0Commonwealth of Virginia
State Board of Social Services

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

August 20, 2025

Attending: Don Carey (Chair), DeRonda Short (Vice Chair), Matthew Melvin, Maria Benjamin, Les Ford, Coke Stewart, April Morefield, Mallory Addison, Tony Whittingham

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

Meeting called to order at 10:05am – Mr. Carey

Acknowledgement and Approval of Remote Participation by Board Members
The Chair announced that April Morefield requested to participate remotely. A physical quorum was present. Ms. Morefield stated she was participating remotely due to her husband is out of town this week for work and no one is left to take care of her three children. ***On Motion Duly Made*****,** (Les Ford), second (Matthew Melvin), motion for Ms. Morefield to participate remotely approved with all in favor.

Recognition of New Members – Mr. Carey introduced two new board members Mallory Addison and Tony Whittingham.

Comments from the Commissioner – Commissioner Erskine provided an overview of current agency priorities.

COMMENT PERIOD
There were no comments from the public.

There were no comments from boards and directors.

Comment from the VA Community Action Partnership – Erik Johnston, Executive Director
Mr. Johnston shared they've been working through the different changes at the federal level on different program areas. The pots of funding they utilize, including Head start, Community Services Block Grant and Weatherization Assistance. Weatherization providers work with the public and private sector to weatherize homes and keep people in their homes. They conduct community assessments every three years. The biggest challenges facing communities is gap in service delivery to self-sufficiency and housing needs. This has been at the top of every agency. They are in partnership with the business and private sector to help people navigate to move out of poverty. They are partnering with the state department housing community broadband office and the Governor's office on universal broadband access and digital training access. They are hosting the summit again with Community Action leaders at the VDSS office September 30 and October 1.

Comment from the Virginia League of Social Service Executives – Rebecca Morgan, President
Ms. Morgan shared local departments are very invested in make sure the SNAP error rate is lowered. The League is passionate about the need to focus on the opportunity to replace the outdated case management system. The League also wants to focus on enhanced training and enhanced assistance from the state.

ACTION ITEMS

1. **June 2025 Meeting Minutes**
   On Motion Duly Made**,** (Matthew Melvin), second (DeRonda Short), motion approved with all in favor.

2. **22VAC40-325 Fraud Elimination/Reduction Effort – Proposed Regulation**
   The Board did not act on the Fraud Elimination Reduction Effort. The proposed regulation will be on the October 2025 meeting agenda. Ms. Ford requested an outline of the proposed regulation via email prior to the October meeting.

Local Disaster Recovery – Jason Berry and Melena Charles provided an overview of the local disaster recovery efforts in Washington County.

Preparation for Future Disasters – Kate Archie provided an overview

Email Addresses for Board Members – Mr. Carey asked if the Board could have a DSS email address and not use their personal email addresses. Commissioner Erskine will look into this and will get back to the Board.

Vote to Replace Former Secretary to the Board – Mr. Carey spoke with the nominating committee and Matthew Melvin was nominated to take the secretary position. The Board voted with all in favor of Mr. Melvin as the Board Secretary.

Board Member Comments – Ms. Short inquired about the status of the response to a constituent who contacts the Board frequently. Ms. Ford moved to have the agency update Board members on the case at a level available by law, once litigation is closed.

Meeting adjourned at 12:24pm