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**King George Department of Social Services
Administrative Board
Meeting Minutes – November 21, 2022**

The regular Board meeting of the King George Board of Social Services was held on November 21, 2022.

- A. Call to Order** – The meeting was called to order by Frank Fronzo, Chairman at 5:35pm with the following notice:

I HEREBY CALL THIS MEETING OF THE KING GEORGE COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATIVE BOARD TO ORDER.

THE FOLLOWING MEMBERS ARE PARTICIPATING THROUGH ELECTRONIC AND REMOTE MEANS PURSUANT TO THE RULES PREVIOUSLY ADOPTED BY THIS BOARD: ANN CUPKA FROM PRIVATE RESIDENCE.

ELECTRONIC PARTICIPATION IS PROVIDED BY MICROSOFT TEAMS.

STAFF & THE CLERK ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR RECEIVING ANY WRITTEN PUBLIC COMMENT.

I DIRECT THE CLERK TO INCLUDE THIS STATEMENT AND ANY STATEMENT OF REMOTELY PARTICIPATING BOARD MEMBERS TO BE MEMORIALIZED IN THE MINUTES.

PRESENT: Frank Fronzo, Chairman
Renee Parker, Vice Chairman
Ann Cupka, Member
Michael Muth, Member
Lisa Pitts, Member
Ed Frank, Member
Jonathan Franklin, Secretary
Melanie Cobb, Benefit Programs Supervisor

ABSENT: Tracy Curtis, Administrative Office Manager
Latoya Lyburn, Family Services Supervisor

The meeting was opened with the Pledge of Allegiance and a moment of silence.

Approval of Prior Meeting's Minutes

On a motion made by Renee Parker, seconded by Ed Frank, the Board approved the Minutes of the October 17, 2022 board meeting.

Public Comment Period

There was no public comment.

B. Director's Report

a. Financial Report

Jonathan Franklin presented the Financial Report. The expenditures for October 2022 were routine. A number of donations to the Special Welfare Holiday Fund were collected. There have been increases in local utility and housing assistance requests, with citizens having notable large Dominion VA Power bills. These large bills often are due to several months of bills that have gone unpaid. The Department has not seen this with Northern Neck Electric Cooperative customers. The Department is assessing how to assist with these bills and coordinate with external resources. Mr. Fronzo inquired about the Energy Share program through Dominion VA Power. Mr. Franklin stated that the Department works with the Salvation Army by processing the applications, but those funds are limited and have an annual cap. The primary concern is for clients living on a fixed income with large past due bills and being able to heat their home in the coldest months.

The Budget Summary shows that the agency continues to be within the expected range of available funds for the year. The State Budget Mid-Year Review is due in December and will determine the need to request additional Pass-Thru and Adoption funds.

b. Management Report

Jonathan Franklin presented the Management Report. Mr. Franklin introduced Mr. Michael Muth as the newest board member, whose appointment fills the final vacancy of the Administrative Board. Mr. Franklin will provide him with the Local Board Member Handbook.

There are a number of important dates: Thanksgiving Distribution (11/22; 8am-3pm) – Oakland Baptist Church; Christmas Distribution (12/13; 8am-3pm) – Oakland Baptist Church; Christmas Party (12/9; 5pm-7:30pm) Brocks Riverside Grill; and Family Day 2023 (5/6/2023; 2pm-7pm). The Department is teaming up with Parks and Recreation and the VFW - Nicholas Mason Memorial Post 12202. This came about from the VFW having a similar event the same weekend as the Family Day, and Chris Clarke from Parks and Recreation suggested sharing the event. Mr. Clarke coordinated an initial meeting for all partners. The desire is to become the annual Spring event in King George. Mr. Fronzo pointed out his positive experience at the agency Christmas Party and Family Day event last year, which is in line with the strategy to reach out to more people.

The board will hold elections for Chairman and Vice Chairman at the December 19, 2022 board meeting. Mr. Franklin encouraged members to consider their desire to serve in one of these roles. The January Board Meeting will need to be rescheduled or cancelled due to the Martin Luther King Federal Holiday. Mr. Franklin presented the Salary Study to the Board of Supervisors last week, answering a few questions and providing some clarifications. After

speaking with the Director of Finance it was decided the increases will go into effect January 1, 2023.

The State was anticipating the Federal Public Health Emergency to end in November, but the Federal notice was not received by the state of Virginia, so there will be no ending of the emergency policies and procedures in January 2023.

Mr. Franklin attended the Virginia League of Social Services Executives Fall Conference. There was a presentation on safety, which has been an ongoing discussion for the management team. It was recommended each department go through a Law Enforcement Assessment regarding active shooter scenarios, building layout, employee field safety, and to develop training and recommendations. Henrico County presenters suggested using Workman's Compensation Policies to purchase facility upgrades and door locks. Mr. Fronzo asked if the Department had an active shooter policy. Mr. Franklin stated there was no written policy, but it has been discussed. This training was a catalyst to do more than simply talk about safety and instead have experts provide clear guidance. Another topic discussed was Medicaid Unwinding and the possibility of increased appeals, which could put a larger burden on the local departments. The Claude Moore Foundation presented further information on how the state should rethink retention and recruitment issues, career paths and certifications, expanding internships, and self-care. The State and Local Dialogue focused on the new local financial allocation models and barriers to foster care placements. Mr. Franklin is hopeful the new allocations will mean additional funding to the Department, but this will not be known until the State Budget is released in April or May 2023. The emphasis of these changes is for the state to be more equitable across localities, but that could mean losses for some localities and gains for others. The barriers to foster care placements remain a concern for King George, as the Department is currently addressing a disrupted foster care placement. This is a common event for King George, even with the current small foster care caseload.

c. Family Services Report

Mr. Franklin presented the Family Services Report. Adult Protective Services saw no significant changes in October, only a slight increase in investigations. The Department received notice that additional Public Guardians are available. Public Guardians assist eligible adults with managing their services and finances, signing admissions into a nursing home or managing an adult's income. In October there were 6 APS reports, 4 were sent for investigation, and 26 ongoing guardianship cases.

In Child Protective Services there were 29 referrals. Not all were accepted, and this is often due to duplicate referrals, which shows that citizens are being proactive. Of the accepted CPS referrals, there were 5 family assessments and 4 investigations. That number of investigations is significant for a single month. One child was prevented from entering foster care, and a new category was added to the report to show the number of children removed from their guardian and placed in foster care. In October one child was removed and placed in foster care. This was the first removal since March, when a sibling group came into the department's care.

d. Benefits Programs Report

Melanie Cobb presented the Benefit Programs Report. The monthly applications either remain at a steady level or are increasing. The only decrease in applications for the month was in child care, but the child care case load has increased significantly due to the policy changes over the last two years. One policy is that applicants only need to say they are looking for work, but there is not a work requirement or proof of job search that is required. Mr. Franklin asked if the ending of the Public Health Emergency will impact the child care caseload. Mrs. Cobb stated the public health emergency is not connected to the child care program as other programs are, and a recent notice indicated the current work requirement policies will most likely remain in place until 2024. A comparison of the King George Energy Assistance Program to other neighboring localities, showing the case count and financial expenditures, was developed by the Fredericksburg Department of Social Services. The Energy Assistance Program has three components for the winter, summer, and crisis.

e. Agency Reviews

Melanie Cobb presented the Agency Reviews. There are a variety of reviews, including Consultant Program Reviews, State Reviews, and Federal Reviews.

The QAA Title IV-E review is a State Review to assess the federal funding eligibility for every child who enters Foster Care. This review found no financial errors, but there were some best practice corrections that were made.

The Child Care Monitoring Review was a consultant review to determine payment or technical errors. The review found no payment errors, but there were some identified technical errors that were corrected in the database and the Department implemented some best practices for the future.

C. Old Business

Mr. Franklin presented the Financial Review conducted by Robinson, Farmer, Cox Associates, which reviewed financial policies, processes, and best practices. The review did not identify any errors; however, the Department needs to develop written financial policies and provide for a separation of duties in various areas. Mr. Fronzo stated that although the report shows no serious deficiency, there are a lot of things missing. The Department needs a timeline to implement the needed changes. Mrs. Parker stated the initial presentation of this report involved a list of identified needs and the board had already started down that path. Mr. Fronzo stated that he would like to see a schedule and a time for the changes. Mr. Franklin stated his goal is to have the policies written, adopted and implemented by July 1, 2023, at the beginning of the new fiscal year. The bulk of the policies can be borrowed from other local DSS agencies who have already created the policies. Mr. Fronzo stated there needs to be a schedule to designate specific timelines for each aspect. It was decided that a timeline will be put together for the January 2023 board meeting. Mr. Frank indicated the board needed to determine if there will be a January 2023 board meeting due to the conflicting federal holiday on the regularly scheduled date of January 16, 2023.

On a motion by Renee Parker, seconded by Ed Frank, the board unanimously approved the rescheduling of the January board meeting to January 23, 2023.

D. New Business

Mr. Franklin presented his proposed FY23/24 Budget Priorities, including Compensation increases, facility upgrades, staff training, and a new financial system. Mr. Franklin stated he is looking for guidance and input from the board members before the FY23/24 budget is approved at the December 19, 2023 board meeting. Mr. Franklin stated he wanted to know how bold the board desired him to be in the budget, and yet remain realistic and a team player in the county. The largest priority is compensation to address the discrepancies identified in the FY23 Salary Study. Compensation needs can be addressed through a local 5% increase, promotions, range revision for Benefit Program Specialists and Family Services Specialists, probation increases, and merit increases. Mr. Franklin stated that half of his staff live in neighboring counties, and we do not have the ability to provide an equitable salary as compared to Spotsylvania. Mr. Fronzo expressed that the board needs to decide how they are going to structure the compensation and provide the appropriate money for the jobs that people are performing. If not, the Department is going to continue to lose people, and as it loses staff, it is going to waste time and not be able to serve the community the way it wants. Mrs. Parker stated the Department should always ask for what is needed and not be a team player. She continued by stating that Mr. Franklin needs to ask for what he needs to retain staff and provide services. Ed Frank stated the King George School Board has had similar issues in offering competitive salaries but acknowledged that King George does not have the tax base as other counties. Mrs. Parker stated the Department should ask for the needed funding. Mr. Franklin stated there will need to be an overall percentage increase that is requested to meet the individual pay factors for each employee. Mr. Fronzo stated he would like to see a breakdown showing what we want to do and what it will cost. Mrs. Parker requested Mr. Franklin identify each pay factor increase and then combine them to find the overall percentage increase.

The facility upgrades include updating the conference room and better utilizing space, securing the front lobby, improved lighting in the file room, and file cabinets. Miscellaneous increases include a new copier, financial system, and additional training and conferences. Mr. Fronzo stated he would like to see a ranking of priorities. Mr. Franklin listed the ranked priorities: compensation, security upgrades, and conference room upgrades. Mr. Muth asked if it would make more sense to complete the security assessment before seeking the facility upgrades, as well as look into grants available for these upgrades. There could be more items and areas that need to be addressed following the assessment. Mr. Fronzo stated the board still needs to have an approximate cost. Mrs. Parker asked if there have been any conversations with the state about financial assistance for security. Mr. Franklin stated that the state would most likely not provide any additional assistance beyond the annual allocations. Mr. Frank asked what current security measures are in place. Mr. Franklin stated the Department has a card swipe locking system for the staff entrance, standard locks for the other two exterior doors, and an interior security door. However, the standard interior door in the lobby remains a vulnerability. Mr. Frank asked if there was anything in place to stop an active shooter or anyone who is armed. Mr. Franklin stated there is at least one employee who has a concealed carry permit. Mr. Frank asked if they carry, and Mr. Franklin replied that he believed so but has not specifically asked. The question of an employee's right to carry a weapon with the proper permit was addressed by the previous county attorney, Matt Britton, who clarified that the employee has the right to conceal carry at work.

Mrs. Cupka stated that Mr. Franklin should not ever go before the Board of Supervisors and be a team player, but should ask for what is needed, and the Board of Supervisors is accountable for not providing the requested compensation. If you do not get it this year, then you ask for it the following year. Compensation goes into recurring expenses, but the facilities and miscellaneous requests are non-recurring. There remains additional ARPA funding that is no longer tied to COVID protections, but rather revenue loss. There have been similar requests from the Registrar's and Treasurer's Offices using the ARPA funds. She encourages obtaining the quotes and requesting those funds. In addition, she attended the VACO breakout sessions, and Commissioner Dr. Danny Avula discussed his budget requests to the state. Another board of supervisor member, who is also a LDSS employee in a different jurisdiction, talked about LDSS employees qualifying for financial benefits due to low compensation. Mrs. Cupka stated that Mr. Franklin should do what he can to advocate. Mr. Fronzo asked if the ARPA funds are pre-budget funds available now. Mr. Franklin stated the Department will obtain quotes and then discuss with county administration about accessing the ARPA funds.

Mr. Franklin asked if the board would like to establish a budget committee to review the proposed FY24 budget prior to the presentation and adoption at the December 19, 2023 board meeting. Mr. Fronzo and Mrs. Parker will participate in the budget committee.

Mr. Franklin pointed out the potential budget impacts he is monitoring, including the renewed allocation formula, increases in the CPS workforce, and the potential for private day school placements transferring from the CSA budget to the Department of Education.

Mr. Frank stated the Strategic Planning Team met and reviewed the staff focus group responses. He listed a few of the staff comments: supervisors are inconsistent in management styles, staff morale is low, internet connectivity issues, and the telework policy is inconsistently applied and creates tension. All of this reflects on retention. Mr. Frank stated these are items that should be discussed by the board. Policies should be firm, fair, and consistent. Mr. Franklin clarified that the internet connectivity issues are unfortunately not under county control, but rather through the Virginia Information Technology Agency, which supports all state offices. The bandwidth issue is statewide and being addressed. The Virginia Department of Social Services identified 20-25 top priority T1 agencies, who will receive the initial bandwidth upgrades. King George DSS still does not know where our agency falls on the VDSS timeline. Mr. Frank asked what the county can do to alleviate the need. Mr. Franklin replied that due to the state security requirements the county IT staff are unable to work on the state equipment. There used to be shared IT support agencies that were able to utilize local IT support and equipment. A federal review identified areas where the state was not in compliance with federal security policy, and the state abolished the Shared Support option. The Department makes use of Wi-Fi in the office to provide an alternative for staff to connect using a VPN. Staff also have the option to telework and use their home internet if additional speed is required. Mr. Fronzo suggested that the board consider scheduling a time in a future board meeting to discuss the strategic plan and focus group comments. Mrs. Parker suggested providing the Department some time to work through the strategic plan and discuss it at the February meeting. Mrs. Parker stated that the board should not be involved in the day-to-day operations, however, there are some items that are intertwined and need to be discussed. Mr. Franklin stated that February would provide time for the Strategic Plan to be completed. The board could then address the final report and key decision points at the February 2023 board meeting. Mrs. Cupka emphasized the restrictions to the internet connectivity issues. However, if there are Breezeline

issues for the office Wi-Fi she has access to senior level Breezeline executives to address those needs.

E. Executive Session


There was no need for executive session.

F. Items for Consent/Approval

There were no items for consent or approval.

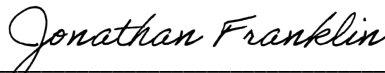
G. Adjournment

On a motion made by Renee Parker, seconded by Ed Frank, and carried unanimously the Board meeting was adjourned until December 19, 2023, at 5:30pm.


Frank Fronzo (Dec 28, 2022 23:03 EST)

Frank Fronzo, Chairman

ATTEST:



Jonathan Franklin, Secretary






Board Meeting Minutes - November 2022

Final Audit Report

2022-12-29

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