



DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

Advisory Board
May 25, 2023

1. Welcome

2. Approval of Minutes for 23 March 2023

3. Director's time

- a) Many Thanks! (Volunteer Appreciation, Years of Service)
- b) New Hires: Family Services Program Manager, Carly Baughn
- c) Foster Care Appreciation Month (May 2023)
- d) Budget Approval: 5 % salary scale adjustment
- e) CPS Prevention Services- Neerja Jain
- f) Self Sufficiency VIEW and SNAP E&T Services- Wendell Drummond
- g) Departmental Reports: Housing (Waiting List follow Up), Family Services, Benefit Programs, and Financial & Support Services

4. Old Business

- a) Emergency Preparedness -All Day Exercise (9 June 2023)
- b) 150th City of Manassas Anniversary-Farmers Market (June 2023)
- c) E3 Series -Successful Completion for 2023
- d) Foster Care Recruitment

5. New Business

- a) Volunteer Opportunities:
 - 1. Christmas in July
 - 2. Bee Festival
 - 3. Resource Fair
- b) Opioid Abatement

6. Adjournment

Next Advisory Board meeting: Thursday at 6:30p.m. 27 July 2023. Location City of Manassas Public Works, 8500 Public Works Drive Manassas, VA 20110

Department of Social Services Advisory Board Meeting

May 25, 2023 @ 6:30 PM – Public Works Conference room

Manassas DSS
9324 West Street
Manassas, VA 20110

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

Members Absent: No members were absent

Staff present: Carly Baughn, Anita Brown, LaTanya Buckhalter, Wendell Drummond, Catrina Ewen, Cicely Harvey, Trevor Hensley, Neerja Jain, Nicole Kirven, Kimberly King-Anderson, and Meaghan Turner.

Others: None

Call to Order: At 6:32 pm, Larry Cain, Advisory Board chair convened the Social Services Advisory Board meeting held on Thursday, May 25, 2023.

Public Present: None

Additions to Agenda: None

Welcome:

Review of Minutes:

The minutes from March 23, 2023, were reviewed and motion to approve the minutes as presented by R. Johnson, second, B. Berger. Motion passed without opposition.

DIRECTOR TIME:

- a. Many Thanks! (Volunteer Appreciation, Years of Service)
 - Each year the City holds a Volunteer Appreciation for its many volunteers throughout the city. The reception was held on April 26, 2023, at the Hylton Performing Arts Center. At the reception, several volunteers were honored for their exceptional service to the city.
 - Years of service-Information
- b. New Hire: Welcome to new staff: Family Services Manager- Carly Baughn.
- c. Foster Care Appreciation month (May 2023)-Elder Abuse Prevention month (June 2023)

The month of May the agency is celebrating Foster Care appreciation. There is a tree located in front of the agency that has been decorated and signed. The month of June, the agency will be bringing attention to the senior population by having a proclamation designating June as Elder Abuse Prevention month. Information will be sent out to the Board regarding the actual date for the proclamation from City Council. Any Board member who can attend will receive a copy of the proclamation.
- d. Budget Approval: 5% salary scale adjustment-The city has decided to adjust the salary scale for all employees.
- e. Child Abuse Prevention: Neerja Jain –

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Two sides to prevention services: In-home and on-going. In-home cases stem from child protective services (CPS) cases where an occurrence has brought the family to the attention of Social Services. Once CPS has stabilized the family and ensured that the children are safe. The family can be referred to the on-going side of prevention services. The on-going support looks at the reason why the family was referred to CPS and try to mitigate the issues that brought them to CPS. Another service is family support. Sometimes a referral is received for a family, but they do not rise to the intervention of CPS, but when a number of referrals is received for a family, it raises a red flag that there is something going on in the home and that is where family support comes in. These are voluntary services; families do not have to accept or participate unless they are court ordered.

Case: August 2022-CPS referral was made by a hospital. An infant was born with Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome which came from the mother being addicted. CPS conducted a safety assessment and put safety measures in place, the case was transferred to the on-going workers. The services began with monthly visits. The mother was a single mother with 4 children ages ranging 15, 7, 4 and 6 months (which was the infant). Again the services are voluntary, the worker wanted the mother to go for drug testing and enter into a substance abuse treatment program. The mother would initially say that she would comply but never showed for any appointments. This went on for some time. The worker did succeed in getting the mother to apply for Medicaid for herself and the children who qualified. The worker did try to get the mother to a doctor for medical treatment. The worker offered rides to appointments which were declined. The mother would indicate that she would go and then just not go. The worker also tried to get the mother to come in and apply for other benefits like SNAP but she wouldn't come. She wasn't saying no she didn't want services but she wasn't asking for help either, nor complying. She stopped communicating in December/January and when visited wasn't home. The school was contacted where the oldest child should have been attending only to find out that the child had not been in school for several years. The worker tried to contact the mother again only to find out that she had been evicted. Another CPS referral was received in early February, about the children being left alone. The mother was arrested for drug possession and stolen goods and the children had been alone. There was a relative that had been involved in the children's lives and the children were placed with them. It was at this time that more information about the situation was uncovered. The worker worked very closely with the relative to get supportive services in place for them as the school aged children who had not been enrolled in school or been to a doctor. The younger children had not been to a doctor or had received immunizations. The worker connected the relative with a doctor who would accept Medicaid. All the children were then able to be assessed and receive medical care. Also, the 4 yr old has special needs. Connection was made with Child Find located in Manassas so that the 4yr old could receive an assessment and services. The infant was seen by a doctor to ascertain if there were any residual effects from the birth. The worker assisted the relative in filling for custody of the children. Continued support to the mother has been offered,

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she has to want the help and has been averse to receiving it. Recently she did enter into an inpatient facility for treatment. The agency will continue to support the relative as needed. It has been critical for the worker to provide support to the relative as they probably would not have known about available services and how to go about obtaining them. The children are doing well and love being with their relative.

- f. Self Sufficiency VIEW and SNAP E & T Services – Wendell Drummond
- The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Employment and Training (SNAPE&T) is part of the Commonwealth's Workforce Development System. This voluntary program is a multi-component employment and training program designed to assist SNAP recipients in their employment and training needs. The goal of SNAP ET is to assist SNAP recipients with opportunities that will lead to paid employment and decrease dependency on assistance programs. By providing employment and training services, such as job search, adult education, vocational training, and work experience to SNAP participants. SNAPET offers financial and non-financial assistance to SNAP E&T participants. Services and relationships vary by community and not limited to:
- Employment Services: Resume writing, letter generation (cover, references, thank you), Employer networking, Mock interviews, Job search & application, certifications.
 - Support Services: Uniforms (and other work-related clothing), work related tools, Transportation assistance (bus pass or car repairs), work permits, childcare, gas cards.

Currently the agency has 10 individuals in the SNAP E&T program. Out of those 10, 4 are enrolled in the Manassas grow program, which is a certificate program through NVCC, 2 are training for certified medical billing and 2 are google IT support. Mr. Drummond works closely with several organization like Service Source who does conduct job readiness, job coaching with individuals. Reaching out to clients, making them aware of the resources available to them. (Attachment a)

- g. Departmental reports:
- a. Housing- The Housing Program received 3,500 applications for the waitlist. The application period was one day. Of those applications received, a random lottery of 750 was selected to be placed on the housing waitlist. The housing staff are in the process of going through the applicants to ensure the information received is correct, contact can be made, and they meet the criteria for the Housing Choice Voucher program. It is only after the 750 selected applicants on the waitlist are depleted that the waitlist will open again It could be 2 to 3 years before the waitlist opens again.
 - b. Family Services- The Family Services Unit welcome a new Family Services Manager- Carly Baughn. Also on June 5, a new Family Services Specialist III

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will join the staff. This new worker's main focus will primarily be Foster Care. There are currently 2 vacant Family Service Specialist II positions. Interviews have been completed and one person was selected. HR is in negotiations with this person. Reviews of more applications will be taking place shortly and hopefully interviews for the remaining vacant position to follow.

As previously stated, May is Foster Care awareness month, in the United States there are 440,000 children in foster care at any given time. In Virginia, there are approximately 5,000 children in care at any given time. 52 % are male, 48% are female. The average stay in foster care is 20 months and that is something they would like to reduce. 14% of children in foster care have been removed twice from their home. At any point in time there are 1,500 children available for adoption and the average age is 8 years old. When children are discharged from foster care, approximately 32% are returned home. 18% of foster children age out. These are children that we are not able to find a permanent placement for. The rest of the children end up in the custody of relatives or adopted.

Manassas City DSS has 11 children in foster care. Demographically: 8 are male, 3 are female. 8 are classified as White, 3 are multi-racial and 5 of those are classified as Hispanic as well. Age ranges: 2 are 1 to 5, 1 child aged 6-9. 2 children 10-12, 5 children 13-15 and 1 youth age 18+ who is in our Fostering Futures program. Of these children: 4 have the goal of return to home, 6 have a goal of adoption, 1 independent living goal. Average time for children in foster care in the City of Manassas is 18.5 months.

It is hoped that with the help of the Prevention team providing stabilization, the children who have a goal of "return home" can be reunited with their families.

c. Benefit Programs- Updates:

Currently the Benefit Unit has 1 vacancy for a Benefit Programs Specialist II position. Interviews have been conducted and HR is now in the process of conducting reference checks on the candidate selected.

- TANF/VIEW – As of January 1, 2023, the state has returned to full policy guidance for those programs. Due to COVID, policies were suspended, such as sanctions and cooperation with the VIEW program. As of January 1, 2023, all clients receiving TANF (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families) must participate with the VIEW program unless they have a medical or hardship exemption. The TANF emergency assistance reverted to normal policy November 1, 2022. Starting June 1, 2023, agencies will be returning to interviews for all initial applications for assistance. TANF cases as of May 25th are 67 cases and 42 VIEW cases. The agency is currently building the SNAP E& T program and there are 10 clients participating in that program.

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- Energy assistance: The cooling assistance program is beginning June 15 until August 15th. The program assists clients with electric bills, as well as AC repairs or cooling unit repairs. Preapprovals have already been sent out as of May 15th. If clients have any changes, they need to report changes by June 15th. In order 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.
 - Refugee assistance- The agency has 1 refugee assistance case which is due to close August 2023. Refugee assistance can be received for 12 months. This is an increase from previous policy that only allowed 8 months of assistance to be received.
 - SNAP – The interview waiver for SNAP expires May 31, 2023. This means that the interviews for SNAP will go back to full interviews. Clients who are able bodied adults that do not have a child under the age of 18 must be working or participating in a training program. They will be referred to the SNAP E & T program. If a client does not meet one of the requirements, their case will close, and they will be excluded for 36 months. Staff are undergoing extensive training as many of the policies were waived and the training is serving as a refresher for some and new to those who are new workers. As of May 25, 2023: SNAP cases are 1,820.
 - Medicaid- Medicaid waivers are expiring as well. Workers have gone back to normal processing. All the overdue renewals that were left untouched due to the public health emergency. During that time, no cases could be closed unless requested by the client. To date, the agency has 2,611 overdue cases. The agency receives referrals from the Federal Market Place as well as many on-line applications. If a referral does not meet the Medicaid guidelines, they are returned to the Federal Market place. In a recent meeting it was indicated that Virginia is expected to deviate from the Federal Market place. Virginia will start their own state-based exchange in early November. As of May 25, the agency has 6,218 cases encompassing 12,348 individuals.
Daycare-The Daycare program reverts to normal policy as of January 1, 2023. The state has increased income limits and some of the guidelines in regard to the program to include job search. There was also a time limit on daycare assistance that has been removed. To date, there are 181 cases, serving 273 children.
- d. Finance/Support-The Finance unit have begun fiscal year end processing. The state fiscal year ends May 30 and the City fiscal year end is June 30.

Customer Service: For the month of April the agency served 871 and 923 clients walking in for a total of 1,794.

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Children Services Act (CSA): Recently the Office of Children’s Services completed their annual GAP survey. This information collected from Community partners helps identify gaps in service areas through out the state. Some of the areas identified were Substance Abuse, Independent living and mental health services. Currently there are 38 children being served under the CSA program Expenditures to date are \$1,290,892.66 of which \$538, 044.06 is the local share. The figures below reflect a fiscal year total.

- 13 children from the Manassas City Public Schools with IEPs and cannot be served in the public-school setting. These children are receiving services in Private Day placements. Expenditures to date are \$556,801.94
- 18 children are in foster care with DSS. Expenditures for those children are \$531,071.17
- 1 child from Court Services Unit. Expenditure \$12,533
- 6 children are being served from Community Services. Expenditures are \$190,896.56.

The CSA program received an additional \$15,000 for Special Educational Wrap funds. These funds are used for special ADA applied analysis, which focuses mostly on autistic services.

OLD BUSINESS:

- a. Emergency Preparedness- DSS working with the Emergency Management for the City has been preparing for a Shelter training exercise June 9th at Osbourn High School. The exercise is an all day event in which staff receiving training in setting up and staffing a shelter in the event of a disaster. So far, one board member, Ms. Johnson has volunteered to come be an “actor” for the event. Anyone interested in participating, should plan to arrive at 10:00 am. Ms. Tapia indicated that she would like to help out as well. We will also have the Pet shelter staff participating in the shelter exercise, so if you would like to volunteer and have a pet, everyone is welcome.
- b. 150th City of Manassas –
 - Farmers Market (June 2023)-During the month of June, staff will be setting up a table and passing out information on Thursdays June 8 and June 15 at the Farmers Market in the Harris Pavilion. Staff will be bringing awareness to the SNAP clients about the match program offered by the Farmers Market.
 - Bee Festival- On June 24th, staff will be setting up a table at the Bee Festival which is taking place on the Libera House grounds.
- c. E3 Series- Manassas City Police Department hosted a Parent E3 Series aimed at educating and empowering parents and guardians to address at-risk behaviors in youths. Manassas Social Services staff participated in the informational sessions, particularly the prevention services group.

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- d. Foster Care Recruitment- Foster Parent recruitment efforts will continue at the Bee Festival. 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.



NEW BUSINESS:

- a. Volunteer opportunities-
1. Christmas in July- Coming soon, the agency will begin collecting donations for those children in foster care. These donations will provide gifts for those children at the Holiday time in December. The Outreach committee is in the process of identifying by age range like 0-5, 6-10 what the amount would be to sponsor that child. It would be in the form of a gift card to sponsor that child. Then someone would take the gift card and go out and purchase what the child is requesting. Finally, there would be another team that would go out and deliver the gifts purchased.
 2. Bee Festival- As previously mentioned the staff will be at the Bee Festival and everyone is welcome to come out and give staff a hand manning the table.
 3. Resource Fair-Planning for the School Resource Fair has begun. Many resources were available and went very quickly. Things like vaccinations, backpack with school supplies, food etc. This event is scheduled for August 12th. Time has yet to be determined.
 4. National Night out- Scheduled for August 1st. 6-7:30 pm- Staff again will have a table with information at this event.
- b. Opioid Abatement-At this point in time, it is just at the level of discussion. More information will be forth coming as it becomes available. Manassas City works in tandem with PW Community Services Board.

Next scheduled in-person meeting July 27, 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 8:00 pm

Respectfully submitted,

Anita Brown