



State Advisory Board Meeting

Draft Minutes

January 11, 2022

Virtual Microsoft Teams Meeting

Board members present: Chair Belva Dorsey (R8), Vice Chair DeLaine Hunter (R1), Randel Hambrick (R3), Secretary Shondeana Morris (R14), Susie Weller, Emily Cole (R4), Dr. Fran Chastain (R2), Laci Gillis Tippins (R11), Emily Brantley, Meredith Holt (R13), Travis Niblett (R9), Virgil Costley, Deke Copenhaver (R7), Nancy White (R6), Octavia Fugerson (R5), Tommy Hill (R10), Judy Manning

Board members absent Allyson Christianson (R12), JaNice VanNess

Other attendees: Melissa Carter, Melissa Barwick

DHS staff: Commissioner Candice Broce, Chris Hempfling, LaMarva Ivory, Jerrica Williams, Ramirez Evans, Kevin Harris, Jon Anderson, Denise Wells, Danny Nuckolls, LaCharn Dennard, NuTrelle Toodle, Rhonda Wheeler, Christopher Perlera, Sekema Harmon, Susan Boatwright, Karen Starks, Johnanna Weathers, Lee Biggar, Sheila Dease-Dinkins, Shannon Fields, Ashley Parham, Salena Perry, Chelsey Williams, Shay Thornton, Kelly Beasley, Holly Campolong, Jacqueline Williams, Stacy Barfield, Kylie Harrod-Winton, Bryan Horn, Robin Herron, Brooke Shaddix, Ann Burris, Sunny Patel, Mary Havick, Kristen Toliver, Emma McCullough

- Welcome and Introductions, today's challenge, housekeeping, and roll call by Chair B. Dorsey. Meeting called to order at 10:02 a.m. Quorum met.
- Motion to approve today's agenda. Moved by Deke Copenhaver and seconded by DeLaine Hunter. All in favor. Approved.
- Motion for approval of November 9, 2021, minutes. Moved by Deke Copenhaver seconded by DeLaine Hunter. All in favor. Approved.
- Presentation by Commissioner Candice Broce
 - Clark's Christmas Kids
 - Raised over \$1.5 million
 - Providing 25,000 gifts for over 8,500 Children in the Georgia Foster Care System
 - Annual Report
 - Published Dec. 31, 2021
 - 2022 Legislative Session
 - Convened on January 10, 2022
 - New Legislative Director for DHS- Matt Wosotowsky
 - Governor's budget- pay increase for state employees
 - Priorities in 2022
 - Technology advancements

- Presentation by Kevin Harris on behalf of Matt Wosotowsky
 - Biennial Session
 - Key Players
 - Governor Brian Kemp
 - Lt. Gov. Geoff Duncan
 - Speaker David Ralston
 - Key Committees
 - Appropriations (House and Senate)
 - Juvenile Justice (House)
 - Judiciary Non-Civil (House) and Judiciary (Senate)
 - Health and Human Services (House and Senate)
 - Education (House) & Education and Youth (Senate)
 - Proposed Legislation
 - Right to Counsel

- Presentation by Mary Havick, DHS Deputy Commissioner, Child Welfare
 - Family Support Cases
 - Impacts of COVID
 - Moved from virtual to in-person visits in September
 - Family Preservation Stages
 - Stays steadier than other numbers looked at
 - Voluntary Kinship Arrangements
 - Better serves families
 - Foster Children/Youth in Care
 - 10,517 children 0-17 in age in December 2021
 - 711 age 18-22 in December 2021
 - Foster Entry and Exit
 - More exits than entry for December of 2021
 - Adoption Finalizations
 - Average of 108 finalizations per month in last fiscal year

- Presentation by Jon Anderson, DHS Deputy Commissioner, OFI
 - Caseload size
 - Average in November 2021 963
 - Front Line Staffing levels
 - Declining in the second half of 2021
 - SNAP Applications and Renewals processed
 - Applications processed in November 2021 was 63,208
 - Active Medical Assistance Families
 - Active Medical Assistance families in November 2021 was 1,054,059

- Board Discussion
 - Board Chair Vision and Expectations
 - Want for Board committees to become more active
 - Board members serve as ambassadors for the Division
 - Want to provide more opportunities for Board members to share areas that they feel need to be improved
 - Joint meeting with DHS Board
 - Consider having a planning meeting to discuss goals

- Areas of focus:
 - Guest Speakers to come in
 - Potential Staff Stability Committee
 - Economic impact of Care Portal
- Board Member Regional Reports
 - R1 – Thankful for Governor’s budget recommendation to increase State employee salary, visiting counties in Region 1 to reflect challenges and successes
 - R2 – Regional director moved, interim director in place currently
 - R3 –Established placement coordinator unit on January 4th, in process of creating adoption unit, staff and kids testing positive for COVID, how to use funds that have been allotted?
 - R4- Impact of Care Portal
 - R5- Hard time finding services for Providing Safe and Stable Families, staff out with COVID
 - R6- Regional Advisory Board meeting scheduled quarterly this year
 - R7 – All 14 counties held Thanksgiving or Christmas gatherings, increase in domestic violence, COVID cases among staff increased- fewer staff to serve families, new staff but challenges with setting up credentials
 - R8 – Hiring is continuing, seeing quicker times, 179 exited foster care in 2021, November 2021 event where parents could see children who were in need of adoption
 - R9- Concern of staff retention, excitement about the Care Portal
 - R10- Two openings in Region 10-process is moving forward, looking to fill asap. Regional Advisory meeting on 1/14 at 11 a.m.
 - R11- Major issue with service providers- problems with finding a transporter and drug testing
 - R12 – Hiring a focus, able to hire new County Director- starting on 1/16, in December held Employee Appreciation Event, while social distancing. Able to bring Hope 1312 to Camden County.
 - R13 – New Region Director- put together a Hiring Fair, created a cultural survey for communities
 - R14- Efforts on hiring, fairs, and other opportunities, need for COVID at-home testing- excited to have those within the county
- Closing remarks and parting words from Chair Dorsey
- Meeting adjourned at 12:25 p.m.