

**Board Members**

Joseph A. Martinez, Chair  
Loretta Thomas-Whiteside, Vice Chair  
Mary Ellen Wiese  
Dennis W. Lee  
Jeffrey C. Brittain



**Dorraine Hernandez**  
**Director**

**Burke County Department of Social Services**

PO Drawer 549

Morganton, North Carolina 28680-0549

Phone (828) 764-9600 ~ Fax (828) 764-9790

***MINUTES***

***BURKE COUNTY BOARD OF SOCIAL SERVICES***

***REGULAR BOARD MEETING***

***February 18, 2016***

**Board Present**

Loretta Thomas-Whiteside, Vice-Chair  
Jeff Brittain  
Mary Ellen Wiese

**DSS Staff Present**

Dorraine Hernandez, Burke County DSS Director  
Rebecca Finney, Services Program Administrator  
Tracey Kincaid, Income Maintenance Administrator  
Viveca Huffman, Clerk to the Board

**CALL TO ORDER**

Co-Chair Loretta Thomas-Whiteside called the meeting to order at 8:35 a.m.

**INVOCATION**

Mr. Jeff Brittain led the group in an Invocation.

**APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA**

Ms. Whiteside asked if there was a motion to approve the Agenda as presented. Mr. Brittain made a motion to approve the Agenda with a second by Ms. Mary Ellen Weise. The Agenda was unanimously approved.

**APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES**

Ms. Weise made a motion to approve the Minutes from the January 21, 2016 meeting. Mr. Brittain seconded the motion and the Minutes were unanimously approved by the Board.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS**

There were no public comments at this time.

## **DEPARTMENT UPDATES**

Co-Chair Whiteside expressed that she was pleased to see an article in the News Herald relating to heating programs available to the community through the department.

Next, DSS Director, Ms. Dorraine Hernandez, introduced staff member Audrey Gwynn to the Board. Ms. Gwynn was recognized for her 20 years of service with the department and her upcoming retirement at the end of February. Upon her retirement, she plans to vacation in California, offer substitute teaching at local high schools, and possibly return to work at Burke United Christian Ministries all while she continues to serve as an associate pastor and works toward completing seminary school. A retirement party will be held for Ms. Gwynn at the department on February 26<sup>th</sup>.

Ms. Whiteside shared that she was pleased and thankful to see the article in the paper about the Low Income Energy Assistance Program and indicated that she placed the bulletin in her church for others to see. Ms. Whiteside next called on Program Administrator, Rebecca Finney, to update the Board on the happenings within Adult and Children Services as well as Child Support. Ms. Finney reported she is in the final stages of filling the vacant position of Social Work Supervisor. She is also in the process of hiring a Processing Assistant IV, a vacancy due to an employee accepting a position within another county department. An applicant was offered this position but then declined due to the low salary. A vacancy in Foster Care was recently filled by Brittany Little and due to her qualifications there is no pre-service training necessary. Ms. Finney was happy to announce that Adult Protective Services and Child Support continue to be fully staffed.

Next, Ms. Finney shared that on February 10<sup>th</sup> there were 161 children in foster care. From October through November 2015 there were 144 children in care and this number rose to 154 children in December 2015. This increase included at least 2 sibling groups and in February 2016 at least 1 sibling group was taken into care. Ms. Weise inquired on the department's ability to keep sibling groups together. Ms. Finney responded that the department does everything in its power to keep siblings together. The department is continuing to see an increase substance abuse and parents not willing to comply with case plans. Another troubling issue is child abuse causing serious injury.

Ms. Tracey Kincaid next shared updates within the Income Maintenance Unit. She is currently working to fill 2 vacancies within this unit and is in the conditional offer phases. She reminded the Board that upon Ms. Gwynn's retirement there would be another vacancy soon.

Next, she shared that LIEAP currently has a balance of \$19,187 and she suspects that the department will be out of LIEAP funds by the end of February. She advised that last year the total funding wasn't depleted and a portion was sent back to the state. She shared that she is seeing progress with processing Medicaid applications. She shared that on January 19<sup>th</sup> there were 147 untimely applications needing to be processed and currently that number is down to 68.

Ms. Kincaid advised that in September 2016 Subsidized Child Care would be going live in NCFAST. All eligibility functions, vouchers and daycare providers will be paid through

NCFAST to the bank of the provider’s choice. She explained that every child on subsidy will need a new application and there are currently 516 cases. Ms. Weise asked if all providers had access to computers and Ms. Kincaid said that with this new process the providers would have to have a computer.

Ms. Hernandez, next, offered information about the upcoming county budget presentation where initial estimates are explained to the County Manager and the Commissioners. She advised that upon review of the agency needs, increased caseloads and work tasks that 15 positions appear to be needed at this time to meet demand. She went over each request and the rational for them. She also explained that we had gotten word from the state that County Departments of Social Services will no longer be able to use temporary staff in the Medicaid or Food and Nutrition Programs to assist with establishing eligibility. The department is currently using 6 temporary staff in Medicaid. Funding for these are already in the budget. She will ask that this funding continue but that it be ear marked for permanent staff. Additional staff are required in the Medicaid unit due to an increase of over 1,000 new Medicaid recipients and additional information and work tasks relating to these areas. The position requests are noted below:

		Matched funds	
• IMC II	FAM & CHILD	5	\$ 26,875 75%
• IMC II	ADULT	4	\$ 26,875 75%
• IMC III	FNS LEAD	1	\$ 29,630 50%
• IMC III	WF LEAD	1	\$ 29,630 50%
• SW III	CPS	2	\$ 36,016 50+%
• PA IV	LTC CLERICAL	1	\$ 24,376 50%
• PARALEGAL	CHILD SUPPORT	1	\$ 37,815 66%

In addition to the above, two new vehicles are in the budget request along with a \$30,000 request to provide scanning of old files into the new computer system. Replacement computers are also being requested. Ms. Hernandez advised that she will be presenting the budget request to the County Commissioner’s on Friday, February 26<sup>th</sup> and ask if there were any concerns regarding what was being requested. No concerns were noted.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Mr. Brittain made a motion to adjourn the meeting and move into Executive Session. Vice-Chair Whiteside seconded the motion.

Submitted by: Viveca M. Huffman, Clerk to the Board

Approved by: \_\_\_\_\_  
Joseph A. Martinez, Chair  
Loretta Thomas-Whiteside, Vice-Chair

Date: \_\_\_\_\_