



State Advisory Board Meeting

January 14, 2020

2 Peachtree Street NW 19th floor, Atlanta, GA 30303

Board members present: Chair Michelle Zeanah, Vice Chair Belva Dorsey, Board Secretary DeLaine Hunter, Tina Bartleson, Meredith Holt, Roger Bryant, Emily Cole, Nancy White, JaNice Van Ness (phone), Shondeana Morris (phone), Tommy Hill, Susie Weller, Cathy Atkins (phone), Judy Manning (phone), Rodney Griffin (phone), Octavia Fugerson (phone)

Board members absent: Emily Brantley, Barbara Sims

Other attendees: Karen Starks (Stark Speak, LLC), Victoria Hill (Miss Georgia), Christine Hill (Mom of Miss Georgia), Amanda Davis (Oconee Area Resource Council), Tiffany Sellers (Zion Foundation), Marvin Polk (Fulton Co. DFCS Board), Dan Therkill (Cherokee Co. Foster Parent), Vanessa Carter (Reaching Back), Wayne Drummond (GPHSA)

DFCS staff: LaMarva Ivory, Ramirez Evans, Chris Hempfling, Carol Christopher, Dahlia Bell-Brown, Salena Perry, Lee Biggar, Mary Havick, Cynthia Bryant, Cliff O'Connor

- Welcome and housekeeping by Chair Zeanah. Meeting called to order at 10:01 a.m. Quorum met.
- Chair Zeanah discussed Open Meetings Act. Reminded Committees to record minutes and provide copy to LaMarva. Also discussed Board Member 2019 Affidavit due by January 31st.
- Introductions by board members and attendees. Chair Zeanah introduced Victoria Hill, Miss Georgia
- Motion to approve today's agenda. Moved by Ms. Bartleson and seconded by Mr. Hill. All in favor. Approved
- Approval of November 2019 minutes. Moved by Mr. Bryant and seconded by Mr. Hill. All in favor. Approved.
- Division/Legislative updates by Deputy Director/General Counsel Chris Hempfling

Secret Santa 2019 Summary – Filled 9,304 wish lists; Governor and Mrs. Kemp supported this effort by issuing a challenge to all State Agencies; there were over 1,000 lists filled because of this.

Totes 2 Tots- collect suitcases and backpacks and when there are removals, those suitcases and backpacks are given to the children. Since 2003, we've raised over 60,000 bags.

Comprehensive Organizational Health Assessment (COHA) Report – NCCWI's Workforce Development Framework. An assessment of how the agency is doing; 2,000 employees completed the survey;

Solution based casework- Child welfare practice model; a unified practice model; Comment from Ms. Havick -practice model is not taking the place of solution-based casework, but complimenting it.

Division Goals for 2020:

Just Culture

- Develop comprehensive practice model and strengthen subject matter expert connections to support county, front line staff discretion and decision making
- Focus on preventing child maltreatment, making efforts to steer families needing services as well as CHINS, delinquency, behavioral health, and developmental disability issues to appropriate community agencies (prevention services)
- Continued buildup of State of Hope program
- Leadership messaging
- Continued retention
- Continued workforce development

Improving OFI Customer Service and Performance

- Continued simplification of forms, improvement of Gateway System (will lead to timeliness and accuracy of all programs)
- Online SNAP applications
- Extended online Medicaid application hours
- Express lane qualification (at least for children's Medicaid)
- Continued efforts to strengthen coordination between OFI and CW that leads to improved outcomes for families.

Exiting Kenny A.

- Consolidating gains by creating and implementing a comprehensive practice model and data analysis/ continued quality assurance plan

- Conducting cost/benefit analysis and assessing our ability to make further gains
- Notifying child welfare community regarding improvements and how those improvements will be maintained and how exiting the consent decree will benefit GA's maltreated children

Developing Extended Family Prevention

- The key to Family First Prevention Services Act implementation is a system that keeps children out of formal state custody while allowing us access to IV-E and other funds to provide services.
- More relatives would take children in voluntarily, keeping them out of formal foster care and giving them more freedom if we could provide additional financial support

CICC/Data Improvements

- Integrating data such as birth records, parole/probation status and history, prison history, sex offenders, Medicaid claims, TANF/Food Stamp, Medicaid status, educational status/school records into both CICC and SHINES.

Reforming Foster Care

- New gubernatorial commission- Family First Commission
- Creating better "market data" focused on developing foster homes based on needs (age, child characteristics) and geography (to keep the child closer to home)
- Leveling playing field between DFCS and CPA foster homes
- Implementing "no eject, no reject"
- Developing wider range of respite services

Building Capacity for parents, children, and youth with SA/MH/DD issues

- Develop Therapeutic Foster Care and Therapeutic Respite Care that can be accessed by parents
- Develop Medicaid programs to keep children in their homes through FCT, FFT, MST, wrap around services, IFI, etc.
- Develop additional resources for treating parents with SA issues in residential treatment with their children
- These efforts will require collaboration between DFCS, DCH, DBHDD

Collaboration with Courts

- Better data and coordination with Family Treatment Courts
- MD-CANI participation
- SAAG performance improvement
- Temporary alternatives to Foster Care
- Emphasizing return whenever Conditions of Safe Return exist
- Greater reliance on protective orders, court-ordered case plans

2020 Legislative Session Focus Areas:

- Child Welfare is a significant priority
- Clean up on 472- Alternatives to removal bill
- Support to foster care/foster parents

New Legislative Affairs Director – Kevin Harris

- **Victoria Hill, Miss Georgia/ 1st Runner Up to Miss America**
 - Flip the Script on Foster Care
 - Engage the public and support children in foster care.
 - Engage businesses and organizations to support children in foster care.
 - Mentorship program for teens aging out of foster care.
 - Offered to promote Foster Care via social media and to speak at meetings/events if Board members are interested
- Introduction of Deputy Director of Child Welfare, Mary Havick
 - Kudos to Victoria Hill
 - Working in 2020 to strengthen partnerships in order to serve our foster parents and communities better.
 - Question from Ms. K. Starks about diversity of faith community partners
 - Continuing Simplification- either remove or streamline a process that needs improvement. Could mean giving more authority back to the county office.
 - Intentional about listening to case workers (field workers) to determine what works.
 - Comprehensive model- asking for input, surveys. It will be a share framework about how we engage with stakeholders and how they expect to be engaged by the agency.
- Overview of Community Services Block Grants & LIHEAP- Cynthia Bryant, DFCS Unit Manager
 - Question from Mr. Hill requesting the presentation be sent out to all
- Organizational Health Assessment Results – Lee Biggar
 - COHA was published in November

- Developing a plan to share/discuss results with all staff and stakeholders
 - Overall agency scored well but there were a couple areas of concerns
 - Comment from Ms. Bartleson commending Lee and Office on work and sharing results
- Working lunch and board committee chairs meetings
- State of Hope spotlight by Amanda Davis, Oconee Area Resource Council
 - The Food for Kids Program - Used the SoH funds to focus on making FFK better. They purchased materials to transfer food and make program ambassadors more visible in Oconee Schools
 - Plans to serve additional 40 families this year
 - Also have a mentoring program and a summer feeding project
 - Desires to expand Food for Kids to Pre-K
- Board member regional reports
 - Region 13 staff levels and morale up and caseloads around 15; beginning a Provider Advisory Board; Pre-Team Pilot Region
 - Hiring concerns across the state
 - Region 9 finalized record number of adoptions last year
 - Region 5 questions about DFCS Annual Board reports and if information is read
 - Region 8 critical CD vacancy still exists; Stakeholder meeting upcoming
 - Region 4 RAB training held
 - Region 11 instituted Wellness Activities in all 18 counties
 - Region 6 has no RAB. RD is working to create
- 2020 Roadshow Schedule
 - Region 12 -April 20 -22 Brunswick
 - Region 14 – June 22-24 Fulton/DeKalb
 - Region 1 – August 17-19 Dalton

- Closing remarks by Chair Zeanah.
- Motion to adjourn at 1:50 p.m. by Ms. Bartleson. Seconded by Ms. Cole. All voted in favor. Meeting adjourned.