Commonwealth of Virginia
State Board of Social Services
Virtual Meeting

February 19, 2025

Attending: Don Carey (Chair), DeRonda Short (Vice Chair), William Boone, Zulma Santos, Sheryl Garland, April Morefield, Matthew Melvin, Maria Benjamin, and Les Ford.

Absent: Sarah Owen and Coke Stewart

Also in Attendance: James Williams (Commissioner) and Ellen Fulmer (Assistant Attorney General)

Meeting called to order at 10:02am – Mr. Carey

Comments from the Commissioner – Commissioner Williams provided updates on agency priorities. Ms. Garland asked about DSS initiatives to reduce child care barriers to employment. Mr. Boone requested information on the number of instances of SNAP fraud, as a percentage of clients and the amount of money lost.

COMMENT PERIOD
Joani Latimer – Ms. Latimer commented on Action Item 4. She thanked the Board for the work they've done on the regulation.

There were no comments from boards and directors of community action agencies.

Comment from the VA Community Action Partnership – Erik Johnston, Executive Director

Comment from the Virginia League of Social Service Executives – Rebecca Morgan, President

Daricka Jones, Chair Benefit Programs Committee and Director, Hanover DSS – Ms. Jones shared

ACTION ITEMS

1. **December 2024 Meeting Minutes**
   On Motion Duly Made**,** (Matthew Melvin), second (Sheryl Garland), motion approve the minutes with one abstaining (Don Carey).

2. **22VAC40-90, Regulation for Criminal Record Checks for Assisted Living Facilities and Adult Day Care Centers – Fast Track Regulation**
   On Motion Duly Made**,** (Sheryl Garland), second (Matthew Melvin), motion approved with all in favor.

3. **22VAC40-191, Background Checks for Child Welfare Agencies – Fast Track Regulation**
   The agency is still working with the Office of Attorney General on this regulation; therefore, it is not ready for action.

4. **22VAC40-73, Standards for Licensed Assisted Living Facilities – Proposed Regulation (Appeal Process for Discharge)**
   On Motion Duly Made**,** (Matthew Melvin), second (Maria Benjamin), motion approved with all in favor.

5. **Resolution to Recognize April 2025 as Child Abuse Month**
   On Motion Duly Made**,** (April Morefield), second (William Boone), motion approved with all in favor.

Child Support Enforcement Family Engagement Services & Other Updates – Alana Tucker provided updates on the Child Support Enforcement Family Engagement Services.

Mental Health Services for Children in Foster Care – Em Parente & Alexis Aplasca provided updates on Mental Health Services for Children in Foster Care.

Kinship Update – Carl Ayers provided an update on Kinship.

Update from ALF Liability Insurance Committee – Sheryl Garland provided the Board an update from the ALF Liability Insurance Committee. The committee set forth a plan, recommending the agency monitor the implementation of the emergency regulation for negative operational or fiscal impacts by tier, and the amount of liability insurance obtained by tier, with the possibility of seeking guidance from the Secretary of Health & Human Resources. These recommendations are to be on the April 2025 meeting agenda for a vote. After some discussion on whether facilities are currently complying with the emergency regulation to have the required liability insurance, the agency was asked to survey facilities for verification of such insurance. The Board will be notified of the survey results. It was also agreed that a draft proposed regulation will be available for discussion at the April 2025 meeting, and a proposed regulation will potentially be adopted at the June 2025 meeting.

Update from Bylaws Committee – Don Carey provided the Board an update from the Bylaws Committee. He put forth three topics on which the committee had not been able to come to consensus. They include increasing the number of allowable virtual meetings from two to three, the ability of the Chair to put forth motions and to vote, and Board's role in advocacy. Ms. Short noted that the bylaws document in general has not been updated in some time, and needs updating overall.

After some discussion, there was consensus to amending the bylaws to allow for the third virtual meeting in a calendar year. There was consensus to amending the bylaws to allow the chair to weigh in on measures and vote, with parameters in place. Regarding advocacy, Ms. Fulmer explained the Office of Attorney General continues to review this matter. The committee will bring draft amendments for Board discussion to a future meeting.

2025 Board Meeting Locations – Mr. Carey and members discussed having a 2025 meeting outside of the Richmond area. Commissioner Williams offered to come back to the Board with recommendations after staff survey local offices in Southwest VA.

Board Member Comments

Ms. Santos mentioned immigrant communities and how recent legislation might impact how families reach out and are served. Commissioner Williams noted an earlier presentation to the Board on the topic that might be updated to address her concerns.

Mr. Carey referenced an email he received in February 2024 from a constituent concerned that the agency violated the foster care bill of rights. He asked Commissioner Williams to provide an update on the concern via email.

Meeting adjourned at 1:35pm