



Georgia Department of Human Services
Aging Services | Child Support Services | Family & Children Services

August 13, 2024

Hybrid, In-Person and Teams Meeting

Board members present: Chair Shondeana Morris (R14), Secretary Jennifer Shinpoch (AL), Randel Hambrick (R3), Anna Bearden (R5), Belva Dorsey (R8) Tommy Hill (R10), Allyson Christianson (12), JaNice VanNess (AL), Jeff Mauer (AL), Virgil Costley (AL),

Board members absent: Fran Chastain (R2), Travis Niblett (R9), Laci Tippins (R11), Vice Chair Meredith Holt (R13), Vacant (R1), Vacant (R4), Vacant (R6), Vacant (AL), Vacant (AL)

DHS staff: Mary Havick, LaMarva Ivory, Takissia Davis, Laura Beggs, Ann Burris, Emma McCullough, Emily Hatchett, Ramirez Evans, Russ Collins, Sam Saric

Welcome and Introductions, housekeeping. Meeting called to order at 10:02 a.m.

Agenda Approval. Motion by Virgil Costley, seconded by Tommy Hill. All in favor. Approved.

Minutes from May 21, 2024, Meeting Approval. Motion by Jennifer Shinpoch, seconded by Virgil Costley. All in favor. Approved.

Presentation by Mary Havick, DHS Deputy Commissioner, Child Welfare

- Celebration of Excellence
 - Event that honors secondary and post-secondary successes of children in foster care
 - Held on July 11, 2024, and honored more than 200 students
- Celebrating Georgia's Caregivers
 - Sent over 30 families and Caregivers to an Atlanta Braves game on July 21, 2024
- State of Hope Application
 - Supports individuals and groups across the state to help strengthen communities and families
 - 2024 Grant cycle of State of Hope has closed
- Georgia Communicare
 - Will include DFCS staff, Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASAs), foster parents, and parents
 - The University of Georgia's School of Social Work is supporting agency by evaluating and promoting Georgia Communicare across the state
- Technology Modernization
 - Future technology projects for child welfare:
 - Caregiver Connection: helping foster parents onboard
 - Improvements in foster parent reimbursement



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Presentation by Chair Shondeana Morris

- Several DFCS Advisory Board members attended, and Chair called for more Board member participation in the future
- Chair visited local library in DeKalb to see the library Gateway Kiosks and encouraged Board members to visit their local library with a kiosk and to promote in their community

Committee Break-Out

Board Business

Committee Reports

OFI Committee

- Will meet once a month- first Thursday of every month
- Will review Departmental goals involving OFI in future meetings
- Anna Bearden will serve as the Secretary. No chair chosen.

Child Welfare and Regional Trends Committee

- Monthly responsibilities of committee members and meeting bi-monthly as a committee
- Will work on building relationship with local Regions and Region leadership
- No secretary or chair chosen

Hiring and Community Relations Committee

- Committee was able to review hiring information and data
- No chair or secretary chosen
- Will meet once a month

Advisory Board Member Regional Reports

- R3 – Randel Hambrick
 - Successes: Starting a kinship unit in Region 3
 - Challenges: OFI staff high workload
- R3/AL- Jeff Mauer
 - Successes: New program for screen-outs
- R5- Anna Bearden



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- Successes: Back to school events and resources for families, new Region 5 director
- Challenges: Foster family recruitment, staff recruitment
- R8- Belva Dorsey
 - Successes: Mother and son celebration in reunification case in Muscogee county, September Law Enforcement Meet & Greet, National Adoption month celebrations
- R12 – Allyson Christianson
 - Successes: Seeking to hire regional director, trying to support staff more with hard work stress, McIntosh County director hired
- R14- Shondeana Morris
 - Successes: DeKalb County Courthouse National Adoption Month celebration on November 22, 2024, new DFCS Director of DeKalb County
- AL- Jennifer Shinpoch
 - Successes: Meeting with school system brought the idea of school/DFCS liaison
- AL- JaNice VanNess
 - Successes: Teams in Rockdale County and Newton County are doing great in meetings with partners
- AL- Virgil Costley
 - Successes: Changes in DFCS are positive including Advisory Board meetings

Executive Committee Nominations

- Nomination of Anna Bearden for Secretary by Shondeana Morris

Adjourned at 11:57 a.m.