

MEETING MINUTES

**Anne Arundel County
Social Services Board
Video Conference Call
March 21, 2023 3:00-4:00p.m.**

Attendees:

Gulayat Hajiyevea, Chair
Dr. Shawn Ashworth
Kia Chandler Esquire
Mary Spencer
Dr. DeAnna Fredrica Brown-Davis
Enidia Santiago-Arce
Darryl Penn? (Absent)
Giavante Hawkins, Treasurer? (Absent)
Tomorrow Brown? (Absent)
Elethress Wilson-Knights, Secretary

Others:

Edith Harrison, Interim DSS Director
Karen Taylor, Chief of Staff and DSS Board Liaison
Karen Nissly, Director Family Supporting Family, Guest Presenter

Meeting called to order at 3:05 pm by Edith Harrison, Interim DSS Director. Motion to approve minutes from February 21, 2023 was moved by Mary, and second by Shawn to be approved with no objections from the Board.

Guest Presenter: Karen Nissly, Director Family Supporting Families (FSF), gave an introduction of various services provided, and a brief summary of current enrollees in Teen parent alternative programs; including GED. Family Supporting Families (FSF), focuses on family empowerment, helping parents to be the best, and prevention through education, home visits, and direct support to available resources. Additionally, upcoming Parent Leadership Conference in Ocean City, and celebrations scheduled in May/June were highlighted with an open invitation to the Board.

There is a new clinical rotation partnership; effective February 16, 2023 with University of Maryland School of Nursing with FSF to provide teen mothers with education/counseling on birth control etc.

All children who are enrolled in FSF programs are immunized within 10 days, and receives a developmental assessment. Childcare is provided up to the age of 4.

Arundel Lodge, a nonprofit community health organization provides mental health support and resources. Currently, nine families were referred for consultations. Questions were raised about funding between Arundel Lodge to MD Family Network, and availability of information website/s.

March is literacy month with “Read Across America” Dr. Seuss Breakfast activity (green eggs and ham), held on 3/2/2023 had 16 families participated, and the local professional fire fighters volunteered to read to the children. The Mayor, Gavin Buckley shared his interest in visiting FSF very soon.

April is Child Abuse Awareness Month, and there are numerous scheduled activities, and speakers to educate families.

There are 5 emergency services personnel who assist families in crisis, and critical needs with referrals for food, shelter, utility, clothing, and burial. Also; since 2017, there are 2 Social Workers who rotates to various libraries and community centers throughout the county providing resources to the community. This program has expanded from 58 to 3,000 families. Additionally, the “Baby Pantry” and “Senior Pantry” provides much needed resources of weekly snack packs, and pop up resource fairs to the community at Anne Arundel Public Library, Lula G. Scott Senior Community Center, at many other libraries, and community centers throughout AACO.

Other resources are extended to Babies who are born with marijuana and prescription drugs syndrome.

Karen Nissly, Director of Family Supporting Families, ended her presentation by thanking the Board for supporting the various programs with Grant Funds.

Treasurer’s Report: Karen Taylor, Board Liaison reported, there were no changes to the accounts; as, previously reported with **local account balance of \$182.96** to be closed soon, and transitioned to the **MASSB account; which currently has a total balance of \$3,661.30**

Director’s Report: Edith Harrison, Interim DSS Director shared, newly appointed leadership at Department of Health and Human Services (DHS), Rafael J. Lopez, Secretary is committed to improving systemic concerns of the citizens by providing better services with improved systems. The family investment plans are:

- Customer centered
- Improved attitude within the agency
- EDT replacement benefits campaign
- Simple streamlined access to the system
- Application for loss of benefits restored in 48 hours
- Customer assistance in computer lab---walk-ins
- Partner with Department of Aging—loss of allotment/outreach/food resources/other benefits.

March is Social Worker professional awareness month, and the staff was recognized for their dedication, and commitment with an afternoon of relaxation at Crownsville. This included a movie “Instant Family Comedy” take a leap become a foster parent, and snacks.

The job posting for Director of Social Services closed on 3/10/2023. There are 15% vacancies at the state level and 25% vacancies at the county level. Currently the agency is diligently working to fill available positions sooner; than later with two staffers and one supervisor across the entire agency.

Board Officials Vote: Giavante Hawkins, **Treasurer** was voted in at last meeting.

Gulayat Hajiyevea, **Chair** (will fully commit in May) with supervised introduction, and information on duties etc. Shawn and Kia agreed to collaborate with mentoring newly elected, Chair.

Open seat: Vice Chair

Mary asked, “What the By-Laws recommend on occupancy of Board positions?”

Karen replied, “Shall means to always do it.” A total of nine people on the board with one county liaison.

Kia stated, “A letter will be drafted to the County Executive Chief of Staff, to inform them of her departure as Board Chair.” Karen has offered to assist. Additionally, Kia and Karen will collaborate on closing out the local bank account, and transferring funds into the MASB account.

Enida shared, April 15th 11am to 3pm Blue Ribbon Project is hosting an open house to feature Mirah's closet which is a free clothes store to assist AACO Foster Program.

Adjournment at 3:50 pm

Next scheduled meeting 4/18/2023