptick in residents seeking assistance as COVID funding goes away.

f. 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)).

Currently, we do have two vacancies for our BPS unit, a Benefit Programs Specialist II and Benefit Programs Manager. In the month of January, the agency hired a Benefit

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worker II in December and one Self-Sufficiency (VIEW) worker that began on January 3rd.

Clients have been receiving notification from the state and from their workers about the unwinding. Notifications have been going out for over a year that the additional food stamps families were receiving were going to stop and the waivers were stopping. The Department of Medical Assistance Services (DMAS) has been sending out notifications since October/November 2022 for Medicaid changes. Information has also been placed in the utility bill insert. Flyers are on display in the lobby of DSS.

The unwinding, which means that the requirements that were lifted during COVID will go back into place. As of January 1, 2023, unwinding is already taking place for Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) and Virginia Initiative to Education & Work (VIEW) participants. TANF is a financial assistance program and requires the clients to participate in the VIEW program. Workers are working with clients to get them back into the workforce, go back to school or some other work component. The clients must participate unless they have an exemption or hardship, and this is evaluated on a case-by-case basis. Currently, the agency has 75 TANF cases, 41 are in the VIEW program and 10 referrals to the VIEW program that are being worked on.

For the SNAP program, the unwinding date has not been given yet. During COVID, interviews for SNAP at the point of application and during case reviews were waived. Interviews were required at the time of application and during the case review before COVID. The waiver is currently in place until March 31, 2023. The waiver decision which would come from USDA could be extended for another 90 days but this is not expected. Currently the agency has approximately 1754 cases for SNAP. The agency continues to work on the SNAPET program, which has 1 participant currently. The ET part is the employment side. The SNAPET program is a volunteer program for those clients receiving food stamps who are willing to participate in the program. If they participate in the program, we can help them with other supportive services. February will be last month that SNAP recipient's will receive an extra amount on their SNAP benefit.

On the Medicaid side of our program, the waiver is in place until March 31, 2023. Recently announced, April 1, 2023, workers can begin to make changes to their cases. Since COVID began, no changes to Medicaid cases could be made unless the client passed away, moved, or requested their case be closed. Workers will begin reviewing all their cases to ensure that the recipients still qualify under current policies. Statewide there are approximately 1,000,000 cases that are overdue and will need to be evaluated over the next 12 to 14 months. The agency has approximately 2,500 that are overdue. Workers are working together to clean up cases. The agency has approximately 6152 Medicaid cases. Enrollees number about 11,895 people enrolled in the city on Medicaid. There has also been an uptick in applications received from the Federal Market place for evaluation. If they do not qualify for Medicaid, the application is returned to the Market place.

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For Daycare, the unwinding is happening as well. During COVID, parents received a break in that the federal government paid the co-payments for childcare recipients. The co-payments began on January 1, 2023. The agency has 160 of daycare cases serving 242 children.

Fuel or energy program just wrapped up in November. The Crisis program which started November 1st is running. That program is for servicing like repairs and replacements on heating equipment up to a certain amount. January 1, funds can be used to assist with disconnect notices, or they are moving into a new place and need assistance with a security deposit. 39 applications for CRISIS have been received, which is the most ever received. Only 8 have been approved, 2 repairs and 6 bill payments, the remaining applications did not meet the criteria for assistance.

At this point, the agency does not have any refugee assistance cases.

Services: The Services unit currently has two vacant positions. A Family Service Manager and a Family Service Specialist III. For the month of December, the agency has received 118 intake calls, which could be anything from child abuse, adult protective services complaint, or rental /food assistance. Right now, we're currently working 34 CPS cases, which includes family assessments, investigations, and prevention cases. The Services unit just completed a Child & Family Services (CFS) review. This review not only takes into consideration compliance but also interviews everyone involved in the case. The Services unit received a superior rating in all areas. T. Hensley met with Shauna Moller who is a Community Resource Officer with the Manassas City Police Department. She will be reviewing incident reports that have domestic violence, substance abuse and mental health issues to try and ascertain whether the family had received services that they needed. If they didn't through the police department, then she is going to reach out to community resources for assistance and Social Services will be one of those resources.

Housing: Michele Childs- The Housing unit remains very busy. As vouchers become available, MC housing unit makes the request for more and has secured additional vouchers for the city. The Housing unit is updating their process to prescreen and have applicant documents at the ready for when vouchers become available. Currently the housing unit is 87% leased up with 5 more voucher holders to lease by February 1. The waiting list that last opened 2014 was at 2,200. Through the process of updating the waitlist that is now down to 83. When the list gets close to "0", a request to open the list can be made. The Housing Authority will decide when and how long to open the list.

Administration: LaTanya Buckhalter-Assistant Director-Admin/Fiscal Unit
The Customer Service unit is finally fully staffed, with the vacant Human Services Assistant position being filled as of January 3, 2023. For the month of December, the agency answered 1,612 calls and had 874 customer walk-ins and 992 translations verbal and written.

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The agency does have a vacant position, Children's Services Act (CSA) Coordinator position that is being advertised. In referencing the CSA statistical report: the funds are reflected in two CSA allocations; state and city. The State allocation is \$1,078,890.00 and the City's is \$1,462,500.00. The State's allocation for FY23 was \$310,590 less, whereas the City's allocation remained the same. Also reflected in the report is the breakdown of the different groups from which their pooled funds are pulled. The number of youths being served from each group, the expenditures, and the obligated funds for those youth. On the report is the balance for each allocation if all the obligated funds are expended, which is a negative balance. If all the obligated funds are expended, a supplemental request will be made to the state for the additional funds. The funding for services is mandated and any obligated funds will be paid. Ongoing conversations have been had with the City Manager if additional funds are needed.

OLD BUSINESS:

- a. Foster Care Recruitment- Foster Care recruitment- Social Services is always looking for good foster families. The agency was fortunate to have a foster family approved in October and November and one more that is almost done. There are two families who have indicated an interest and they are being contacted. The city has 4 approved foster families. There is a website called Family Match. One way to get to the website is by scanning the QR code on a recruitment card. This will take them to a website where they may enter their contact information. It does not obligate anyone to anything. The recruitment cards were distributed for anyone wishing to take and share with others. The agency has been sharing these cards with local churches and other non-profits.

NEW BUSINESS:

- a. Volunteer opportunities-
 1. 150th City of Manassas Anniversary- The City will be celebrating their 150th anniversary in 2023 with the Kickoff being on April 1, 2023. Social Services will be at many community events. June has been designated as the month where Social Services will be the most active. As more events are firmed up a calendar of events will be shared with the Board.
 2. Christmas in July-Partner with area businesses in anticipate the needs for Foster Children for the holiday season.
 3. Michelle Tapia - Liaisons @ local school – Career sharing with 5th and 6th graders. Also a "Woman in trades" event being held at Osbourn High School. They are looking for volunteers to share information and inspire/encourage high schoolers. If interested, please contact Michelle at tapiamiche@gmail.com. CASA- looking for mentors especially for males? Jazz cuts located on Church Street in old town has a mentoring program.
 4. Other areas to volunteer? Social Services is always open to volunteers as we increase our community outreach.

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Devin Vaughan – INOVA – FYI – Catholic Charities has a clinic that is open to anyone needing medical care. They are located 9380 Forestwood Lane, Unit B Manassas, VA 20110. Hours are **Monday through Thursday: 8 a.m. - 5 p.m.**

George Mason also operates a free clinic in Manassas Park located at 99 Tremont Street, Manassas Park, Tuesdays, 7:30 am to 3pm.

Next scheduled in-person meeting March 23, 2023. Location is the City of Manassas Public Works bldg. 8500 Public Works Drive, Manassas, VA.

ADJOURNMENT With no further business to discuss, meeting adjourned at 7:50 pm

Respectfully submitted,

Anita Brown