Commonwealth of Virginia
State Board of Social Services

Virginia Department of Social Services
5600 Cox Road
Glen Allen, VA 23060

October 15, 2025

Attending: Don Carey (Chair), DeRonda Short (Vice Chair), Maria Benjamin, Les Ford, Coke Stewart, April Morefield, Tony Whittingham, and Mike Flynn

Absent: Matthew Melvin and Mallory Addison

Also in Attendance: Kevin Erskine (Commissioner) and Ellen Fulmer (Assistant Attorney General)

Meeting called to order at 10:06am – Mr. Carey

Acknowledgement and Approval of Remote Participation by Board Members
The Chair announced that DeRonda Short requested to participate remotely. A physical quorum was present. Ms. Short stated she was participating remotely due to her being on vacation in Eden, UT. ***On Motion Duly Made,*** (Maria Benjamin), second (Tony Whittingham), motion for Ms. Short to participate remotely approved with all in favor.

Recognition of New Member – Mr. Carey introduced new board member Mike Flynn.

Comments from the Commissioner – Commissioner Erskine provided feedback for a solution for the Board emails.

COMMENT PERIOD
There were no comments from the public.

There were no comments from boards and directors.

Comment from the Virginia League of Social Service Executives – Rebecca Morgan, President
Ms. Morgan offered to talk about the League with the new board members if they have question. She shared the League's focus right now is the Federal shutdown and how it will impact programs at the local departments.

Tiffany Gordon, Chair, Legislative Committee, Director Mathews DSS shared the two things they are focusing on this legislative session is the replacement of VaCMS and advocating that the state cover the SNAP administrative costs.

ACTION ITEMS

1. August 2025 Meeting Minutes
   On Motion Duly Made**,** (April Morefield), second (Maria Benjamin), motion approved with all in favor.

2. 22VAC40-325 Fraud Reduction/Elimination Effort – Withdraw Action
   CLOSED MEETING
   On Motion Duly Made, (Les Ford), second (Coke Stewart) moved to go into a closed meeting to hear legal rational for withdrawal of 22VAC40-325 Fraud Reduction/Elimination Effort. Attending the closed meeting were Mr. Carey, Ms. Short, Ms. Benjamin, Ms. Ford, Ms. Stewart, Ms. Morefield, Mr. Whittingham, Mr. Flynn and Ellen Malenke. Absent were Mr. Melvin and Ms. Addison. Motion approved with all in favor.

   Mr. Carey reconvened the public meeting at the conclusion of the closed meeting. He certified that the closed meeting was held in conformity with Virginia law and that only public business matters as identified in the motion by which the closed meeting was convened were discussed. Members unanimously agreed with the certification of the closed meeting.

   On Motion Duly Made, (Ms. Stewart), second (Mr. Whittingham) motioned with all in favor to certify the closed meeting.

   On Motion Duly Made (Ms. Ford), second (Ms. Stewart?), the Board requests the Department resubmit a regulatory action for the Fraud Program within 60 days, at the next meeting.

3. 22VAC40-201, Permanency Services-Prevention, Foster Care, Adoption & Independent Living Exempt Regulation
   On Motion Duly Made**,** (Coke Stewart), second (April Morefield), motion approved with all in favor.

   Ms. Ford asked for a presentation on the number of children eligible for SSI survivor benefits, the amount of reimbursement the state is receiving and the budgetary implications of placing those funds in a separate account for those children.

4. Request from Wise County DSS to follow Local Jurisdiction Policy Regarding Inclement Weather and Holidays
   On Motion Duly Made**,** (Les Ford), second (April Morefield), motion approved with all in favor.

5. Establish 2026 Meeting Schedule
   On Motion Duly Made**,** (April Morefield), second (Les Ford), the Board deferred the action until the December 2025 meeting. Motion approved with all in favor.

Overview of Office of the Children's Ombudsman – Eric Reynolds provided an overview of the Office of the Children's Ombudsman.

Executive Directive 13 & Other Updates from Human Services Portfolio – Mr. Carey shared this presentation will be moved to the December 2025 meeting.

Ms. Ford asked Mr. Ayers for a presentation in December on options to catch eligibility errors and the Department's plan. Mr. Ayers stated his recent presentation to the Senate Finance & Appropriations Committee provides that information, as would the related Request for Information (RFI). He stated both would be shared with members.

Board Member Comments – There were no comments.

Meeting adjourned at 12:47pm