

Department of Family and Children Services, Clayton County

Board of Directors Meeting

held

Wednesday, April 24, 2019 at 10:00 a.m.

Board Members Present:

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

Absent Board Members:

Dr. Barbara Pulliam	-	Board Member
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Staff Members Present:

Dr. Nia Cantey	-	County Director
Lashanda Collins	-	OFI Supervisor
Mercedes Daghestani	-	DFCS Intern
A'Kera Clay	-	Recording Secretary
Lori Jones (via phone)	-	Regional Accounting
Nancy Ward	-	Program Coordinator

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 Mr. Bivins. Sign-in sheet present. This will be available at every Board Meeting.

2. Audience Participation

There was no audience participation.

3. Approval of Minutes

Lori Jones was asked to be apart of the first portion of this meeting to advise the decision to making a line item increase of \$5,000 for board members to travel. Chairman Tia wanted to know if it were possible to do so during this time of the fiscal year. Lori Jones explained that the county subsidy that is given to most counties when they apply is an agreement between the commissioner and the DFCS office. The purpose of the money should be spelled out in the application that DFCS sends to the Commissioner for review. The application usually details what the money will be used for. 99% of the time, the money is used to support the staff and clients. Most applications do not list anything related for the board. The budget and line items that DFCS chooses to list for the board is as "the budget" can support. Technically everything that they are given is supposed to be used as it is stated in the application. Applications usually don't include a spot for the board. However, most counties include a specific percentage of allocated funds for board usage. Lori states that if the budget has room to include travel for

board, then it can be changed. However, Lori cautioned against doing so now due to emergency circumstances. She also stated that Clayton is projected to use 100% of its budget this year. She gave no recommendations to increase on the current budget.

She stated that if there was a decision this late in the year to allocate funds to the board, it could take away the availability of funds for children that might have needed those funds (unplanned, emergency circumstances). Therefore, Lori does not recommend this increase. She advised that plans should be made at the beginning of each year, so that the county and board can plan better. Dr. Cantey stated that the board did make an inquiry prior to the new budget coming out. The budget came at a time when the county was operating in "the red" (the summer). Dr. Cantey states she was unsure of 100% spending. Lori stated that the fund balance fixes it to 100% spending.

Dr. Cantey stated that new dollars won't be available until January, which means that the county would be out for the fall. Lori stated that anything that does not get spent gets sent back. In previous years, Clayton could keep the monies. When Clayton switches fiscal year, there is no county money for 6 months. Lori stated that Clayton County has no cushion, economically. Random things like daycare expenses receive no money.

The intent is to use the fund balance to cover PRNs. With the money left over from this year, the intent is to replenish the fund balance and use current year dollars to pay for those PRNs. By doing so, the fund balance will then be used as a cushion to help cover the county for those six months. The fund balance does not have to be sent back. It is money from prior years when the county could keep the dollars. It is money that is available, but the current year dollars must be sent back. So because the use of the PRNs happened during this current year, we are going to use the current year dollars to pay for them and then that will free up more fund balance to help cover the county in the six months when we don't have anything.

When the fiscal year changes, the budget changes. The budget will then run from January to December. Lori states that she is unsure how they can disburse funds outside the cycle of the year, so basically, they would be running two sets of books. There will be a gap when people aren't funded. The year will not start over. The budget for the county is usually not approved until the fiscal year starts. Regional does not get first deposit from Clayton County until three months into the current fiscal year. So if they are switching to January, no deposit will be made until March. Lori states that she needs more clarity on this. The fiscal year is soon to end. Based on previous years, Clayton spends their money every year. Therefore, Lori suggests that we need to consider what line item to decrease in order to increase board member per diem. This means that something has to give to make it available. Lori is unsure of what conferences the board has to attend because there were years where the board did not travel. Lori wants Dr. Cantey to follow up on the fiscal year is currently and how the fiscal year is going to switch over. She recommends that Dr. Cantey stretches her dollar for those six months. Lori exited the board meeting at 10:27am.

Dr. Cantey passed out budget information. Chairman Tia Simons said benefits normally start in June, but now they will start in January. She then proceeded to approve the minutes. The minutes were approved at 10:28am.

4. Program Reports

a. Lashanda Collins – OFI Supervisor

Ms. Collins reported on the numbers for the Office of Family Independence (OFI) for the month of March 2019. She said expedites for Food Stamps last month for the SOPs were 95%, unexpedite are 89%. The Family Medicaid and Peach Care was 92%. The PO1 (Pregnant Medicaid) was at 67%. For TANF was 94%.

Ms. Collins reported that there are 2 ADM support positions that are pending a start date. 2 county receptionist that are pending a start date. 2 supervisor positions are pending interviews. OFI will be interviewing on Friday. Ms. Collins also pointed out that there was a retirement for Ms. Reeves on May 1st. OFI has 8 case manager positions pending start date. OFI hired 22. Out of those, 3 were terminated and 2 resigned. Mr. Bivins wanted to know the total amount of employees. Ms. Collins stated there were about 60.

Mr. Bivins asked if there were challenges with SNAP monies or if there was a disruption in the funds during January. Ms. Collins stated there was no issue in the Clayton County OFI. Bivins asked how many employees are OFI. Ms. Collins stated there are 60, that they get them in and they go out. A lot are on FLMA. Mr. Bivins stated how when he attended the state meeting, Tom Rawlings stated that he wanted to create a mental health unit for DFCS.

b. Dr. Cantey

Dr. Cantey reported on the Board Report. She wanted to report the current experiences. She stated that there were 135 overdues, 6 active employees in rotation, 4 in training. She stated that Clayton County is in partnership with the district to procure 5 PRNs. She stated that the county does not have the money to spend though. She then mentioned that there were 30 overdue cases that were given to permanency.

Dr. Cantey also stated that she and Ms. Manning are carrying 6 to 15 cases. She stated that the county has approximately 107 ongoing cases and Clayton has the highest. One of the goals for Clayton is that "we may have cases that may be 10 or 12 months old". In Family Preservation, the county provides preventative services to keep that family together and we should only be involved for six months. So, we are going to start having round tables where we are looking at those cases regarding "did we provide services, put those services together, and close the cases". She stated that she will have a round table in May to determine how long to have Family Preservation involved. The county has identified 20 cases that are over 12 months. We have 271 children in care. She stated that the "exit numbers" are pretty good. She stated there were 79 children free for adoption and 28 that were considered without resource and that there were kids that parents identified as "kids they did not want to bring home". Clayton County had a "Push24" adoption call in the last two weeks and a lot of children come off the list. Dr. Cantey stated that the county has moved at least 4 to 5 children to adoption. There is greater focus on that. She stated that it is a great feeling to see movement.

She then moved on to discussion more hiring steps. She stated that there has been a green light to hire two administrators. She stated currently that there is one administrator on Permanency who is responsible for six units. She wants a one administrator to have a ratio of 1 to 5. That includes adoption and the resource unit. She

stated that CPS has a one to six ratio, including Family Preservation. She is looking to hire a hybrid and a CPS administrator. A hybrid administrator will have cases from both Permanency and CPS, so it would be made up of the adoption unit, resource development, and family preservation. Having an additional administrator would give more special attention to the needs of the units.

Mr. Bivins then asked will this be a 2nd tier supervisor. Dr. Cantey stated that family preservation is a unit with a supervisor, resource development is a unit with a supervisor, and adoption with a supervisor. Those units are sitting on both sides of the house. She clarified that she wants a hybrid where they would come under that. There is no direct oversight to CPS which may be the contributing factor to the high number of overdues.

Mr. Bivins asked what the return would be and if there would decrease caseloads. Dr. Cantey stated that they would provide the management and oversight of the staff and can carry caseloads too. Mr. Bivins requested to have an organization chart. Dr. Cantey stated that the county is in the process of creating one, so the current one is out-of-date. Mr. Bivins asked if there are any departments that have ratios too great. Dr. Cantey stated that Dekalb is larger. Gwinnett has two administrators just on CPS. She stated that the county is operating with one. She stated that that is a lot of volume for just one.

Vice Chairman Quen asked why there was just one and if it was related to the budget. Dr. Cantey stated that Clayton is viewed as a smaller county. She stated that until you can show the need based on number, it does not get the same attention as the other counties. However, if a case manager turns in a resignation today, Ms. Manning can create a job posting the same day. Dr. Cantey stated that the county is continuously hiring. She stated that the county was in a deficit of case managers.

Mr. Bivins asked if the county was cross training and stated that if this was the case originally. Dr. Cantey stated for the existing hires, this has stopped, except for the new hires.

The Chairman asked if there were any more questions. No more questions were asked, therefore, she moved to exit the program reports at 10:42am to discuss the budget, retirement, and promotions.

(Approaching Executive Session at 10:42 a.m.)

5. Executive Session

a. Personnel Report

Dr. Cantey reported on the Personnel Report for March 2019. She stated specifically pertaining to Social Services, Kelly Blosser was promoted to a case manager position. She stated that Blosser is still an administrative assistant for Permanency as of now. She stated that Jerrica Williams is a case manager in Fayette County. Regina Jackson and Naeemah Fisher are with OFI. Imari Daniels is a rehire that operates as a case manager.

She stated that there were 5 resignations. She stated that there are addition hires for April which are not reflected on the current printout that was provided.

Mr. Bivins asked about rehires, what their reasons were and if this included retired staff. Dr. Cantey states that the rehire is returning to the agency, but retired personnel are rehired too, but they are listed under a different classification. Mr. Bivins asked about the number of positions that are open. Dr. Cantey stated there are a least 15-18 and that the agency has been hiring. These hires may have not started yet. There are currently 3 new hires in training. She stated that sometimes she has staff on extended leave. As of today, there are 5 staff on extended leave. Mr. Bivins asked the reason for this. Dr. Cantey stated that this is a stressful job. She also stated that filled positions have not been worked yet. The 15-18 are separate situations. Mr. Bivins asked if this was an industry standard. Dr. Cantey stated it could be. Mr. Bivins asked is this critical level. Dr. Cantey stated that critical can look different. She stated that prior to the meeting, there was a meeting about overdues. She proceeded to explain what critical could look like; 135 overdues so that means that there are 135 families that the county can't access safety for. This is not counting the number of cases that come in during the day. In the meeting prior to the board meeting, there was a discussion to request 6 case managers being removed from rotation and to figure out how to respond to rotation in the moment. 135 need to be assessed, not counting the 9 that will roll today to increase the number. She stated that there are staff in training. She stated that during the summer months, when school is out, you might see impact.

b. Budget Clarification

Chairman Tia acknowledged that there was a printout of the block grant given to all board members to view and what has been spent thus far. She also acknowledged that Lori answered their questions.

Mr. Bivins stated that he saw two categories: a county budget tracking and a budget. He requested explanation on the discrepancy and if we used state money. Dr. Cantey explained that the sheet from Lori was not provided. The sheet the board was viewing was provided by Ms. Nancy Ward, internal tracking. The sheet shows what comes in monthly. \$93,000 has been awarded. November through April shows what has come in, and that is \$69,750. Then the budget that Nancy started tracking starting in November through April expenditures of that \$93,000. What's been spent is \$61,189. Clayton is estimating that it has \$31,810 left to spent between now and June. She stated that Lori provided what has been spent and that we are operating "in the red". She stated that is why the county spends the fund balance. She stated that the county starts in July. She stated that is why the county leaves money in the fund balance because there is no money to spend. She stated that the county always spends state money and that this pays the state back. She stated that the PRNs are paid out of fund balance. She stated that the county is in debt from last year.

Vice Chair Quen Howard asked if the county was paying back from last year. She asked that when we get the fund balance, why the county can't clear the money owed. She wanted to know if this was regarding old balances. Dr. Cantey explained that the "owed" was a miscalculation from the last. She stated that the county has new PRNs this year. Lori processes a month behind. She stated that there are printouts of what the

county spends and how it is spent. Vice Chair asked whether the \$6,272.38 was spent in April and referred to the breakdown sheet that was provided. Dr. Cantey stated the sheet would not show April because it is currently the month of April. Vice Chair thanked Dr. Cantey for the clarity.

(Executive Session ended at 10:57a.m.)

6. Other Matters

a. Semi-Annual Board Meeting

Mr. Bivins stated that on Monday and Tuesday, he was in Macon at the state meeting and Dr. Pulliam and he were installed as board members on the state unit and executive committee. He stated that he went an extra step and volunteered to serve as a committee of board this year. He said that he was very enlightened at the meeting. He also had questions about the State of Hope. He feels that the agency needs to be a liaison. At the state meeting, he said that Commissioner Tom Rawlings spoke about how he is trying to take care of employees. He felt mental health is important and wants DFCS to not be an "all things, all people" agency. Commissioner Rawlings felt it needs to only focus on safety issues. He wants DFCS to have a new brand and image. Mr. Bivins stated that he wanted to see this vision and initiative.

b. Future Involvements and Projects/Events

He also stated how he realized that the commercial sex trafficking is a huge issue in DFCS. He feels that the board members need to become more active in advocating. He feels as if the leadership team are not taking advantage with boards because they have not been trained. He stated that at the top, there is a new level of management and a different world of teamwork. He feels superintendents need to understand the board's power. Boards need to also understand what's on the director's "plate". He feels that as board members, unrealistic expectations have been placed on the director and that there needs to be more training.

Dr. Cantey stated that Regional Director Sabrina Watson is in the process of strengthening board members' engagement and providing more trainings with the advisory board. She is trying to ensure that no one is working alone. Mr. Bivins stated that he met a lot of great people at the meeting in Macon. Chairman Tia stated that there has been sidebar conversations on how they should communicate better with the director, Dr. Cantey. Chairman Tia also pointed out that she volunteers at Gigi's House.

Mr. Bivins pointed out how he does a lot of advocacy with the school. He feels that the county and board members should sponsor a movie and discussion. He suggested to review what Ga Cares does with their movies on sex trafficking. He stated to be advised that a lot of people do not come to sex trafficking trainings and discussions and that parents don't come because they feel they could be singled out. He noted that the state uses theaters and that they have great panels that take it from a broad level to the community. He stated that local leaders come and

answer questions. He stated that in his learning process, he learned that there is sex trafficking in churches. He feels that in the future, the board can do projects and should push to win board of the year. Vice Chairman Quen Howard wants to implement this idea this summer. Chairman Tia suggested a movie under the star like the commissioner does. Dr. Cantey stated that the county donated 3 bikes to Commissioner Warner and his event, bike-a-thon that takes place in May. Mr. Bivins stated that he still has toys from the Salvation Army that they give to police.

c. Training Rooms

Dr. Cantey announced that all televisions in each training room were up. She also stated that the county would host its first meeting with Permanency and CPS, but there is no set date. At this meeting, data will be disbursed to the staff.

d. Foster Care Appreciation

Dr. Cantey announced the National Foster Care Parent Appreciation on May 10th and that all board members would receive hard and soft invites. She stated that the theme is "It Takes a Village". She said the intent is to let those see who are the "end users".

e. Day in the Park

Vice Chairman Quen Howard asked how the Day in the Park event was in Forest Park. Dr. Cantey stated that she was attending the Block Party at Mundy Mills which was also taking place at the same time. She stated that she was apart of Clayton County Leadership, which oversaw planning the event. She stated that the county had tables at both events though.

f. In-Service

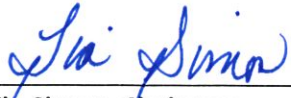
Mr. Bivins stated that he spoke at a regional meeting about creating an in-service for law enforcement. He inquired who wrote the law enforcement plan. He wanted the document that details law enforcements interactions with child safety and removal of parents. He inquired whether OFI has interactions with law enforcement. OFI rep stated only when there is disruptive behavior in the lobby. Mr. Bivins then moved on to state that he would like to put together a comprehensive newsletter. He stated that different counties have different types. He specifically wanted a foster care piece. Dr. Cantey stated that this is done with local judges, law enforcement, school districts, and DFCS. Every county has a different protocol. She recommended that Mr. Bivins to observe if other counties are doing so. She advised against duplicated other counties. She informed Mr. Bivins that protocol is handed at a district level.

7. Date of Next Board Meeting

The date of the next board meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, May 22nd, 2019 at 10:00 a.m.

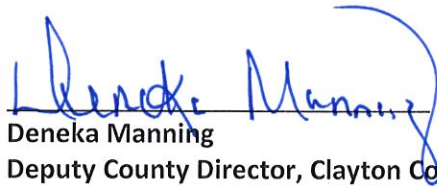
Meeting was adjourned at 11:16 a.m.

Respectfully yours,

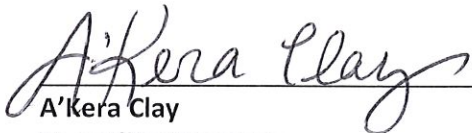


Tia Simon, Chairman
Clayton County, DFCS Board

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



Deneka Manning
Deputy County Director, Clayton County
DHS – DFCS



A'Kera Clay
Recording Secretary