

**STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA)
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COUNTY OF STOKES)
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**DSS BOARD
STOKES COUNTY GOVERNMENT
DANBURY, NORTH CAROLINA
MONDAY DECEMBER 17, 2018**

The DSS Board of the County of Stokes, State of North Carolina, met for a meeting at the Stokes County Department of Social Services Conference Room located in Danbury, North Carolina on Monday, December 17, 2018 at 10:00 am with the following members present:

Chairman Ronnie Mendenhall
Vice Chairman Andy Nickelston
Board Member Rick Morris
Board Member Jamie Yontz

County Personnel in Attendance:
Acting County Manager/ Clerk to the Board Shannon Shaver
DSS Director Stacey Elmes
IMC Administrator Cindy Joyce

Chairman Mendenhall called the meeting to order and welcomed those in attendance.

Chairman Mendenhall noted that Board Member Walker was not present.

INVOCATION

Board Member Yontz delivered the invocation.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Chairman Mendenhall invited those in attendance to join the Board in the Pledge of Allegiance.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Chairman Mendenhall entertained a motion to approve or amend the December 17th Agenda.

Vice Chairman Nickelston moved to approve the December 17th Agenda.

Board Member Yontz seconded the motion.

Chairman Mendenhall opened the floor for discussion.

With no further discussion, the December 17th Agenda was approved unanimously.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Chairman Mendenhall noted there were no individuals signed up for public comments.

Information

Chairman Mendenhall turned the floor over to DSS Director Stacey Elmes.

DSS Director Stacey Elmes presented the following information to the Board:

Stokes County DSS Dashboard 2018				
	October	November	December	Total
ADULT SOCIAL WORK SERVICES				
Guardianship Cases	29	30		
New APS Reports Received	11	8		19
APS Reports Accepted	6	5		11
Investigations Initiated Timely [Goal 95%]	100%	100%		
Outreach Visits	3	3		6
In Home Aide Programs/Family Caregiver	39	39		
Community Alternatives Program (CAP/DA)	77	77		
Representative Payee	14	14		
SA - In-Home	66	66		
Placement	0	0		
Adult Care Homes Monitored	2	5		
Total Requests for CIP	24	74		98
CIP Expenditures				\$
	\$3,343	\$9,105		12,448
Total Requests for LIEAP	0	0		0
LIEAP Expenditures				\$
	\$0	\$0		-
Unclaimed Bodies	0	0		0
Staff Hours Spent at Shelters	0	0		0
CHILD CARE SUBSIDY				

Children Receiving Services	267	253		
Expenditures	\$82,815	\$86,526		\$169,341
Waiting List	204	214 (130)		
CHILD PROTECTIVE SERVICES				
CPS Reports Received	57	48		105
CPS Reports Accepted	25	22		47
Children Opened	52	52		104
Open Reports	38	38		
Open Case Management	25	15		
Courtesy Requests	6	8		14
Substance Affected Infants Reported to DSS	2	0		2
Substance Affected Infants Accepted for Inv.	2	0		2
Reports Initiated Timely [Goal 95%]	97%	100%		
Reports Completed Timely [Goal 75%]	61%	64%		
Children Remaining at Home [Goal 95%]	88%	99%		
CHILD SUPPORT				
Number of Children Served	1,331	1,346		
Total Collections	\$219,954	\$206,475		\$426,429
Paternities Established	28	4		32
New Court Orders	5	6		11
FISHING LICENSE WAIVERS				
Fishing License Waivers	0	1		1
FOOD & NUTRITION SERVICES				
Total Households	2,618	2,522		
Total Individuals	5,474	5256		
Report Card (App. Timeliness) [Goal: 95%]	98%	98%		
Report Card (Recert. Timeliness) [Goal: 95%]	99%	99%		
Benefits Distributed	\$ 583,633	\$ 557,569		\$ 1,141,202
	October	November	December	Total
FOSTER CARE				
Children Entering Care	6	1		7
Total Children in Care	94	83		
Children Discharged	5	12		17
Children in Care Over 1 Year	35	33		
% Receiving a Monthly Visit [Goal 100%]	100%	100%		
% Visited in the Home [Goal > 90%]	89%	85%		
Foster Care 18-21	10	10		20

Monitoring of Children No Longer in Custody	5	14		4
Licensed Foster Homes	19	19		
Sanctioned Homes	12	10		22
# of Individuals/Families Receiving Training	47/31	53/34		
Recruitment Events Held	0	0		0
Foster Care Costs (county/state/fed)	\$59,425	\$63,218		\$122,643
Children Open for LINKS	75	75		
Adoptions Completed	2	0		2
Adoption Assistance Cases	151	156		307
Adoption Assistance Costs (fed & state)	\$18,145	\$7,989		\$26,134
MEDICAID [ADULT, FAMILY & CHILDREN'S]				
# of Cases	7,075	6,735		
Report Card (Timeliness) [Goal: 85%]	97%	98%		
Public Assistance Hearings (All Areas)	8	5		
MEDICAID TRANSPORTATION				
Clients Served	397	366		
Trips Provided	1,788	1,646		3,434
Monthly Cost	\$63,239.99	\$60,752		\$123,991.71
PROGRAM INTEGRITY				
New Claims Established	\$2,719	\$5,367		\$8,086
Total Collections	\$4,563	unavailable		\$4,563
Retained in County	\$526	unavailable		\$526
SPECIAL ASSISTANCE				
# of Special Assistance Cases	117	115		
Benefits Distributed	\$48,588	\$47,656		\$96,244
SA/MH LIAISON				
Number of Referrals during the Month	7	0		
Open Cases at end of Month	37	32		
VACANCIES				
Social Work	0	0		0
Clerical/Income Maintenance/Child Support	2	2		4
WORK FIRST				
Total Work First Cases	unavailable	unavailable		
Number of Child Only Cases	unavailable	unavailable		
Employment Cases	unavailable	unavailable		
Referrals for Drug Testing	0	0		
Applicants Testing Positive	0	0		
Benefits Distributed	unavailable	unavailable		\$-
OTHER				

Walk-In Traffic	1,108	1,031	2,139
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DSS Director Stacey Elmes noted that under vacancies DSS is now fully staffed.

Chairman Mendenhall opened the floor for any discussion/questions/comments.

Board Member Morris commented:

- How many are fully qualified to do the jobs right now?

DSS Director Stacey Elmes responded:

- We have not had any social work vacancies in a while.
- The vacancies we have had have been for Income Maintenance Workers.
- Nobody is fully qualified in Income Maintenance without having a year's experience.
- We have to do work against for those employees.

Chairman Mendenhall commented:

- It is good to see that your investigations are at 100 percent for October and November.
- I would like for our new members to look down the entire list to be sure they do not have any questions.

Board Member Morris commented:

- Foster Care is down.
- What have you guys been doing to get that down?

DSS Director Stacey Elmes responded:

- We actually completed quite a few adoptions.
- This is wonderful for our children.
- Some of the kids have been able to go back home with their parents which is nice too.

Vice Chairman Nickelston commented:

- I do not have any questions at this time.
- I have had an individual reach out to me in the community concerning DSS that I have been unable to get in contact with.
- As soon as I make that contact I may have some information or questions at the next meeting.

DSS Director Stacey Elmes commented:

- You might have noticed the fishing license issued portion of the report.
- We do issue fishing license to those who receive food stamp benefits.

Board Member Yontz commented:

- It looks as if children receiving services went down by 14.
- Do you usually see that around 250 a month, or is that something that stays the same?

DSS Director Stacey Elmes responded:

- It usually stays about the same.
- We do have a waiting list.
- We are trying to work through that.
- The state limits our money for that program so we have to stay within a certain budget.

Board Member Yontz continued:

- I will echo what Mr. Morris said.
- It is great to see the Foster Care numbers down.

Stokes DSS Involvement with Cardinal Innovations - November 2018

Chairman Mendenhall turned the floor over to DSS Director Stacey Elmes.

DSS Director Stacey Elmes presented the following information to the Board:

November 13, 2018: Meeting with Ronda Outlaw, Melissa Bunker, County Manager, and DSS Director regarding issues.

November 14, 2018: Permanency Planning hearings held at DSS. Cardinal staff and foster care staff in attendance.

November 14, 2018: Community Partners Meeting held at the Health Department that Cardinal staff facilitates.

November 15, 2018: DSS worker attended an in-services provided by Cardinal at the Wellness Center.

November 20, 2018: Juvenile Crime Prevention Committee Meeting. DSS staff and Cardinal staff are committee members.

November 20, 2018: Community Collaborative Meeting. DSS staff and Cardinal staff are committee members.

DSS Stacey Elmes commented:

- I am not sure if you have had the chance to meet Ronda Outlaw with Cardinal.
- She has been my confidant and a great voice for Social Services.
- She is retiring at the end of the month.
- I am hoping her replacement will be the same.

Chairman Mendenhall opened the floor for any discussion/questions/comments.

Audits and Technical Assistance

FNS Quality Control Active Case Review Finding Report Report Review Month – June 2018

Chairman Mendenhall turned the floor over to DSS Director Stacey Elmes.

DSS Director Stacey Elmes presented the following information to the Board:

DSS Director Stacey Elmes commented:

- This is just a case review.
- This report looks as if there is an error.
- We did however receive clarification from our Food Stamp Consultant that the case was actually correct.

Chairman Mendenhall opened the floor for any discussion/questions/comments.

Board Member Yontz commented:

- Are these case reviews random?

DSS Director Stacey Elmes responded:

- These are conducted by the state.
- They are done at random each month.
- They look at the record and talk to the client.
- They are very thorough.
- We also do our own internal reviews as well.

Memorandum of Understanding between DHHS and the County

Chairman Mendenhall turned the floor over to DSS Director Stacey Elmes.

DSS Director Stacey Elmes presented the following information to the Board:

- We received letter dated 11/14/18 from DHHS with our Modified Agreement.
- All 100 counties received this.
- We have to sign this agreement saying we agree to perform at certain measures and if we do not then the state will get involved.
- They will try and help us figure out why we are not meeting our measures.
- It is really nothing that we haven't been held to in the past.
- They are just now putting it on paper and making everyone sign it.
- This is probably the third version of this.
- The Directors have gone back and forth with the state on this.
- We believe there are some things they should not hold us accountable for.
- Once this is finalized we will receive the measures and can let you know where we stand with them.

Chairman Mendenhall opened the floor for any discussion/questions/comments.

Board Member Morris commented:

- I think before I left you and I were talking about this and the scope of your work increasing under this MOU.
- Is that still the case?

DSS Director Stacey Elmes responded:

- It has not yet.
- I think we will have to do a lot more review of work.
- We do not want to fail and be under corrective action with the state.
- This is going to require workers to be more accountable than they have in the past.
- The work will be more tedious, and to be honest, we have enough workers to just get by.
- Going over and beyond is going to be very difficult.

Board Member Morris continued:

- I would think by budget time you should know if there will be a need for additional coverage to handle the requirements of the MOU.
- For instance if Foster Care were to spike again like it did a few years ago.
- It will change immediately with what you are required to do.

DSS Director Stacey Elmes responded:

- We will be required to make new measures no matter what.

Board Member Morris continued:

- I think we need to be thinking in terms to be agile enough to react if things happen that are beyond your control.

DSS Director Stacey Elmes responded:

- There are a lot of things out of our control such as Foster Care, court, and the fact that parents don't always do things in the time that we need them to do it in.
- There are a number of things that could hold us up.

Chairman Mendenhall commented:

- If you could to provide a short overview of what has happened regarding the MOU and the changes that have occurred for the new Board members.

DSS Director Stacey Elmes responded:

- The state has been talking about this for over a year.
- When they first started talking about this they were very harsh with their numbers and measures they wanted us to meet.
- It was not doable.
- They have softened a lot and given us more flexibility in some areas.
- When you are working with children and their parents you have to be flexible.

Chairman Mendenhall continued:

- There was some controversy a while back with DHHS concerning regionalization.
- Could you touch on that subject?

DSS Director Stacey Elmes responded:

- The state introduced House Bill 630 giving counties the ability to merge together and become an entity if they would like to.
- At first they wanted to make that a requirement and they have now changed that.
- It is now an option.
- They can merge individual units if they want.
- I feel that would be a monetary nightmare.
- I believe everyone is concerned about regional supervision.
- This could take workers from county offices leaving the county to pay the price.
- These are some of the big concerns going on within Social Services.

Board Member Yontz commented:

- It always concerns me when the state does anything of this sort because they blanket everything.
- They think what is good enough for larger places like Charlotte-Mecklenburg, or Guilford County is good enough for Stokes County.
- We saw this with the school system.
- It makes me very nervous.
- I agree we need to be very flexible in giving you guys what you need to get the job done.
- If there is anything within reason we can help you with please reach out.
- There will be times when I say no.
- Don't take it personally.
- I think in this county you hear you will get a no on things.
- This is not all the time.
- We have a civic duty.
- That is coming from me as 1 of 5 Board members.
- I want to extend that offer to you guys.

Chairman Mendenhall commented:

- We were all worried that the regionalization process was going to be forced upon us.
- I am glad that all worked out.

DSS Director Stacey Elmes commented:

- We also received a letter dated 11/19/2018 from DHHS with Performance Measures in the Modified Agreement with Performance Measure Data Methodology and Performance Measure Data Sets attached.
- The first program they talk about is Adult Services.
- This report is a little off.

- I believe we had a report that sat in another county for a few days but that still affects our numbers.
- There was an issue on the Special Assistance report that could have been for a number of reasons; however we still did not meet the numbers.
- We need to be working to make the numbers better.
- The next measure they talk about is child care assistance and we had an issue with that too.
- If I remember correctly this was an application that was missed.
- We are so small it only takes one to skew our numbers.
- Child Support, according to these numbers looks like our worst program.
- They really do a fantastic job.
- They have issues with getting parents to do what they need to do.

Board Member Yontz commented:

- It appears you are still above the state average so it seems if others are having issues as well.

Acting County Manager Shannon Shaver commented:

- With the MOU modifications that are being made, does this pose a problem for you with programs like Child Welfare going live in NC FAST?
- Will that affect your numbers?

DSS Director Stacey Elmes responded:

- We go live for Child Welfare with intake and assessments only on January 22nd I believe, which is going to be a monster.
- It will mess with our numbers.
- Once the workers get used to the system hopefully it will flow smoothly.
- Our workers are used to people work more than computer work.

Acting County Manager Shannon Shaver continued:

- Computer work and working in that system are two different things.
- It may not read it correctly or give false results.

DSS Director Stacey Elmes responded:

- The counties have gone round and round with the state on this system.
- They will not back down and we are forced to use this system.

DSS Director Stacey Elmes continued:

- Our Child Welfare numbers can be skewed by many factors.
- They are growth measures so hopefully they will bend on these a little.
- Our LEAP program started at the beginning of December.
- This program provides a payment to the utility company for the client.
- This program only runs through the end of March or until we run out of money.
- CIP is yearlong which is the crisis intervention program and is for heating and cooling.

Board Member Yontz commented:

- Historically do you see that you run out of funds?

DSS Director Stacey Elmes responded:

- We did not run out last year or the year before.
- We get around \$139,000.00 for LEAP and CIP.

DSS Director Stacey Elmes continued:

- The next portion is concerning food and nutrition programs.
- We do not usually have any problems with timeliness.
- We have lead workers and supervisors who stay on top of the applications and when they are due.
- The next program in the report is Work First.
- I am not sure those numbers will ever look good.
- We have so few workable folks in this program.
- Most are grandparents.
- It is hard to get those eligible to work 32-35 hours a week for around \$240.00.
- We can provide transportation.

Board Member Yontz commented:

- It appears the county is doing their part on this.

Board Member Morris commented:

- I believe we were looking at a program management system originally and then they decided NC FAST was going to do that so we quit looking at it.
- Is NC FAST going to cover all of that?

DSS Director Stacey Elmes responded:

- It was document management and NC FAST is going to tackle that.
- I am not sure what it will look like but they are tackling it.

Board Member Morris commented:

- So you will not be pursuing an outside system?

DSS Director Stacey Elmes responded:

- I don't think it is the right thing to do until we know what this is going to do.

Chairman Mendenhall commented:

- What do you see as your biggest challenges for the upcoming year?

DSS Director Stacey Elmes responded:

- NC FAST continues to be an issue.
- It causes us to be slow and untimely.
- It is not every day but when there are problems it just completely stalls the workers.
- It can make us late on things which affect our numbers.

- I am not looking forward to child welfare going in to this system.
- This system has cost us workers, money, and time.
- When it works it works well.
- We are also in need of workers.
- It never fails when we get fully staffed something happens.
- We can never get above the norm.
- It would be so nice to be able to do our work and go home at a normal time.

Chairman Mendenhall commented:

- Would you say NC FAST is like working with Power School that the school system has had some issues with?

DSS Director Stacey Elmes responded:

- I would say so.

Vice Chairman Nickelston commented:

- How many positions are you looking to open up here?

DSS Director Stacey Elmes responded:

- I have asked for a Supervisor position in Child Welfare in the last 3 budgets.
- We need that and it is required by statute.
- We are in need of a clerical position in Foster Care.
- They are carrying a case load of 15-17 kids.
- These would be the top two.
- We do have some needs in Income Maintenance but these two are the most important right now.

Vice Chairman Nickelston continued:

- Would having these two positions help to get you and your staff home at a decent hour?

DSS Director Stacey Elmes responded:

- Probably not for me but it would help our workers.
- It would especially help the Foster Care workers.
- The Foster Care workers have a schedule you cannot imagine.
- I would love for you to spend some time with these workers and go out with them and see what they do.

Vice Chairman Nickelston continued:

- I would love to do that.

Chairman Mendenhall commented:

- I have done this and I believe Mr. Morris has as well.
- It is a very worthwhile experience and eye opening into what they are dealing with.

Board Member Morris commented:

- A case load of 15-17 sounds high to me.
- I would think 12 would be more manageable.

DSS Director Stacey Elmes responded:

- 15 is what the state says.
- This is not a terrible number.
- However they are dealing with some children with some major issues.
- It is just tough with the amount of work they have to do.

Board Member Morris continued:

- I believe when you and I were working on this you at one point had a two page email single spaced with all that the Social Workers have to do when it comes to foster kids.
- If you still have that it would be great for these guys to see this.
- It would help them better understand the work load these guys have and the nature of the work.

Adjournment

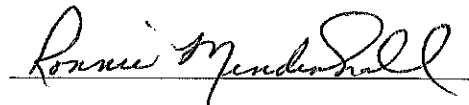
There being no further business to come before the Board, Chairman Mendenhall entertained a motion to adjourn the meeting.

Vice Chairman Nickelston moved to adjourn the meeting.

Board Member Yontz seconded and the motion carried unanimously.



Shannon Shaver
Clerk to the Board



Ronnie Mendenhall
Chairman