

Baltimore County Department of Social Services Board Minutes

The meeting of the Advisory Board of the Baltimore County Department of Social Services (DSS) was held January 14, 2019 at 4:00 p.m. in the Boardroom of the Baltimore County Department of Health and Human Services.

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Gregg Powell, Chair; and Lisa Simon Jablon. Members attending via phone were Dr. Bronson, Sheri Lumsden and Dr. Wiley.

MEMBERS ABSENT: Dr. Karen Bethea, Dr. Donald Gabriel and Justin Jackson.

OTHERS PRESENT: Mark Millspaugh, Deputy Director and Kathy Wynn, Executive Secretary to the Director.

I. Reading and Approval of the Minutes

Motion: To approve the minutes of November 19, 2018:

Motion by: Ms. Simon Jablon
Second by: Dr. Wiley
Decision: Unanimous Approval

II. Director's Report

Office of Housing Executive Director's Report

The Executive Director's Report Housing Program Portfolio has been modified to show two new voucher types, Mainstream and Family Unification. Mainstream vouchers are for persons with disabilities (elderly or non-elderly) to access affordable private housing of their choice. The Office of Housing is in the process of reviewing eligible applicants from the existing wait list for this voucher. This should be completed by the end of next month.

Family Unification vouchers are for families to whom the lack of adequate housing is a primary factor in the imminent placement of a child, or children, or children aging out of foster care at risk of becoming or are homeless. One challenge is that federal law requires these families to receive case management services for the entirety of their time using this voucher. We do not have the capacity in our child welfare program to keep cases open. Mr. Millspaugh has asked for clear written guidance on what the law requires for case management. We hope to have resolved in February to begin awarding in March.

The Office of Housing received funding for the Housing Assistance Payments (HAP) and Administrative Fees for the month of January. Baltimore County has been allocated funding for the month of February, but has not yet received. Due to the shutdown, there is no one at the U.S. Office of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to proceed further after the federal allotment. If the shutdown continues through March, there will not be funds to pay for administration of the program or to pay the landlords. Administrative fees are appropriated in the County budget. If the federal government does not provide the March allotment, this means the full cost of the administrative program would be paid by the County. Impact on clients is minimal; burden would fall on the landlords.

Federal Shutdown Impact

The Social Security Administration and the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services are not impacted by the shutdown. It is not expected that Baltimore County will have a great number of federal government employees applying for benefits. Guidance has been received from the State on how to handle those applications. Income received the month an application for benefits is received must be counted but we do not have to forecast. Staff are aware of this. Federal government employee and contract applications are being tracked.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture is shut down with the exception of a few essential employees required to work without pay. Those few individuals have held conference calls to provide guidance regarding food stamp benefits. As of today, they have determined a way to pay the February food stamp benefit. For any eligible program participant who is on the data file, the State must transmit Wednesday night. Any client who is an active participant in food stamps with a certification period of March or later will receive their benefits. Any current recipient due for recertification will not receive unless processed by this Wednesday. If not processed, they will not receive any benefits until the government opens (7000 cases). Staff worked Friday night and overtime shifts over the weekend. They will work until 9:00 PM today and tomorrow. It is "all hands on deck" trying to get these cases processed. We are also phoning clients asking them to send their information. The State is being as supportive as possible. If the shutdown continues through February and March, that will have a number of implications for our clients.

The State has funds available to help pay for certain types of emergencies for food. Mr. Millspaugh will ensure the list of all local food pantries is updated. If board members know of any other food assistance pantries, please forward that information. County funds may also be used to provide emergency food to clients.

Generous Juror Fund

At the last meeting, Mr. Gabriel inquired about the generous juror fund. Revenue from this fund has dropped off substantially. A segment on this fund will be featured on *Hello Baltimore County*. Mr. Millspaugh is hoping this will help to inform the public. The video could be shown to potential jurors at the courthouse. \$5400 was spent entirely on Camp Connect; purchasing items where we don't have other resources to do so. Mr. Powell requested a list of items needed for Camp Connect to forward to board members.

MD Think Update

Maryland Child, Juvenile and Adult Management System (CJAMS) – Converting from the CHESSE system to integrate with the Department of Juvenile Services system in addition to adding all new functionality for adult services. This system is being built with the user up front, what do the caseworkers need to do their job? Mobile devices are also being tested. CJAMS is to be implemented in phases.

- Phase I implementation is the pilot which is to begin in May in Western Maryland.
- Phase II – Baltimore County and all of central Maryland will be part of this phase
- Phase III – Baltimore City
- Phase IV – Eastern Shore

The pilot will continue for a little over a month. Phases are set up regionally, not by County. July 1 is the date for Baltimore County to implement. The entire implementation is to be completed by October 1.

There has been discussion on how this system will impact some of the workforce. Organization Change Management is a way of stating how we have to change ourselves to work with this new system. The vision is that this will be the platform for all new State computer systems.

Child and Family Services Review (CFSR)

A CFSR is a federal quality review of child welfare programs. Auditors are here through the end of the month. State staff have been deputized by the federal government to do the review. There are five teams with two to a team; ten reviewers plus three individuals from the State to oversee the review. They interview clients and will review an estimated 20 state records. Interviewing workers, children, therapists and parents, anyone involved in the cases.

The department did identify through aggregate data the areas we want to focus on. One is the number of children in foster care. Also focus on reducing the length of stay youth are in care. This presents challenges as the Court plays a major role. We will focus on this for the next three years.

In addition to the CSFR, we are working with the DHS Inspector General who wants to return for an audit Corrective Action Review. The audit listed 13 findings, the corrective action review looks at repeat findings of which the department had four: documenting visits in five days; closing CPS cases within 60 days and notifying the State's Attorney's Office of the investigation; timely processing of FIA overpayments; and, timely processing of OHEP applications. Mr. Millspaugh is confident that some of those areas will be resolved.

III. Old Business

At the November meeting it was noted that board members have not been able to get in touch with Mr. Jackson and recommended that a letter be sent regarding his absence. Ms. Wynn to follow up to see if the letter was sent and a response received.

Orrester Shaw, County Executive representative to the Board has retired. Any removal and/or appointments to the Board will have to come from the County Executive's office.

IV. New Business

None

V. Remarks of the Co-Chairperson

The next meeting of the board is February 11, 2019.

VI. Adjournment

Motion: To adjourn the meeting at p.m.

Motion by: Ms. Simon Jablon
Second by: Dr. Bronson
Decision: Unanimous Approval



Mark Millspaugh
Deputy Director