

ADVISORY BOARD MEETING

WARREN COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

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

July 21, 2022

The Advisory Board met in the Training Room of the Warren County Department of Social Services on July 21, 2022, with the meeting called to order at 4:03 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; Nichole Johns, Community Liason; Lisa Look, Fiscal Assistant; Lucy Riffey, Adult Protective Services /Adult Services Supervisor; Desiree Minter, Benefit Program Supervisor; Katie Colton, Benefit Program Services IV; Renee Pearson, Administrative Office Manager

County Officials: No County Officials present

Guests: Linda Selover, Community Member

Approval of Minutes

Having no revisions to be made, a motion was made by Mr. Cullers to approve the May 19, 2022 minutes. The motion was approved unanimously.

Public Comments

Ms. Selover requested that the county's website be current with up- to-date minutes and audios.

Advisory Board Comments

No Board Comments.

Unit Reports

Administration and Support

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

	<u>June</u>	<u>Year to Date</u>
Phone Calls	1,390	8,634
Lobby Visits	944	6,297
EBT Cards Disbursed	101	527

Notes of Interest

Mr. Martz informed the Board that the Department has a section in the lobby where clients can take clothes, books, and other donated items for free. The Department also has a job board located in the lobby which has employment information and current job postings. The lobby also has mandated posters stating client rights for Medicaid and SNAP.

Community Liaison

Prepared by Michelle Smeltzer, Community Liaison, reflective of June 2022. Presented by Nichole Johns.

Community Development Block Grant (Housing)

Funds have been exhausted

Ministerial Fund

June spent - \$1,044.73

June received - \$716

Food Distribution

June - 13 clients served

Job Developer

New clients/referrals for the month of June: 9

Jobs offered/accepted in June: 3

Total clients to served date: 85

Notes of Interest

Ms. Johns informed the Board that the Department was working on putting together a Job Fair. Mr. Martz stated that the Department was trying to schedule the Job Fair around the end of the public emergency which has been extended until October. Previous Job Fairs have been held at

the gymnasium located inside the same building as Social Services. Ms. Johns reported that the upcoming Job Fair will take place at the Warren County Community Center in order to be more accessible to the public. Mr. Martz informed the Board the food program, housing assistance program, and the job developer program all fall under the Community Liaison. In the next year, the Department is hoping to include transportation as an addition under the Community Liaisons. Mr. Martz noted that the Front Royal Trolley does not go past Walmart, which creates issues for clients who have a transportation barrier for the factory jobs located outside the trolley's route. Ms. Selover suggested contacting the factories directly to see if they could do a vanpool. Ms. Johns replied that the Department had reached out, and the factories could not meet the transportation needs due to the various shift schedules.

Services

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

Permanency

Foster Care Cases	13 cases with 15 children total
Fostering Futures	2
Adoption Cases	8 children available for adoption (3 have identified families.)
KinGap Cases	0
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	45 referrals/19 accepted
Family Assessments	47 open as of 6/30/22
Investigations	15 open as of 6/30/22
In Home Cases (Prevention)	10

Adult Services

Guardianship Cases	95
Adult Service Cases	14
Adult Protective Services Reports	23
Adult Protective Services Reports Accepted	20

Notes of Interest

Mr. Cullers asked what KinGap was, and Ms. Lawson replied that KinGap is when a relative becomes a foster parent. Ms. Brandon questioned if In Home Cases involve a lot of repeat clients, and Mr. Martz responded that there are some repeat clients. Mr. Martz asked Ms. Riffey to explain what AS and APS are. Ms. Riffey stated that Adult Services (AS) provides services to clients 60 years of age and older or incapacitated adults ages 18-59. These adults have disabilities that prevent them from doing daily tasks. The Department can assist clients with getting to and from doctor appointments, scheduling doctor appointments, applying for Social Security Disability benefits, and setting up their Safelink Cell Phone. Adult Protective Services (APS) investigates abuse, neglect, and exploitation of vulnerable adults. Ms. Brandon wanted to know if a client can come to the Department if they need assistance with medication, and Mr. Martz responded that clients could come to the Department for help covering medication. The Department would first make sure the client is receiving Medicaid to help cover some of those prescription costs. There is some funding from the State to help in that area, and the Department also has the ministerial fund that can step in when needed. Ms. Johns informed the Board that she came across a program led by Everett Community Housing Partners that wants to serve the Front Royal community with house repairs and maintenance to assist with lowering electricity bills. If a client is receiving TANF, Social Security, or is part of the Department's Energy Services Program, the client will automatically meet income qualifications for this program. This program is at no cost to the owner, landlord, or the renter.

Eligibility

Submitted by Desiree Minter, Benefit Programs Supervisor, reflective of June 2022. Presented by Desiree Minter.

<u>Program</u>	<u>Applications</u>
SNAP	117
Medicaid (F&C)	91
TANF	22
Child Care	15
Fraud Referrals	1
Auxiliary Grant (AG)	3
Fuel	28
IV-E	0

Notes of Interest

Ms. Minter introduced Ms. Colton to the Board, Benefit Program Specialist IV and a Certified Trainer for VaCMS. Ms. Colton is also in the process of becoming a Certified Trainer for Aged Blind, or Disabled Medicaid. This is not only beneficial for in-house training but also for training that is open to surrounding agencies.

Assistant Director's Report

Ms. Lawson reported that the Department has hired three Eligibility Workers and two new Service Workers. Ms. Lawson stated there are three openings in Eligibility, an HSA position in Services, and a Receptionist position at the front desk. The Department has also hired a new Fraud Worker. Ms. Lawson informed the Board that the Department did a Mandated Reporter Training for the Warren County School Administrators. There has been a request for the Department to return and conduct Mandated Reporter Training for the teachers. Ms. Lawson stated that a Mandated Reporter is a set of people such as law enforcement, teachers, nurses, and doctors who are required to report child abuse. Ms. Lawson informed the Board that the Police Department and Social Services have been working on strengthening communication between the Departments. In June, some staff members from the agency went and toured the Police Department and were able to ask questions on how they conduct certain investigations. Ms. Lawson stated in August, members from the Police Department will come to the agency to get a tour and will also be able to ask questions. Ms. Lawson reported that the Department will have an active table at National Night Out on August 3rd. The Department is partnering with Warren County Parks and Recreation for its annual Jack O' Lantern Jubilee where families can bring their children to the Health and Human Services Complex track area for trick-or-treating. Ms. Lawson informed the Board that Virginia Hills Church reached out to the Department wanting to provide back packs filled with school supplies. On August 1st the agency is expected to receive 40-50 backpacks for families in need. Mr. Cullers reported that the Methodist church was also doing a backpack drive.

Director's Report

Mr. Martz reported that the agency has been working with Safe and Sound Task Force to help find placement for foster children. Safe and Sound is also in the process of developing Professional Foster Parents when someone is hired to become a foster parent in return they will receive a yearly income. Mr. Martz stated that children from an unstable home environment being placed into foster care is very traumatic. Finding placement for these kids is an issue; another local agency had a child living in the agency for 32 days. The State has acknowledged that there is an issue and is working toward finding a solution. Mr. Martz highlighted some of the new laws that took place on July 1, 2022:

- Circuit Court can now assist with paperwork for adoption
- APS has a new law to hold financial institutions responsible for reporting financial exploitation
- Clients living in an Assistant Living Facility now have the right to request an appeal if discharged without their consent
- Public childcare will now be mandated to have a learning program
- A new CPS law allows a mother to surrender their child at a safe location up until 30 days after birth without being prosecuted
- Counselors and Psychiatrists are now mandated reporters and are required to report child abuse
- A parent's partner is now considered a caretaker which helps CPS step in when there are allegations of sexual abuse
- Background checks are now waived to work in a residential facility as long as there is no direct contact with children.

Mr. Martz reported TANF payments increased by 5% and State supported employees will receive a 5% pay increase starting on August 1, 2022. The State Board will be hosting one of its meetings here in Warren County in 2023. Mr. Martz stated that there was a test completed by Verizon to gauge the Department's internet speed, which is currently running at 4.6 MGB per second compared to the average speed of 100 MGB per second. The State is working to get all agencies to meet the 100 MGB per second average. Mr. Martz reported that agencies with a T1 line defined as bare minimum service are considered first priority. There are 120 agencies across the Commonwealth, and 24 of those agencies are considered to have a T1 line. The Warren County Department of Social Services is one of the 24 agencies that are considered first priority in fixing this issue.

Old Business

No old business to report.

New Business

Mr. Martz reported that Mr. Mabe and the Department are working on a budget line that will originate from donations to help clients with various expenses. Mr. Cullers requested the Department's help establishing a Caretaker Support Group. Mr. Martz responded that he would have Ms. Lawson and Ms. Riffey work together on this project.

Adjournment

Hearing no further business for discussion, Mr. Jerome motioned to adjourn the meeting. The meeting was adjourned at 5:01 PM. The next meeting will be held on September 15, 2022 at 4:00 PM.

X

STEPHEN JEROME

X