

ADVISORY BOARD MEETING

WARREN COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

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

March 24, 2022

The Advisory Board met in the Training Room of the Warren County Department of Social Services on March 24, 2022, with the meeting called to order at 4:01 PM by Mr. Jerome.

Members in Attendance: Lorraine Brandon, Brenda Wells, Stephen Jerome, Robert Cullers

Present for the Department: Jon Martz, Director; Christie Lawson, Assistant Director; Amanda Jenkins, Administrative Secretary; Desiree Minter, Benefit Program Supervisor; Renee Pearson, Administrative Office Manager; Michelle Smeltzer, Community Liaison; Mikki Ewanish, Administrative Services Manager; Lisa Look, Fiscal Assistant; Shelissa Lewis, Foster Care Adoption Supervisor; AJ Levesque, APS Worker

County Officials: No County Officials present

Guests: No Community Members present

Approval of Minutes

Having no revisions to be made, a motion was made by Miss Brandon to approve the January 27, 2022 minutes. The motion was approved unanimously.

Public Comments

No public comments.

Advisory Board Comments

Mr. Jerome wanted to know if Social Services refers clients to St. Luke Community Clinic. Mr. Martz stated that Social Services has reached out and received flyers from St. Luke's to hand out to clients who may be in need of their services. Mr. Cullers presented a donation from Front Royal United Methodist Church to help serve clients who may be in need in our community. Mr. Cullers stated that the Front Royal United Methodist Church will continue to donate either monthly or quarterly to the Social Services Ministerial Fund.

Unit Reports

Eligibility

Submitted by Kristen Strosnider and Desiree Minter, Benefits Program Supervisors, reflective of February 2022. Presented by Desiree Minter.

<u>Program</u>	<u>Applications</u>	<u>Cases</u>
SNAP	131	1,981
Medicaid (F&C)	115	5,520
TANF	15	77
Child Care	10	60
Fraud Referrals	0	4
Auxiliary Grant (AG)	2	12
Fuel	24	0
IV-E	0	0

Notes of Interest

Mrs. Minter reported that interviews are being held for the Fraud Investigator Position.

Administration and Support

Prepared and by Renee Pearson, Administrative Office Manager, reflective of February 2022. Presented by Renee Pearson.

	<u>February</u>	<u>Year to Date</u>
Phone Calls	1,089	2,136
Lobby Visits	1,298	2,936
EBT Cards Dispersed	108	219

Notes of Interest

Mr. Martz reported that the Department received a new telephone system. Mr. Jerome inquired if there is a certain number of EBT cards for the year or are they ordered as needed. Mrs. Pearson replied that EBT cards are ordered as needed.

Community Liaison

Prepared by Michelle Smeltzer, Community Liaison, reflective of February 2022. Presented by Michelle Smeltzer.

Community Development Block Grant (Housing)

February - \$3,835.26

Ministerial Fund

February spent - \$543.38
February received - \$1,150

Food Distribution

February - 26 clients served

Job Developer

New clients/referrals for the month of February: 6
Jobs offered/accepted: 3
Total clients to date: 59

Thermal Shelter

Housed 69 individuals from December 11, 2021 through March 24, 2022
-26% female
-67% receive SSI/SSDI/Social Security
-On March 23rd, 39 individuals stayed at the shelter

Notes of Interest

Mr. Martz reported that for some of these clients receiving benefits such as Social Security or Disability, the funds are not sufficient to provide housing for these individuals. Mr. Cullers questioned if there was a certain time for pick-up for the food pantry at Social Services, and Mrs. Smeltzer replied that there is no set time-frame for food pickup. Mrs. Smeltzer stated when clients apply for SNAP benefits they are not approved immediately. The food pantry is typically used to hold clients over until their benefits are in place.

Services

Prepared by April White, Shelissa Lewis, and Lucy Riffey, – Family Services Supervisors, reflective of February 2022. Presented by Shelissa Lewis.

Permanency

Foster Care Cases	14 cases with 16 children total
Fostering Futures	2
Adoption Cases	6 children available for adoption (3 have identified families.)
KinGap Cases	1
ICPC Requests	0
Resource Families in Approval Process	3
Resource Families Completed Approval	1
Resource Families in Re-Approval Process	0

Child Welfare

Referrals Received	71 referrals/32 accepted
Family Assessments	43 Open as of 3/21/22
Investigations	14 Open as of 3/21/22
In Home Cases (Prevention)	7
<u>Adult Services</u>	

Guardianship Cases	84
Adult Service Cases	14
Adult Protective Services Reports	21
Adult Protective Services Reports Accepted	18
UAI Screening Referrals	14

Notes of Interest

Ms. Brandon questioned if in home cases have a good success rate. Mr. Martz stated that Department is trying a different approach that he believes is going be more successful. When closing out an investigation or a family assessment, the Department will complete a risk assessment. If the risk assessment comes back high, then a CPS worker will go out with an In Home worker to offer this program and discuss resources that are available. Ms. Brandon asked about how long it takes to become a foster parent; and Ms. Lewis responded the training takes six weeks. Ms. Lewis stated that most of the time is spent researching the family's history to make sure they are a good fit to become a foster parent. Mr. Cullers asked what guardianship cases involve; Mr. Martz stated that guardianship cases mainly involve helping the client with their finances.

Mr. Martz then discussed poverty income limits.

- A household of one can make \$13,590 annually or \$1,133 monthly.
- A household of two can make \$18,310 annually or \$1,526 monthly.
- A household of three can make \$23,030 or \$1920 monthly.
- A household of four can make \$27,750 or \$23,750 or \$2,313 monthly.

Mr. Jerome asked if the In Home Program was something all agencies do, and Mr. Martz replied that it is mandated for all State agencies to implement the In Home Program for high risk cases.

Assistant Director's Report

Ms. Lawson reported that the Department is holding a Jubilee on April 23rd at the track in honor of April being Child Abuse Awareness Month. WIC will be there along with the Warren County Public Schools Pre-K Program. The Front Royal Police Department will also be there doing ID kits for the kids. C&C will be there giving out ice cream, and there will be popcorn machines, cotton candy machines, moon bounces, face painting, and balloon animals. Ms. Lawson reported that the community has really come together to help support this event. Mr. Martz stated that due

to the COVID-19 –pandemic, the last time the Department was able to host the Jubilee was in 2019. Mr. Martz informed the Board the Bikers Against Child Abuse will be coming as well as Charlee Allman, who will be performing at this event.

Director's Report

Mr. Martz reported the State will be doing an evaluation every other year on how the Department is doing as an agency. The State meets quarterly in Richmond for their meetings, and once per year, they choose a different location. Next fall, the State Board will be coming to Warren County to have its meeting. Mr. Martz informed the Board that next month, he, April White, Christie Lawson, are going to Richmond to speak to the State Board about children finding space in psychological facilities. Mr. Martz reported that staff has had to stay with these children in the hospital 24 hours a day for days or weeks at a time. Mr. Jerome questioned if there are more children in need of mental health treatment; and Ms. Lawson stated it is a combination of fewer available beds and an increase in the need for mental health services. Mr. Cullers wanted to know what the Board could do to help; and Mr. Martz said the Board members can speak to their representatives on the Warren County Board of Supervisors and their legislators. Mr. Martz stated that more access to mental health treatment in communities is needed. CSB partners are being informed by the State that the focus is shifting from mental health to substance abuse. Ms. Brandon stated that substance abuse can sometimes be self-medicating due to a mental health issue. Mr. Martz agreed that there is an overdosing issue but there is also an underlying mental health issue. There can be a rush to have Substance Abuse Counselors, but if they are not cross-trained to deal with the mental health issues, the treatment is not going to be as effective.

Old Business

No old business to report.

New Business

Mr. Martz reported that the pandemic and public health emergency is going to be coming to an end soon. There will be changes in the Departments services such as a decrease in benefits and resuming in-person interviews. During the pandemic, the Government allowed the maximum benefits for SNAP. Those benefits are going to return back to their normal eligibility rates. Work requirements that were waived during the pandemic will also be put back into place. Mrs. Minter reported that when schools were closed due to COVID, instead of free lunches, the money was added to an EBT card to make sure those kids were being fed. This program will also be coming to an end. Mr. Martz reported that co-pays for daycare would be returning. VDSS estimates up to 20% of current Medicaid recipients may lose coverage once restrictions are lifted. Mr. Martz informed the Board that Mrs. Smeltzer is working to schedule a meeting with community partners to help prepare them for an increase in the need for their services. Mr. Martz stated that the Department is working to get the word out to its clients, and the State is mailing out letters with this information as well. Mr. Jerome suggested reaching out to Mike McCool with National Media Services to do an interview to help get this information to the public. Mr. Martz informed the Board that the agency will be holding its second job fair on May 12th.

Adjournment

Hearing no further business for discussion, Mr. Jerome motioned to adjourn the meeting. The meeting was adjourned at 5:00 PM. The next meeting will be held on May 19, 2022 at 4:00 PM.

X



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