

ADVISORY BOARD MEETING

WARREN COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

465 W 15th Street, Suite 100, Front Royal, Virginia 22630

July 15, 2021

The Advisory Board met in the Training Room of the Warren County Department of Social Services on July 15, 2021, with the meeting called to order at 4:01 PM by Mr. Jerome.

Members in Attendance: Lorraine Brandon, Stephen Jerome, and Brenda Wells

Present for the Department: Jon Martz, Director; Samantha Edwards, Assistant Director; Michelle Smeltzer, Community Liaison; April White, Family Services Supervisor; Eric Jones, Benefit Programs Supervisor; Mikki Ewanish, Administrative Services Manager; Lisa Look, Fiscal Assistant; and Connie Moore, Human Services Assistant III

County Officials: Walter Mabe, Warren County Board of Supervisors

Guests: Linda Selover, Community Member

Approval of Minutes

Having no revisions to be made, a motion was made by Ms. Wells to approve May 21, 2021 minutes. The motion was approved unanimously.

Public Comments

Ms. Selover read a prepared statement concerning the posting of audio taped minutes on the public website.

Advisory Board Comments

Mr. Jerome informed the board the Director made a presentation to the Town Council which was well received and well presented. Mr. Jerome asked the Director for an update on the Self-Sufficiency III position, if there are any updates on Human Trafficking in Warren County, and to respond to the public comments.

Mr. Martz responded per policy the office is required to post minutes to all public minutes on the public website, but the form of the minutes is not prescribed, and written minutes meet all requirements. There are no updates on Human Trafficking, but Mr. Martz will research the topic for the next meeting. Finally, the Department is advertising for the Self-Sufficiency III position beginning July 16, 2021, and the advertisement will run for two weeks.

Unit Reports

Services

Prepared by April White and Christie Lawson, Family Services Supervisor, reflective of June 2021. Presented by April White.

Permanency

Foster Care Cases	13 cases with 18 children total
Fostering Futures	0 – 1 child scheduled to re-enter program 7/15/21
Adoption Cases	6 children available for adoption 1 child with a signed Adoption Assistance Agreement
KinGap Cases	1
ICPC Requests	2 (Tennessee/Massachusetts)
Resource Families in Approval Process	0
Resource Families in Re-Approval Process	0
In Home Cases (Prevention)	8

Child Welfare

Referrals Received	56 referrals/23 accepted
Family Assessments	65 Current as of 6/30/21
Investigations	21 Current as of 6/30/21

Adult Services

Guardianship Cases	83
Adult Service Cases	7
Adult Protective Services Reports	21
Adult Protective Services Reports Accepted	18

Notes of Interest

The Department's Resource Family Specialist has completed Foster Care Parent Trainer training and has begun recruiting local families. One child in foster care graduated high school in June, and there was one Child Protective Services removal of a newborn on June 30th.

Mr. Jerome asked a question about those in foster care 16 years of age and older. Ms. White explained once a child reaches the age of 14, they can decide if they want to be adopted or not.

Mr. Mabe asked if children in foster care can petition the court for emancipation and if so, whether they would be on their own. Ms. White responded they could, but they would have to demonstrate to the court they could be self-sufficient. It would be difficult for a foster care child to demonstrate this, but if they could, then they would be on their own.

Eligibility

Submitted by Kristen Strosnider and Eric Jones, Benefits Program Supervisor, reflective of June 2021. Presented by Eric Jones.

<u>Program</u>	<u>Applications</u>	<u>Cases</u>
SNAP	101	1,839
Medicaid (F&C)	94	3,889
Medicaid (ABD/LTC/SSI)	20	1,352
TANF	20	47
Child Care	8	44
Fraud Referrals	3	3
Auxiliary Grant (AG)	1	9
IV-E	1	
Energy Assistance – Cooling	71	

Notes of Interest

The agency has completed a successful Auxiliary Grant review with the State.

Administration and Support

Submitted by Renee Pearson, Administrative Office Manager, reflective of June 2021. Presented by Connie Moore.

	<u>June</u>	<u>Year to Date</u>
Phone Calls	932	8,307
Lobby Visits	849	4,640
EBT Cards Dispersed	65	472

Notes of Interest

The Department is on pace to more than double the number of applications received from last month.

Mr. Martz added the lobby is now completely open, and the Department has added bookcases with books for adults and children. Visitors are encouraged to take books after every visit. Also, a new bulletin board has been posted with local job openings.

Community Liaison

Prepared and presented by Michelle Smeltzer.

Ministerial Fund Spending (*most of the funds went to Utility payments*)

May, \$526.56

June \$811.01

Food Distribution

May – 15 People

June – 17 People

Notes of Interest

The One Stop Resource Center is open every Wednesday afternoon in the cafeteria. We deliver meals every Thursday afternoon with Reaching Out Now. Nichole has completed a grant writing class and is preparing to begin applying for grants. Two clients may have been able to secure permanent housing.

Coming in August:

Job Fair – August 5th

Food Distribution – August 11th

Volunteer Fair – August 21st

Safe at Home – Back to School Community Day at Bing Crosby Stadium – August 28th

Goodwill Committee – Ms. Lisa Look, Fiscal Assistant, discussed the activities of the Department's Goodwill Committee, which is called The Breakfast Club. The Committee sponsors Department activities designed to boost employee morale. They have provided cards, flowers, socials, and rubber ducks to employees as well as teamwork activities for the Department. This is funded through employee dues.

Assistant Director's Report

Ms. Edwards reported the agency currently has eight vacancies but three employees starting over the next two weeks. The agency is still hiring three more positions. The agency has been in contact with George Mason University, and they are willing to advertise vacancies to graduating students and interns. The agency had one resignation from an employee who was with the agency for one day before deciding the work was not for her.

Director's Report

Mr. Martz informed the Board he has been conducting one-on-one meetings with all personnel since the last Advisory Board meeting. Approximately two-thirds of the staff have completed their one-on-one, and there is a working "to do" list of over 70 items as a result of the meetings. The Warren County Department of Social Services is hosting a Job Fair on Thursday, August 5, 2021 beginning at 10:00 a.m. until 3:00 p.m. in the gymnasium in the Health and Human Services Complex. There are currently 15 confirmed employers as of today. Employees are advertising the job fair on Instagram and Snapchat. Finally, the Department has initiated the Pathways Program, which features both a book and nightlight program and has given away over 60 nightlights in two days.

County Administrator's Report

Mr. Daley was not able to attend the meeting. There was not a County Administrator's report at this time.

Adjournment

Hearing no further business for discussion, Ms. Wells motioned to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Jerome adjourned the meeting at 4:44 PM. The next meeting will be held on September 16, 2021 at 4:00 PM.

X

Jon Martz
Warren County Director

X

Lorraine Brandon
Vice Chair of Advisory Board



Warren Job Fair

The Warren County Department of Social Services will be hosting a job fair for all residents. Many local employers will be on hand accepting applications. Additionally, local education programs will share course and training opportunities.

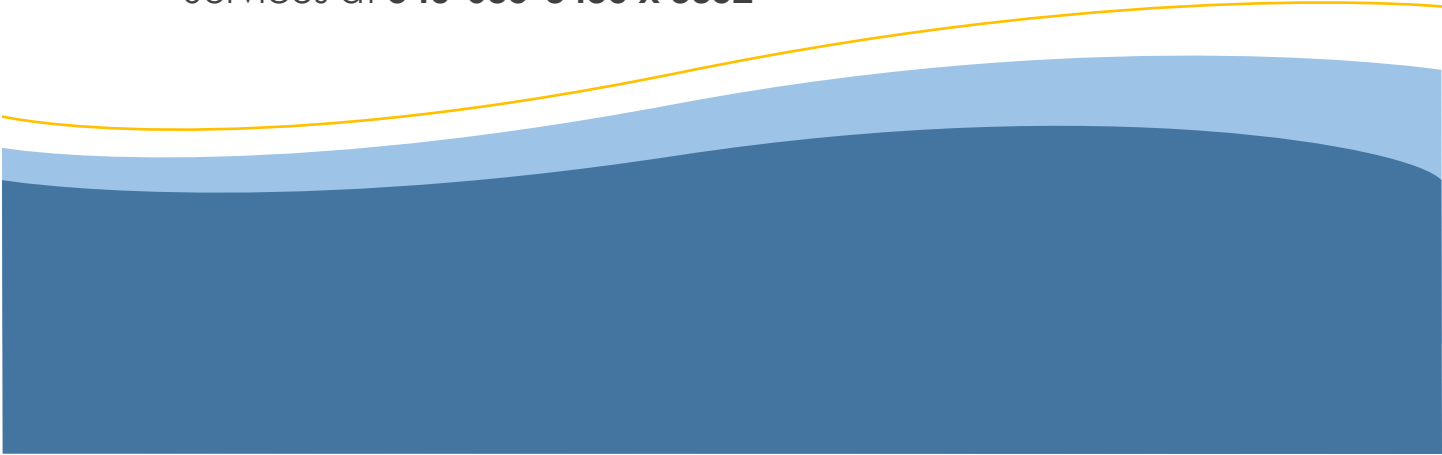


Thursday, August 5, 2021

10:00 a.m.to 3:00 p.m.

**Health and Human Services Complex Gymnasium
465 W. 15th Street, Front Royal, VA 22630**

If you are in need of transportation, contact the Royal Trolley Service at 540-825-2456 for route information. For any other questions please call the Warren County Department of Social Services at **540-635-3430 x 3352**



WCDSS Pathways Program

The Warren County Department of Social Services is pleased to introduce the new Pathways Program. Studies have shown the benefit for both children and parents of the use of night lights. Please select a night light for your child's bedroom as our gift to you. While you are here—please encourage your child to take some books from our community bookshelf as well.

3 Benefits of Using Night Lights

- 1 According to doctors, nighttime lights can boost a baby's brain development. The American Optometric Associations recommends use of nighttime lights from birth to four month for better visual development.
2. Many babies around 2-4 years can develop a fear of darkness and nightlights can console them, making them feel safer.
3. Parents can walk through their toddler's room more safely at night. There are many times when they may have to check in to their baby's room for nighttime feeds. It can also help your toilet trained babies to find their way to bathroom safely.

