



SOCIAL SERVICES ADVISORY COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

December 16, 2019

I. CALL TO ORDER

The Meeting was called to order at 4:45 pm on Monday, December 16, 2019 by Ms. Angelia Allen.

Members Present:

Ms. Angelia Allen, Mr. Paul Battle, Ms. Janene Taylor–Smith, Ms. Melvina Sneed, Mrs. Gracie Bowers

Members Absent: Robert Jones, Shellinda Miller

Staff Members Present:

Mrs. Little– Hill, Mrs. B’Onka Hill, Mrs. Janice Douglass–Ellis, Mrs. Monica Brown, Ms. Dana Spruill

II. INVOCATION

Ms. Janene Taylor–Smith gave the invocation and introductions were made. A Motion was made by Ms. Allen to accept the meeting minutes from June 12, 2019.

A. Considerations

Ms. Taylor– Smith made a consideration to the spelling of her name. Mrs. Bowers added the consideration to amend for the correct year for the next meeting which is 2020. A consideration was also made to clarify the end of Rev. Drakes term which was in June; he was still absent for the June meeting.

B. Motion to Accept Amendments with Corrections

Ms. Allen made a new Motion to accept the amendments with corrections. The Motion was second by Ms. Taylor-Smith.

III. OLD BUSINESS/DIRECTOR'S COMMENTS

A. Staffing Update

The new Chief of Services Ms. Janice Douglas-Ellis is still in training. She is currently taking on Foster care and Interns.

B. Interns

Mrs. Douglass-Ellis shared that there are currently 4 interns who are scheduled to work with PDSS. One of the interns attends LSU. Ms. Bowers asks how we had an intern from LSU. Mrs. Little-Hill informed her that the student reached out to us. Mrs. Little-Hill added that intern placement is generally considered based on what locality is closest to the student and that some students take online classes but are still local residents.

Mrs. Little-Hill shared that NSU is working on their Social Work program. Mr. Battle added that NSU is beginning to get more aggressive with developing and improving their program and want the students to have a competitive edge. NSU would like the student interns to gain more experience and training on the business part such as documentation, obtaining funds etc.

Mrs. Little-Hill added that internships help the students find their niche and area of specialty. She personally interviews all potential interns prior to placement.

C. Community Partnerships

Partnerships are a way Social Services is able to meet the needs of the community. The Department partners with various local organizations.

- a. Hope Charitable Services sponsored various drives such as: milk, collard greens, pumpkins, and chocolate.
- b. Women of Color donated Thanksgiving baskets
- c. Tidewater Friends of Foster Care provides tutoring services and birthday gifts for the children in foster care

D. Reports– Benefits

Mrs. B Hill provided and reviewed the VDSS Performance Indicators Monthly Report; PDSS exceeds the target and statewide average. The Benefits Department continues to improve on audits.

E. Reports– Family Services

Mrs. Little–Hill stated that focus will be placed on compliance of Family Services Programs and new strategies and trainings to address compliance issues.

Mrs. Douglass–Ellis shared that she will be monitoring our contacts with families and family engagement regarding participation in Family Partnership Meetings. We will be pay special attention to including extended family members and other natural supports to serve as a resource for our children in care. Her focus will also be on being more visible in the community in terms of our service provision and therapeutic interventions.

Mrs. Little–Hill gave an example of ensuring program compliance. She stated that at one time the employment services unit was not following state policy as it relates to sanctions for citizens who were not compliant with program participation. This has been addressed. Notifications of non–program compliance are sent to affected citizens prior to the disruption of their benefits. She also added that our case documentation has improved and now we are working on improving timeliness.

F. HR Filling Vacancies

Mrs. Little–Hill stated that the amount of vacancies impacts our timeliness. She has been working closely with Human Resources to fill vacant positions. We are almost fully staffed. The Director meets with all new employees during the onboarding process to share the Departments expectations.

III. NEW BUSINESS

A. Election of New Chair

A motion was made by Mrs. Snead to make the current Vice President Ms. Allen the new President. Ms. Taylor– Smith seconded the motion. A

motion was made by Mr. Battle for Mrs. Snead to be the new Vice President. Mrs. Snead declined. A new motion was made by Ms. Allen for Mrs. Bowers to be the new Vice President. Ms. Allen suggested that Mrs. Bowers think about it and that we can revisit the election of the Vice President in January.

B. Quorum

There are six active board members and based on that number, a total of four present board members is required for a quorum. The Commission can still hold meetings without a quorum but cannot vote.

C. Human Resources within the Department

Ms. Bracy is a new Human Resources Generalist within the Department. Some of her responsibilities include FMLA requests, job posting, and scheduling. This new position assists with the onboarding process and timeliness of filling vacancies.

D. Partnerships addressing Housing Needs

Mrs. Little-Hill shared that there are housing vouchers for citizens who are homeless as well as for youth who have aged out of the foster system and are at risk of homelessness. DSS has supported PRHA in applying for those vouchers. These vouchers would assist the city in their strategies for addressing homelessness in their "Poverty Initiative".

VI. ADJOURNMENT

A Motion was made by Ms. Allen and seconded by Mrs. Taylor-Smith to approve the adjournment of this meeting at 5:57 pm

Respectfully submitted,

Dana Spruill

Administrative Coordinator II