

ADVISORY BOARD MEETING

WARREN COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

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

September 16, 2021

The Advisory Board met in the Thermal Shelter of the Warren County Department of Social Services on September 16, 2021, with the meeting called to order at 3:59 PM by Ms. Brandon.

Members in Attendance: Lorraine Brandon and Brenda Wells

Present for the Department: Jon Martz, Director; Samantha Edwards, Assistant Director; Michelle Smeltzer, Community Liaison; Christie Lawson, Family Services Supervisor; Eric Jones, Benefit Programs Supervisor; Mikki Ewanish, Administrative Services Manager; Lisa Look, Fiscal Assistant; Amanda Jenkins, Administrative Secretary; Brook McClung, Self Sufficiency Specialist III; and Renee Pearson, Support Supervisor

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. Brandon to approve July 15, 2021 minutes. The motion was approved unanimously.

Public Comments

Ms. Selover expressed her concerns that the official audio recordings had not been uploaded to the agency website.

Advisory Board Comments

Ms. Wells wanted to know if there were any other comments/questions from the other two districts due to Mr. Jerome not being present for the meeting.

Mr. Martz responded that Mr. Jerome did send in two questions for the Board. One of those questions was the status of the two Board member vacancies. Mr. Martz informed the Board that Ms. Smeltzer has recruited two people. Unfortunately, one of those individuals is no longer interested in becoming a Board member. Mr. Martz added that flyers are being distributed throughout the community to recruit more Board members. Another comment from Mr. Jerome was the minutes from the previous meeting were not sent out. Mr. Martz acknowledged that he thought he sent them out but realized he had not. Minutes were sent out earlier in the day and were included in everyone's packets for the current meeting.

Eligibility

Presentation was given by Eric Jones, Benefit Program Supervisor on how clients can apply for programs offered by Social Services (presentation attached). Mr. Jones reported that applications can be filled out online, by phone, and in person.

Unit Reports

Eligibility

Submitted by Kristen Strosnider and Eric Jones, Benefits Program Supervisors, reflective of August 2021. Presented by Eric Jones.

<u>Program</u>	<u>Applications</u>	<u>Cases</u>
SNAP	135	1,874
Medicaid (F&C)	99	4,034
Medicaid (ABD/LTC/SSI)	27	1,342
TANF	25	68
Child Care	14	54
Fraud Referrals	1	4
Auxiliary Grant (AG)	2	9
IV-E		

Administration and Support

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

	<u>June</u>	<u>Year to Date</u>
Phone Calls	1,301	11,019
Lobby Visits	1,520	7,028
EBT Cards Dispersed	116	702

Community Liaison

Prepared and presented by Michelle Smeltzer.

Ministerial Fund Spending

July - \$811.01

August - \$594.64

Food Distribution

July - 17 People

August - 21 People

Michelle Smeltzer reported churches in the community donate at least once a month and approximately \$16,000 is in that fund. This fund is used for various reasons such as prescriptions, motels, utilities, clothing, birth certificates, and DMV related issues. We distribute food out of our agency for people in need. The agency's pantry has provided food to approximately 70 individuals within the last three to four months.

Notes of Interest

The One Stop Resource is going to be moved to First Baptist Church on the 1st and 3rd Wednesdays of the month. We are hoping this will increase our clientele with this location being more accessible in town. This will take effect the 1st week in October. We received a grant for \$35,000 from the Director of the Continuum of Care to provide motel stays for the homeless. We are also working with Shenandoah Lions Club for Shelter and Northwestern Community Services to try to get long term housing once our clients are more stable. Virginia Hills Church donated 25 backpacks filled with school supplies. DSS did an internal food drive, each department did a competition to see who could donate the most food. A total of 637 items were donated. Admin and Support grouped together and won an ice cream bar. Mr. Martz introduced Brook McClung as our new Employment Service Specialist. She will be working with unemployed and underemployed to help them with resume writing and job readiness courses. Ms. McClung will be making contacts with business in the community to find out what skills they are looking for then connecting clients with those skills to help make them more employable.

Services

Prepared by April White and Christie Lawson, Family Services Supervisors, reflective of August 2021. Presented by Christie Lawson.

Permanency

Foster Care Cases	13 cases with 18 children total
Fostering Futures	0 – 1 child scheduled to re-enter program
Adoption Cases	5 children available for adoption
	1 child with a signed Adoption Assistance Agreement
KinGap Cases	1
ICPC Requests	2 completed, 3 in process
Resource Families in Approval Process	2
Resource Families in Re-Approval Process	0
In Home Cases (Prevention)	6

Child Welfare

Referrals Received	55 referrals/29 accepted
Family Assessments	64 Current as of 8/31/21
Investigations	21 Current as of 8/31/21

Adult Services

Guardianship Cases	92
Adult Service Cases	19
Adult Protective Services Reports	23
Adult Protective Services Reports Accepted	19

Notes of Interest

ICPC is interstate compact between different states. Resource family is a foster care family. For the first time in a long time, we have families in training to be foster families in our district.

Assistant Director's Report

Ms. Edwards welcomed Brook McClung and introduced Amanda Jenkins. Amanda Jenkins is our new Administrative Secretary. Ms. Edwards reported that Administration is now fully staffed. We have four vacancies within our agency. Three of those positions are in services and the other one is in eligibility. We feel that Mr. Jones's training plan has made a huge impact in making staff feel more confident in their position. We are using creative advertising strategies such as Indeed, Facebook, reaching out to colleges, as well as professional organizations. Mr. Mabe questioned how many vacancies were open in our agency, Ms. Edwards reported four. Mr. Mabe asked if the four vacancies are posted on the government website and the state website. Ms. Edwards confirmed they are posted on the state website. Mr. Martz went on to say Ms. Edwards has reached out to universities that have a social service program and they have agreed to post our openings. Mr. Martz stated that we received ten applicants from Facebook and encouraged everyone to like our Facebook page in order to get updated information on community events in which we are engaged.

Director's Report

Mr. Martz reported that the job fair was a success with 32 vendors and 50 individuals seeking employment. There were 8 to 10 people who were offered a job on site, and 5 to 10 people had follow-up appointments. We will be conducting more job fairs in the future. Staff one-on-one meetings have been completed. Communication was one of the major concerns in the one-on-one meetings. Staff was interested in learning about what other staff members do. Mr. Martz sent out emails asking each staff member to share three things that others may not know about them. Then we had staff go and guess who they thought fit those descriptions. Staff expressed concern to change the perception of what the public thinks of DSS. Being involved in our community is a big part of who we are. We had a table at National Night Out as well as Habitat for Humanity. Consistency and training was another concern with our staff. With our new employees engaging in Mr. Jones's onboarding training, we have seen a positive impact. Employees are picking up on material much faster. We have employees that have taken courses to become State certified trainers in VAMCS and SNAP, and we are in the process for TANF. This allows us to provide training within our agency to our employees and neighboring agencies.

We are partnering with Girl Scouts to do a toy drive. A table will be available in our lobby for residence in our community to donate toys. We will keep some of the toys here at our agency for families that may come in for Christmas that are in need. Mr. Martz reported that Ms. Smeltzer will be doing a Santa for Seniors event providing free dinner and a small gift, depending on COVID-19 guidelines. We will also be hosting a Halloween event for trick-or-treating the Thursday before Halloween. Mr. Mabe asked if this was a nonprofit event, and Ms. Smeltzer replied anyone is welcome to come.

County Administrator's Report

Dr. Daley was not able to attend the meeting. There was not a County Administrator's report at this time. There was a comment from Mr. Mabe that the County has hired a new Human Resources Director who will start on October 4th. The County also hired a new Deputy Finance Director. Mr. Mabe informed the Board that there are two community gardens: one on Criser Road and the other one at Virginia Hills Church. These gardens have produced two tons of food for residents in our community. Loaves and Fishes and C-CAP are some of the pantries that have helped distribute the food to the community. Loaves and Fishes is starting a new program for people who may be in need in the Shenandoah Farms and Blue Mountain subdivisions.

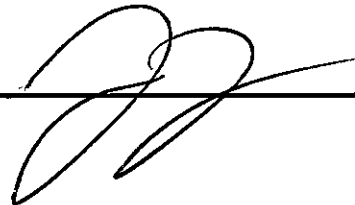
Adjournment

Hearing no further business for discussion, Ms. Wells motioned to adjourn the meeting. The meeting was adjourned at 4:43 PM. The next meeting will be held on November 18, 2021 at 4:00 PM.

X

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "J. Mabe", written over a horizontal line.

X

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "D. Daley", written over a horizontal line.