

Department of Family and Children Services, Clayton County

Board of Directors Meeting

held

Wednesday, March 27, 2019 at 10:00 a.m.

Board Members Present:

Tia Simon	-	Chairman
Quen Howard	-	Vice Chairman
Dr. Barbara Pulliam	-	Board Member
Dr. Chantara Carter	-	Board Member (via phone)

Absent Board Members:

Charlton Bivins	-	Board Member
-----------------	---	--------------

Staff Members Present:

Dr. Nia Cantey	-	County Director
Deneka Manning	-	Deputy Director
Ashley Stallings	-	OFI Administrator
Mercedes Daghestani	-	DFCS Intern
Patrice Davis	-	Recording Secretary

1. Call to order and Invocation

The meeting was called to order by the Chairman at 10:14 a.m. She welcomed everybody. Invocation was offered by Dr. Pulliam. The Chairman said we need to have a sign-in sheet. This will be effective at the next Board Meeting.

2. Audience Participation

There was no audience participation.

3. Approval of Minutes

Dr. Pulliam reported that herself and Mr. Bivins are part of the State Executive Committee for DFCS Statewide. They both will be attending the GPSHA meeting on Sunday (4/21) before the Conference in Macon on Monday (4/22). Ms. Howard said it might not be Monday since Monday is a holiday. The date has to be checked. The minutes of the meeting were approved pending the date of the GPSHA Conference being checked.

4. Program Reports

a. Ms. Manning

Ms. Manning reported on the Board Report in the absence of Dr. Cantey. She said there were no child fatalities for the month of February 2019. Dr. Pulliam then asked what were courtesy interviews. Ms. Manning said when another county has placement of a child in our county or if it is reported that the child could be in this county they would

want us to check on the child. She also reported that we had 11 courtesy interviews for February.

Ms. Manning continued to report that children in care increased in February 2019 compared to January 2019. She also said 2 adoptions were finalized. The process had started months before and has just finalized in February. Dr. Pulliam asked if this had anything to do with the case managers. Ms. Manning said the adoptions unit has stabilized in staffing. The amount of foster homes has also increased. The Chairman said reaching out to the community helps along with advocating.

Dr. Pulliam asked what is the Rainbow House. Ms. Manning said it is a State contracting placement where children goes from the ages of 12 and up. It is considered a safe place for runaways. They are in partnership with just Clayton for emergency temporary placement if we are having issues with finding placements. If we have children in transition, we can take them over there to have showers, receive clothing or eat. Ms. Howard asked if there is a fee. Ms. Manning said no. Ms. Howard asked if there are records of children who go in and out. Ms. Manning said only the children that are placed there permanently. Ms. Howard also asked if there were assessments. Ms. Manning said not with the emergencies. Only the ones that are going to be placed there are kept track of.

b. Ashley Stallings – OFI Administrator

Ms. Stallings reported on the numbers for the Office of Family Independence (OFI) for the month of February 2019. She said expedites for Food Stamps last month for the SOPs were 95% which was an increase for the district. The Family Medicaid and Peach Care, the district SOP was 92%, Clayton's was 89% where we fell below. The PO1 (Pregnant Medicaid) was at 79% and the district was 71%, we came up above. For TANF for the district, not just in Clayton, districtwide was 97% which was the highest for the State.

Ms. Stalling reported that 21 new hires started on 3/18. 15 is going to Food stamp training and 6 going to Medicaid. There were no transfers or resignation for the month of March. She continued to report that there were 10 positions currently available which are in the process of being posted soon. 8 of the positions are case managers, 1 is a County Receptionist and the other is Admin Support. Of the 21 new hires, 6 of them were internal. She also said it was best to have a new hire unit where all the new hires will be for mentoring and training.

(Approaching Executive Session at 10:32 a.m.)

5. Executive Session

a. Personnel Report

Ms. Manning reported on the Personnel Report for February 2019. She pointed out the transfers within and out of the State. There were 2 employees that left and then came back. Dr. Pulliam asked why take them back. Ms. Manning said as long as there

were no issues when they left, she did not see the reason not to take them back. Especially if they are already trained.

b. Budget Clarification

Dr. Cantey issued the financial update to the Board. She said the update reflects what is spent for the month. Regional Accounting balance may be different from ours. Dr. Cantey said March update will also be tracked, but you won't see that until next month. We started monitoring in November when the dollars were received.

The Chairman reported that Clayton will be going into a different fiscal year starting January 2020. The year will be from January to December. Dr. Cantey asked if there would be a delay when funds are disseminated. She said this needs to be known and followed up on. She said that is the reason she keeps money in the fund balance for situations like this. Dr. Cantey said she use the fund balance for certain expenses like the PRNs. She told the Board that regional don't pay for PRNs, stipends, and their trips. They pay for per diems, foster parents, clothing vouchers and salary for staff. All other monies that we request will come from County dollars. The Chairman then asked if we have money in the Fund balance.

The Chairman said in regards to clarity about the new fiscal year, she could ask someone to talk to Accounting for us and see how it would affect the Boards of Clayton County. The Chairman said the grants are normally approved in October and money could be disbursed in January. The money is given in increments. The Chairman continued that the money will continue to be given to us in increments every month. The Board members continued to look over the financial update. They asked what would happen if you don't get the money or if you over spend.

Dr. Cantey issued a copy of what is in the fund balance. There was no amount. She said Regional was skeptical about how much we can spend out of our fund balance. If we spend over, there is no guarantee that we can pay it back. Based on our track, we are a month behind which is \$10,000.

(Executive Session ended at 11:03a.m.)

6. Other Matters

a. Stakeholders Meeting

The Chairman indicated that she enjoyed the Stakeholders' Meeting and that it was very informative.

b. Foster Parents

Dr. Carter said 3 people came to her about the process of foster care and getting paid to do it. She then asked how is the process communicated with people who are interested. The Chairman told her that they have to attend a meeting. In regards to payment, Ms. Manning said each foster parent is assigned a case manager they go to if there are issues. She also said the class is held every 3rd Thursday (to be checked). Dr. Cantey said if there are errors with their paper work it

normally takes about 30 days to fix. She said if there are problems with payment, let the case manager or the Foster Care Administrator know.

c. Conference Room

The Chairman stated that she loved the new look the Conference Room had; very modern.

d. Training Rooms

Dr. Cantey said the training rooms will be updated also. Dr. Pulliam asked how does the staff feel about the upgrade. Dr. Cantey said its mixed. She said we just hired 16 new people, 20 in the last month and we have some who will eventually leave. She said Tom Rawlings, the Director for DFCS will continue to engage front line staff. Dr. Cantey said he will continue to adhere to employees concerns and try to make adjustments that are spoken about. She said we have 4 new staff that just came out of training. While that is happening, we still have staff leaving or on FMLA. The only good thing is that any resignation that occurs can be filled promptly.

Dr. Cantey reported that DFCS will be doing a road show in June for Mr. Rawlings. There will be some community engagements. She said she will ask the Chamber of Commerce to take the lead on these events. Dr. Cantey told the Board she would appreciate them being there since its part of their engagement. The date proposed is 6/24. She said the date might be revised. Dr. Pulliam said she won't be available from June to September.

Dr. Cantey also reported that the next Stakeholders meeting will be with the educators. She said she is still working with our lieutenants/chiefs. She said she is building that relationship so that when we have a situation we can call them. Dr. Cantey said she is working on the school system in letting them know what cases is to be called in and what not to. Dr. Cantey said she meets with the school 2 or 3 times a year, but with the quarterly Stakeholders Meeting only once. She said we also meet with them before the new school year starts or as the need arises.

e. Fostering

The Chairman said she knows people who are interested in becoming foster parents. She would like to speak to somebody. Ms. Manning said she will send an information package to her about fostering. The Chairman asked if persons have to foster before they adopt. Dr. Cantey said you can just adopt, but there is a waiting list. She said we have families that just adopt.

f. Easter

Ms. Howard asked if there is anything planned for Easter? She also asked if there will be anything for staff. Ms. Howard asked if something can be done in May; preferably a grill/barbeque. Dr. Cantey suggested having 4 or 5 food trucks come in, and cover lunches for the staff. She wants it to be community based. Invite the community, let it be like a block party. The Chairman says a food truck comes to the Clayton County Courthouse every Wednesday.

g. Procedure for Conferences

Dr. Pulliam asked what is the procedure for wanting to attend a Conference. Dr. Cantey said at the beginning of the year you would identify certain conferences that you would want to go to. She said it would be placed in the budget along with the amount of Board Members wanting to attend. Dr. Cantey said she understands that some of the trips are State operated and that Board members would need to attend. She said accounting treats everybody the same when it comes to reimbursements. There certain things will be paid up front. She said registration is normally covered, along with travel and lodging.

Dr. Pulliam said her concern is that she went to a Conference before and was not reimbursed. Dr. Cantey said the trip to Macon was already known. She had to decide which conference to pay for. Mr. Bivins also had one that we had to pay for in August. We couldn't afford it. We have to take into consideration who was going. Dr. Cantey said if the Conference is within 50 miles, lodging is not reimbursable.

Ms. Howard asked where is the line item for Travel. Dr. Cantey said it falls under per diems and its \$2,000. Ms. Howard said we had voted for \$5,000 in travel. Dr. Cantey said when the monies came in November, the yearly budget was not revised because we were already active in our spending season. We were playing "catch up" and the line items never changed. Dr. Pulliam then asked if we have to meet for 12 months of the year. Dr. Cantey said she had asked that question and the Board said yes. The Chairman said the tradition use to be that we didn't meet at Christmas or one of the months in Summer (July/August). She said we should go back to that. Dr. Pulliam said she is still not clear what the procedures is in regards to going to Conferences. The Chairman said as far as the grant that we receive from the Board of Commissioner's office is concerned, the Board is allowed to make policies. The Chairman said she wants to get with Dr. Cantey and create a policy on how the Board Members can travel and what they can or cannot do, and who can or cannot go.

Ms. Howard said last year we had spoken about the line item and the budget and we had agreed on \$5,000 for travel. She wants to know why isn't it showing on the budget. Dr. Cantey said money would not be made available until November. The line item could not be changed because we didn't know what monies would be made available. The Chairman asked if it can be changed now. Dr. Cantey said we should change it when we get the new dollar amount. She also asked what would the amount be changed to. The Chairman said a vote was taken and we agreed on \$5,000; that's an additional \$3,000 to be added to the \$2,000 already there. The Chairman said we could just put the money there and if it is not used it can go to the fund balance. Dr. Cantey said she wants to have an idea in regards to what will happen between now and June. We can cut off spending in May. She said the cut for pay period is June. Dr. Cantey ask the Board if they know what type of travel they would be doing outside of Macon between now and May. Dr. Cantey said she did not put in the money because we were operating in the red. None of the line items were changed because we had to pay back the State. Dr. Cantey said if she is adding \$5,000 to the line item and there isn't any planned travel between now and

May why would she add \$3,000 and start the new year with \$5,000. That has to be justified.

The Chairman said there are options. Either we add the \$3,000 because that is what the board voted for or add it for the fiscal year. The Chairman said between them and Dr. Cantey needs to come to an agreement. She said the stipends will still be paid, the travelling to Macon will still be covered, and the barbeque in May. Dr. Cantey said the function would come out of something else. She mentioned that if she was to contact Regional to add the \$3,000 she would have to answer questions. She said we may not see any monies until January. Dr. Cantey asked why propose a travel discussion when there will be no travelling in May. Ms. Manning said questions will be asked about us moving the monies. Dr. Cantey said travel is not a priority, not even for staff. Dr. Pulliam said you travel out of necessity. Dr. Cantey said when you go to see families. She said conferences have been cut from the State budget because it does not rise to the level of a necessity.

The Chairman asked the Board what they propose for this line item. Dr. Pulliam still insists on \$5,000. She said Regional (Lori) needs to know that it was budgeted. Dr. Cantey said she will prioritize her focal point. Family and staff are her focal points. Dr. Cantey said she will invite Lori to be a part of the conversation so that a better understanding is given. She still does not see the reason to move \$3,000 if you are not travelling post May. The Chairman then asked how much can be moved instead of \$3,000. Dr. Pulliam disagrees. She said the dollar amount is to be what was voted on. The Chairman said she think we should get clarity from Regional Accounting (Lori). Dr. Pulliam said we voted already and we should not vote again. The Chairman said we could close out the meeting by agreeing to a smaller dollar amount. Dr. Pulliam said she could help out by not asking for any reimbursement for the Macon Conference.

The Chairman said the Board needs to come up with a policy to implement about how much conferences each Board member is to attend and where the money should come from. The Chairman says the GPSHA Conference in August, the State pays for that and not the County. Ms. Manning said the Meetings/Conference/Workshops, the Board will have to decide who goes to what. She also says the conferences will come out of the block grant. A policy will definitely be done to prevent discrepancies. Dr. Cantey said after the policy is done, we will go from there.

h. Rainbow House

Ms. Manning said the Rainbow House will be partnering with several other community partners to have an East egg hunt in Forest Park. This will be on 4/13. Ms. Manning said she will send the flyer out to the Board members. It is for the foster children. It will be from about 11 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

i. Name Tags

The Chairman is requesting upgraded name tags for the Board members.

7. Date of Next Board Meeting

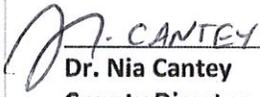
The date of the next board meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, April 24, 2019 at 10:00 a.m.

Meeting was adjourned at 11:40 a.m.

Respectfully yours,

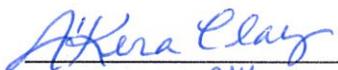


Nia Simon, Chairman
Clayton County, DFCS Board



Dr. Nia Cantey
County Director, Clayton County
DHS – DFCS

Deneka Manning
Deputy County Director, Clayton County
DHS – DFCS



~~Patrice Davis~~ A'Kera Clay
Recording Secretary