

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 July 15, 2019 at 4:00 p.m. in the Boardroom of the Baltimore County Department of Health and Human Services.

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Mindie Flamholz, Lisa Simon Jablon, Sheri Lumsden and Gregg Powell; Chair. Members attending via phone were Dr. Donald Gabriel.

MEMBERS ABSENT: Dr. Stephanie Bronson. Dr. Rosalyn Wiley

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

I. Reading and Approval of the Minutes

Motion: To approve the minutes of May 20, 2019

Motion by: Ms. Flamholz

Second by: Dr. Gabriel

Decision: Unanimous Approval

II. Director's Report

Camp Connect

This year was an outstanding year for Camp Connect. Forty-eight campers attended, equal number of boys and girls. There were 19 sibling groups from nine different counties. Forty-eight campers is not full capacity; next year we will work towards having a waiting list. There were 39 volunteer counselors consisting of social workers from three different local departments, attorneys, public defenders, foster parents and four foster alumni.

For the first time, five Naval Academy midshipmen and two officers attended. The Naval Academy created a training program for midshipmen for Camp Connect. Applicants had to submit essays and go through an application process. Seventy applications were submitted with seven individuals selected, five male and two female. The midshipmen added tremendous value, bringing a different perspective on the world and using their leadership skills. A leadership program was created where each evening at 9 PM after the nighttime activity any camper 15 years or older could join the midshipmen in the dining hall for a discussion on a different leadership topic. During the daytime activity, they would call the leadership group out and ask them to provide guidance/leadership to the younger campers.

This year, an option was added for individuals to sign up for clubs as opposed to swim time from 3:00 to 5:00 PM. The midshipmen and some other counselors created clubs to include

a fishing club and a survivalist club. Some of our staff offered swim lessons. One social worker had a yoga class.

There was no rain, all activities moved forward as planned. Evening activities included a talent show, birthday party and trip to an amusement park. The final evening activity was a carnival that included a pool party with a large inflatable bounce house, an inflatable water slide, photo booth with costumes (encouraging sibling photos) and a caricature artist. Every single youth had their caricature done. We are checking with the Attorney General's office to see if the caricatures can be used as part of a promotional campaign for the camp. There was also a barbecue cookout, and ice cream shop to make ice cream sundaes. At the evening closing activity, campers discussed the week they had, shared stories and sang songs. The evening culminated with an amazing fireworks show.

Highlights from this year:

- The reunion of a sibling group of four who had not been together for over a year.
- A young girl in Mr. Millspaugh's group, in her fifth year at camp, rode the zip line for the first time and was very proud of herself for doing so. Her siblings were very supportive.

The cost for Camp Connect this year was \$61,174.00, of which \$51,000.00 was the state funding contract for the campsite which included staff, activities, adventure park admission, food, games, the ice cream shop, arts and craft supplies.

\$3,600.00 from the generous juror fund went toward backpacks, towels, water bottles and giveaways. Funds were also received from generous donors, the largest of which was a grant from the Reginald F. Lewis Foundation in the amount of \$5,000 for each of the next three years. This award was received a few weeks prior to the start of Camp and was used to support the Saturday closing activities (carnival and fireworks).

Campers look forward to receiving a yearbook to look back on their time at the camp.

Department of Health nurses were onsite which was very helpful. The County Administrative Officer, Stacy Rodgers, attended as did some members of the Board. A Facebook live broadcast was done during camp.

A meeting is scheduled for tomorrow to go over the final report. Every camper and counselor completed an evaluation. Work has begun on the contract for next year which will be our 20th year. We want to do something special to highlight the 20 years.

Ms. Jablon offered to write a letter to the editor to highlight all the services offered by the Department of Social Services. Ms. Flamholz suggested an article from the perspective of the midshipmen; having 70 applicants is a story on its own. Mr. Millspaugh will follow up to see if the midshipmen were required to write an end of camp experience essay. If yes, he will inquire if they would like to submit/be involved in helping to write something in addition to Ms. Jablon's article.

Office of Home Energy Program (OHEP)

OHEP offers three primary programs, all are income-based. Individuals can apply in person, by mail or online through myDHR. The three programs are: Maryland Energy Assistance Program (MEAP), the Electric Universal Service Program (EUSP) and the Arrearage Program. July is the beginning of the fiscal year and OHEP program year.

The department's Office of Emergency Preparedness assisted this year with the main waiting area the first week applications could be submitted. So as not to be overwhelmed, certain areas of the waiting area were set aside for OHEP. This year, 173 people applied in person on July 1. On July 2, 135 clients served, 143 on July 3 and 100 on July 5. The system was orderly and there were no waiting lines. With the process improvements, clients are aware they are going to be served relatively quickly. There is no need to arrive early in the morning to stand in line. To date, 3,191 applications have been received.

Census 2020

Baltimore County is now launching Census 2020 to make sure all who reside in Baltimore County are counted. The County Administrative Office requested from this department four representatives to assist with this effort. Ms. Flamholz has agreed to be a representative. This project is still in the planning process; details will be forthcoming. If not planned correctly, it could hinder funding for the next decade.

A suggestion was made in regards to sending drones up to locate homeless camps and having a team from Prologue visit those camps. Mr. Millspaugh to share this with the department representative on this project, Ms. Bollinger-Smith.

2020 Budget

Mr. Millspaugh included funds for secondary trauma in his budget request. We are currently in the process of creating a recovery room, a safe place where staff can go when feeling overwhelmed or stressed. Standard Operating Procedures will be put in place. We want to do more to make certain staff is supported given the challenging nature of our work and some of the traumatic experiences they encounter.

III. Old Business

Board members can remain as a member until another individual fills their position on the board.

The Maryland Association of Social Services Boards (MASSB) will be held October 24-15 at the Hilton Garden Inn in Solomon's Island.

IV. New Business

N/A

V. Remarks of the Chairperson

If a member is able to attend the October MASSB meeting, please let Ms. Wynn know. The Board does not meet in August, the next meeting is scheduled for September 16.

VI. Adjournment

Motion: To adjourn the meeting at 6:10 PM.

Motion by: Ms. Jablon
Second by: Ms. Lumsden
Decision: Unanimous Approval



Mark Millspaugh
Deputy Director