

The Northampton County Board of Social Services met in the Board Room of the Social Services Building on October 17, 2023. The meeting was called to order under Virginia code §2.2-3708.2 at 11:00 am. Present were Chairman, Spencer Murray, Board Member, Janice Langley, Board Member, Ernest Smith, and Mozella Francis, Director.

On a motion by Ms. Langley and seconded by Mr. Smith, the minutes of the September 19, 2023, meeting were approved. There was no public comment or correspondence.

The Board was provided with a copy of the FY2024 budget. Ms. Francis reviewed the budget sheet pointing out budget line 855, of which we are operating under, should take us to the end of the Fiscal Year. Ms. Francis explained that under line 812, she will be requesting additional monies under the I-VE budget line. Ms. Francis pointed out the importance of how a child comes into care with the Agency. This determines if Federal or State funding can be used. If state funding is used, it requires a local match. If Federal, we do not have to pay a local match. Ms. Francis pointed out that for the 855-budget line September is notably higher since we received three pay periods that month. On budget line 866, Family Public Services, we have \$15,6051.28 to last us until the end of the Fiscal Year. On budget line 895, Adult Protective Services, we will be utilizing these funds more often to prevent homelessness as well as other assistance as required. Ms. Francis advised that the COVID funding has been depleted. Ms. Langley motioned to accept the budget report and Mr. Smith seconded the motion.

Ms. Francis updated the Board on all Agency programs:

- The Virginia Initiative for Education and Work (VIEW) program continues to grow. VIEW cases are impacted by TANF cases.
- Ms. Francis explained the requirements for the ABAWD (Able Bodied Adults Without Dependents) population to receive SNAP. Ms. Francis reminded that the clients are responsible to work at least 20 hours per week to continue to receive SNAP benefits unless they are under the work program or qualify for another type of waiver, for example, disability.
- Within the Child Care program, once the child has been approved, they are approved for twelve months. Ms. Francis updated the board on the FY 2025 childcare funding. If additional funding is not approved, cuts will have to be made. We are not certain how that may look at this point, but more is to come.
- The SNAP Program has been receiving more applications due to the current state of inflation and the ebb and flow. Historically, we receive more applications during the Fall than summer. Many summer jobs are seasonal.
- In the Foster Care program, we have three formal adoptions for finalization of which Ms. Francis will require the Board Chairman's signature during closed session.
- APS and Adult Services are status quo. We continue to see an increase of requests for UAI screenings (Uniform Assessment Instrument) from members of the community.

- In-home/Prevention/CPS continues to increase in caseload complexity.

Ms. Francis advised the board that she will present the EPPEs (Agency Employee Evaluations) during closed session for signature by Board Chairman, Spencer Murray.

Ms. Francis discussed the 2024 Compensation Plan. When the plan was brought to the Board, it included a 7% increase which did not get passed during the time of submittal. Ms. Francis advised that she is required to amend the Compensation Plan to read, “5% plus an additional 2%” for employee compensation of which the Board will need to approve. Ms. Langley made a motion to accept, per Director, Mozella Francis, to amend the Compensation Plan. Mr. Smith seconded the motion.

Ms. Francis advised the board that she requires a motion to approve the *Consent to Adopt Form* for our three adopted children. Mr. Smith made a motion to consent to adopt the three foster children. Ms. Langley seconded the motion.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) was presented to the Board by Ms. Francis and how AI may impact human services both presently and in the future. Ms. Francis informed the board that at the last meeting the Commissioner talked about AI in the work that we do and that he would soon be attending a conference. The commissioner reported that he would discuss more on the use of AI in the work that we do in Virginia Department of Social Services. Discussion ensued amongst the Board members and the Director.

Ms. Francis informed the board of the need for translation services within the Agency. She advised that the State has very rigid security requirements for technology, i.e., Google Translate. Ms. Francis has been researching other technology alternatives that have been security vetted and approved by the State. Ms. Francis is actively pursuing these alternatives.

Ms. Francis reviewed Agency Holiday closings. Following is the schedule:

- November 6 – Election Day
- November 10 – Veteran’s Day
- November 22 – ½ day at Noon/Thanksgiving
- November 23 – Closed for Thanksgiving
- November 24 – Closed for Thanksgiving
- December 22 – ½ day for Christmas
- December 25 – Closed for Christmas

Ms. Francis introduced the new Agency Business model effective, Fridays, beginning, October 20, 2023. We have been assessing what the needs are for the Agency and analyzing the best use of our manpower while continuing to support the community. The Agency will pilot this “Processing Workday” for all Eligibility staff on Fridays. The outcome of this pilot will be updated to the Board at future board meetings.

On a motion by Ms. Langley and seconded by Mr. Smith the board went into Closed Session in accordance with Section 2.1-344 of the code of Virginia, as amended, for the purpose of discussion or consideration of employment, assignment, appointment, promotion, performance, demotion,

salaries, disciplining appointees, or employees of any public body.

Coming out of closed session, Ms. Langley made a motion to accept that the director, Mozella Francis, be allowed to use her discretion with special duty pay as it applies to Medicaid Unwinding effective May 2023 through March 2024.

The board returned to Open Session.

On a roll call vote certifying to the best of each member's knowledge, only public matters exempted from the public meeting and in the original motion were discussed. The vote was Chairman Murray, yes, Board Member Langley, yes, and Board Member Smith, yes.

The next Board of Directors meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, November 21, 2023, at 11:00 a.m.

Ms. Francis advised that she will be attending a State Conference over the period October 31 – November 3, 2023.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:50 a.m.

Attested by

Spencer Murray, Chairman
October 17, 2023,

Mozella F. Francis
Director