

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 September 16, 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, and Sheri Lumsden. Members attending via phone were Dr. Stefanie Bronson and Dr. Donald Gabriel.

MEMBERS ABSENT: Gregg Powell and Dr. Rosalyn Wiley.

OTHERS PRESENT: Dr. Gregory Branch; Director, 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 July 15, 2019

Motion by: Dr. Bronson
Second by: Ms. Flamholz
Decision: Unanimous Approval

II. Director's Report

Office of Housing

The Office of Housing submitted an application for an additional 50 Mainstream vouchers to assist persons with disabilities to return to stable housing opportunities. Baltimore County currently has 55 of those vouchers received just last year of which 17 are filled. Each time the government provides an opportunity to apply for programs vouchers, we do so. Our strategy moving forward is to expand our portfolio. Mr. Millspaugh will update the Board on the status of the application.

Family Self-Sufficiency (FFS) Program

The FSS graduation ceremony held recently was an outstanding event. A program activity was held for the first part of the day. The program presenter was a Sergeant from the Police Department whose expertise is on gangs. The presentation was on active gangs in the community, what to look for and how to identify if a family member or friend is doing anything that looks to be gang participation. The presentation was very engaging and provided the history of different gangs.

The FSS Program helps individuals plan to become self-sufficient and responsible neighbors. There were 30 graduates of which 19 are now homeowners. It was a festive occasion as well as informational. Dr. Branch introduced the keynote speaker, County Administrative Officer, Stacy Rodgers.

The FSS Program is a nationwide program. It is not very successful in other parts of the country but has been very successful in Baltimore County. There are 306 active participants in this program.

Welfare Avoidance Grant

The Welfare Avoidance Grant can help individuals by fronting up to three months of Temporary Cash Assistance (TCA) benefits. To be eligible, you must have children. You must come into the office to apply for the grant which has been found to be highly effective. Research shows it is highly effective in getting people off of the welfare system.

III. Old Business

N/A

IV. New Business

Council on Accreditation (COA) Stakeholder Survey Results for Advisory Boards

Nine surveys were sent, three received. These results show how we compare to the COA average. The organizations reputation with the community is favorable ending up with an average score of four.

Ms. Jablon referred back to the minutes regarding discussion of submitting an op-ed article. Also telling the story of Camp Connect through the voice of the midshipmen who participated at the camp. Mr. Millspaugh stated just one of the essays written afterwards was received and did not lend itself to be used publically. Others have been requested but not yet received. Ms. Jablon wants the community to know about the good work the department is doing, mentioning a segment seen on WBAL regarding an organization that was protecting the welfare of the community.

Dr. Branch stated he would have the department's Public Information Officer and her supervisor attend a meeting. Many times, people are paying to get their stories out there.

As a part of the accreditation, COA requires similar surveys to be done. COA sends the surveys, local departments send a list of who they should be sent to.

Community survey – 183 surveys sent, 9% response rate
Consumer survey – 254 surveys sent, 34% response rate
Contractee survey – 50 surveys sent, 76% response rate
Foster Parent survey – 129 surveys sent, 56% response rate
Personnel survey – 635 surveys sent, 42% response rate
Supervisors & Managers survey – 102 surveys sent, 68% response rate
Youth & Child: Foster or Kinship survey – 250 surveys sent, 38% response rate

Good, informative information was obtained from these surveys, discussed at length at leadership team meetings regarding the positive feedback and areas of improvement.

Strategic Plan FY2019 Outcome

Mr. Millspaugh spoke regarding strategic plan data. There are three goal areas:

- Goal 1 – Exceptional customer services
- Goal 2 – Strengthening partnerships with stakeholders
- Goal 3 – Ensure a skilled workforce

Exceptional service covers all services and performance measures built into the programs.

These goal areas are categorized in one of three ways: how much we do, how well we do and is anyone better off.

Child Welfare and Adult Services data was reviewed. Ms. Jablon asked if there are youth who remain out of state. Eight youth remain out of state. Some are ready for discharge, but there is not a placement available.

Mr. Millspaugh stated leadership will be engaging in rethinking the strategic plan to ensure we are measuring what is really important for us. Not certain if the goals will be changed.

V. Remarks of the Chairperson

Ms. Jablon asked for suggestions for new members of the Board. Ms. Flamholz inquired if Ms. Parham could attend next month's meeting to discuss the 2020 census.

Mr. Millspaugh is working on the Revere Bank Award for the MASSD conference, working on two ideas to nominate. Dr. Gabriel to look at his calendar to see if he can attend the conference.

VI. Adjournment

Motion: To adjourn the meeting at 5:30 PM

Motion by: Ms. Lumsden

Second by: Ms. Flamholz

Decision: Unanimous Approval



Gregory Wm. Branch, M.D., MBA, CPE, FACP
Director