

Baltimore County Department of Social Services Board Minutes

The meeting of the Advisory Board of the Baltimore County Department of Social Services (DSS) was held February 13, 2023 at 4:00 p.m. via WebEx.

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Dr. Stefanie Bronson, Dr. Jasmine Leigh Morse Timothy Butka, Dr. Donald Gabriel, Melanie Gordon-Newell, Morgan Phillips and Elder Joseph Saunders

MEMBERS ABSENT: Lisa Simon Jablon and Dr. Roslyn Wiley

OTHERS PRESENT: Director, Mark Millspaugh; Deputy Director and Kathy Wynn, Executive Secretary to the Director

I. Reading and Approval of the Minutes:

Motion: To approve the minutes of October 17, 2022.
Minutes to be approved at the March meeting.

Motion: To approve the minutes of January 9, 2023.
Minutes to be approved at the March meeting.

II. DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Department of Human Services (DHS) Leadership Team

The DHS has a new Acting Secretary, Rafael López. Mr. López will serve in an acting capacity until he is confirmed by the Senate. Acting Secretary López has extensive experience in human services. He met with local directors his first day. He understands there are challenges in the department and wants to help solve those challenges, moving DHS in a better direction. He appointed Carnitra White, former Director of Anne Arundel County Department of Social Services, to be his Deputy Secretary for Programs.

DHS/Social Services Administration Lawsuit

A lawsuit was filed by advocacy organizations the final day of the Hogan Administration. The named defendants are former DHS Secretary Lourdes Padilla and Denise Conway, Executive Director of the Social Services Administration which has oversight of child welfare programs. Five different advocacy organizations joined together on this lawsuit, one of which is a national organization that has filed similar lawsuits in seven states. The lawsuit claims that Maryland is derelict in its duty to oversee psychotropic medications prescribed to youth under the care of DHS. The lawsuit names three plaintiffs, one of which is a Baltimore County youth who came into care due to mental health issues and externalizing behaviors. This youth was on psychotropic medications when he came to Baltimore County DSS. We have struggled with placement for this youth due to these behaviors. This is a statewide problem as the State does not have enough programs to meet the needs of youth with these behaviors. Mr. Millspaugh will keep the Board informed as this moves forward.

Legislative Session

Less than two thirds the number of bills have been filed this year than the last two years. If the Board has interest on a bill and the agency's position, please ask. Unless a bill directly affects the department, a position is not taken. Legislation we have been concerned about the last few years,

was not filed this year.

State Budget

Within a week of taking office, Governor Moore was required to submit the 2024 budget. He created an agency that will help youth who graduate from high school with obtaining a one year internship with the government.

Included in the budget are funds to continue Summer SNAP at the same funding level Governor Hogan did last year. Only 14 counties ran the program last year. Within those 14 counties, 102,645 children were served. Baltimore County served the most: 30,250. The County matched state funds of \$1.5M, contributing \$1.4M. The three other counties that served 100% of children were Anne Arundel County (16,500), Harford County (7,900) and Queen Anne's County (1,012). We hope to serve the same amount as last year.

The State budget includes a COLA and step implement for employees. This will be helpful in retaining staff.

County Budget

We are currently working on the County budget. There is an initial meeting this week with the County Administrative Officer (CAO). There will be an additional meeting with the CAO and in March the leadership team will meet with the County Executive. The budget is compiled within the target provided. One tier request can be submitted. We are submitting for \$500K for summer SNAP. This will be the last budget that ARPA funds are available. We have a number of programs/initiatives funded by ARPA where we have to determine how to proceed as funding is ending. The biggest expansion is homeless services. The County Executive has expressed interest in sustaining homeless services. Homeless services is handling all eviction calls and cases related to eviction prevention. The Governor did not include funds for homeless prevention in his 2024 budget,

Medicaid

Individuals who received Medicaid during the pandemic will have to file for recertification.

Budget Town Hall Meetings

The County Executive is hosting budget town hall meetings in each council district. Three have been held and this week's will be in district 5. Anyone who is interested is welcome to attend and may sign up to speak. Meetings have been very well attended and the number of people testifying has been great. There have been no comments directly related to DSS. The most closely related is the student support network which has been vocal regarding continuing to fund summer SNAP but also wants to expand other food system supports. There have also been a few speakers on healthcare access, specifically for undocumented individuals. The County Executive is taking notes at these meetings.

Mr. Saunders inquired if there are areas DSS could partner with for a certain need of a population. What is the greatest need seen out of the department where other agencies could assist? Building those partnerships is something DSS is interested in. The challenge is funding to support those projects. Mr. Millspaugh will speak with his Assistant Directors.

Mr. Butka inquired if board members are restricted in participating in fundraising. It was previously discussed in past meetings using MASSB, depositing funds in a MASSB account. As long as funds were directed toward certain programs within the department, the Board could pursue. The CAC, Camp Connect and the Center for Family Success were mentioned as all having funding needs. The Office of Law advised the Board could pursue but cautioned against more general fundraising.

Social Work Month

March is National Social Work Month. Activities are being planned with more being in person. As done in past years, one event will be a film about social work with discussion held after the film. We are purchasing a few giveaways, one being a lanyard with the National Association of Social Work slogan.

In prior years, afternoon ice cream socials have been held with board member participation. Mr. Millspaugh will let the Board know if that happens.

A letter from the Board recognizing the importance of having social workers in the community would be welcome. It would be nice to have all signatures on the letter.

III. OLD BUSINESS

A reminder to submit your ethics disclosure. Ms. Wynn to follow up on status of board member filings.

IV. NEW BUSINESS

None.

V. REMARKS OF THE CHAIRPERSON

Mr. Butka noted the next meeting of the Board is scheduled for March 20.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

Motion: To adjourn the meeting at 5:30PM
Motion by: Dr. Gabriel
Second by: Mr. Saunders
Decision: Unanimous Approval


Mark Millspaugh