

BEAUFORT COUNTY DISABILITIES AND SPECIAL NEEDS ADVISORY BOARD
100 Clear Water Way
Beaufort, SC 29906
February 15, 2022

MEMBERS PRESENT: David Green, Frankie Middleton, Lynn Russo, Andy Thacker, Audra Antonacci (Ex-officio)

MEMBERS ABSENT: Pamela Brandon-Hennigh, Wendy Bukowski, Priscilla Drake, Nancy Pinkerton

STAFF PRESENT: Bill Love, Janice Beach, Wanda Mayse, Beth Cody, Terry Geitner, Cherie Scoggins

GUESTS PRESENT: Jennifer Morrow

I. CALL TO ORDER – Lynn Russo, Chairman

Ms. Russo called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m.

II. WELCOMING GUESTS

Ms. Russo welcomed our guest.

III. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE DECEMBER 7, 2021 BOARD MEETING

A QUORUM WAS NOT PRESENT TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF DECEMBER 7, 2021.

IV. ADOPTION OF THE FEBRUARY 15, 2022 AGENDA

A QUORUM WAS NOT PRESENT TO APPROVE THE AGENDA FOR THE MEETING OF FEBRUARY 15, 2022.

V. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT – Lynn Russo, Chairman

Ms. Russo asked the Board members if they wanted to attend council meetings to pick up Disabilities Awareness proclamations in March. Everyone agreed that it would be better to have them mailed to DSN. Audra Antonacci said she would accept the one at the County Council meeting on March 14th.

Ms. Russo again reminded members to please let us know whether they would be able to attend the meeting so we will know if we will have a quorum.

VI. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT –Bill Love

A. Staff Reports – Budget - Beth Cody presented two documents for review; one for the 2022 budget and where we are at this point and one for the proposed 2023 budget. We are doing fine thanks to the County's support. Residential will go to fee for service on March 1.

Early Intervention - Cherie Scoggins said that Early Intervention is providing services to 267 kids. We had 14 referrals last month and 11 so far this month. I have one EI who is resigning March 4th. We hope to have the position posted this Friday so we can get applications and start the interview process. It is a long process when hiring an EI.

Because of Covid, we have had a lot of resistance with having Early Interventionists going back into the classrooms. In order for us to provide family training services, we must be in a natural environment. We received a letter from the state that goes into why the natural environment is important and how we can work with those childcare facilities to work with the teachers and the administration and how that can be something that works in conjunction and really helps move that child forward. I am in the process of developing a letter to go along with that introducing myself that we are going to send out to all the providers. We have a listing through DSS, and I think there is close to a little over 250 providers that we will be sending it out to. We are hopeful that that happens. Why that is challenging is that so many of our kids are in childcare facilities and they are not able to get that family training after hours. It really needs to be done in that type of environment. Not only does that happen with us, but also with speech, OT, and PT. If the childcare providers are not allowing our early interventionists in, they are also not allowing the children to receive speech, OT, and PT from those providers. This is something the state recognizes as an area of concern and it is something we are working across the state to try to get facilities and in home providers to understand the importance and what a difference that makes to have that be able to happen.

Going back to the resignation, I just wanted to let you know the reason for the resignation is because this mom is not able to have childcare for her little one. We are noticing that there are not enough childcare providers out there. What tends to happen is moms have to make the decision whether they want to continue their career path or do they want to be able to stay home. Oftentimes they have to make that decision because there wasn't an option for them to put their child in childcare. Mr. Love added that it is annoying, and it bothers him, and he wishes he could do more about it. She is an excellent worker and it is unfair that she has to be in a situation to have to make that choice. It is extremely unfair for women to have to make those decisions. Some places are providing services within their facility where parents can bring their young ones to be monitored and supervised while they are there. Ms. Scoggins said she has reached out to a number of childcare providers and they also don't have workers that are able to work in the childcare centers. It is just a vicious cycle that we have to try to figure out. Ms. Russo asked if anybody has brought this up to County Council if they could consider some type of childcare for County employees. Ms. Antonacci agreed that it is a need and she will bring it up at one of their meetings. Ms. Middleton said Beaufort Memorial has been doing something like that for their employees and that Ms. Antonacci might be able to talk to someone there to point her in the right direction. Ms. Mayse said that childcare affects direct care workers too and that they don't make the salary Early Intervention and Case Managers do so have less funds to cover the cost. We have lost a few with not being able to get childcare at the reduced cost they were expecting and that they are comfortable paying as well.

Case Management - Ms. Scoggins said she had one Case Manager that retired this year. We are also working with the individuals that are in the community right now. DHHS is requiring for those that are going into the community and providing care (such as respite

and in home support) to have an electronic visit verification (EVV). This is an electronic timekeeping. Before, people would hire a caregiver to care for their loved one. They would submit a paper record and get paid for it. That will no longer happen. They will have to make sure they have access on a cell phone to be able to clock in. There is GPS tracking for all of that so it is a big switch over. This way DHHS can monitor, and people are able to get paid for services. We just got a memo a few minutes ago that the Appendix K has been extended to June 30th so that is good news. We are also working on Camp Treasure Chest. It will be located at Robert Smalls Middle School (they may have changed their name). We are working with them and they have been very accommodating. We are looking to do 4 weeks of camp. Ms. Scoggins said she is on the Ronald MacDonald Board and was able to participate in the ribbon cutting of Savannah Memorial's new hospitality cart. As she finds out more events, she will share with the Board in case anyone would like to participate.

Day Program - Terry Geitner said he was talking to a friend who made the comment that the world seems like it is starting to right itself a little bit. Granted we are not there yet; David just went through Covid, I just finished up a bout of it myself, and we still have issues with employees and getting positions filled. But on a better note, we just took on a cleaning contract with the city, the 500 Carteret building which has a multitude of offices. We have the entire 18,000 + square foot building. They started Monday the 14th. It was a great Valentine gift to everyone. Mr. Geitner said he wishes he could see the motivation with people wanting to come to work here that he sees on the consumers going on jobs. They are thrilled. That put another 5 or 6 people working. Then we have another pending invitation once we test the waters here. It is great that these opportunities are becoming so available to us and the enthusiasm of our consumers that want to go to work. We have been fortunate that we have had some new staff come in recently and have been trained and are starting to take on classes. We are starting to feel a real difference in just the general energy in our day program, very positive, more uplifting. We are happy to have them on board. I am not sure what happened but the applications have stopped. I hope to see another surge soon because we do need to bring in a few more people. I think that is the same with residential too. We have around 30 individuals waiting to come back to the Day Program. We just authorized 7 or 8 individuals to come back starting March 1st. There are certain criteria that we are establishing on that as far as having the proper ratio. With them returning we are going to be right about 70 – high 70% capacity which is great. Some of those will immediately be employed as well. We have a volunteer who was a part time employee that is going to start our spring garden. We plan to get the consumers more involved this year.

- B. FMAP – Mr. Love said we got a notice from the state that providers got \$5 million worth of FMAP money and that we can use it for things like retention bonuses, recruitment bonuses, hiring bonuses, additional training, and some media advertisement. I met with the team here earlier and we talked about the best way to do that. Wanda Mayse, Cherie Scoggins, and Beth Cody are going to reach out to their counterparts. We don't know how much money they are allocating for each area, and we don't know the timeframe. Once we get that information, we are going to prepare a piece of correspondence for Ms. Antonacci so she can look over it. Then we need to let County Council know that we're going to apply for this money. One of our concerns is that we don't want to compete with County Council. I know that they have some federal money as well. What we are trying to do is just kind of make sure we are not bumping into each other. We had a meeting about two

weeks ago and Mr. Greenway felt that we could apply. He also wanted us to keep him and County Council aware of our efforts.

- C. iTrain – Mr. Love said we recently developed a contract with iTrain, a virtual training program. We have a problem getting staff to attend some of our training because they are working, and we are short staffed. We sent it to Mr. Greenway for his signature so we can move forward with that.
- D. Disability Advocacy Day – Mr. Love said Disability Advocacy Day is March 2nd in Columbia. A group of us are going to go. The governor, the lieutenant governor, Dr. Fry our DDSN Administrator, and other legislators are going to be present to respond to any questions that we may have. I'm excited about us taking vans of individuals. Cherie and some of Wanda's staff are going to drive up. If any of you are interested, you are welcome to drive up with us.
- E. New Board Members – Mr. Love said we have 3 new board members in the process. We're waiting for County Council to approve them. We got a response back that someone from PEP, Drug and Alcohol, and Community Services have applied. I think it will make a difference and strengthen our board. It is one way of keeping these agencies working together on some issues.

VII. DEPUTY DIRECTOR'S REPORT – Wanda Mayse

- A. Staffing - Ms. Mayse said staffing is still the same, not a whole lot has changed. It is like a revolving door. We get new people in and then we have people leave for various reasons. Ms. Beach will be doing another job fair but the last one we got a minimal turnout. We are chipping away at it and trying to give the current staff some relief. My coordinators are working in homes so we're keeping it together. The quality of care has not been compromised by all of that so that's the thing that is pleasing. I am not as concerned as Ms. Cody is about fee for service for residential. My part in that is easy. It is just a "head in the bed" and that's what we get paid for. The only thing that will impact us a lot is family members being able to visit as much as they have in the past because if they're not physically in the home for overnight stays we will not get paid. That is going to be a bit of a challenge because it kind of bumps against what HCBS Final Rule says. They want families to spend time together. We are going to have to navigate through that and work that out.
- B. Compliance Reviews – Ms. Mayse said we are still engaged in compliance reviews, and they are all coming back 95 and above. Our services have not been compromised even with the reduction in staffing. We have two coming up this week and one I think is Day Program. I'm very optimistic that they are ready. They've been working on being prepared. Our census is remaining stable and things are going well.

VIII. POLICY/DIRECTIVES COMMITTEE – Lynn Russo, Chair, Wendy Bukowski, Co-Chair

There were no policies or directives listed for review.

IX. COMMITTEE REPORTS

- Hospitality Committee, Wendy Bukowski, Chair –Nothing to report
- Personnel Committee, Lynn Russo, Chair – Nothing to report
- Public Relations/Legislative Committee, David Green, Chair – Mr. Green said with all the changes this is a good opportunity to start hitting up legislators about the waiting list. Ms. Russo said she would draft a letter.

X. PUBLIC COMMENT

Ms. Russo asked members present about attending in person at the next meeting in April. She asked Ms. Beach to send an email before the next meeting to see who would want to attend in person.

XI. The next board meeting will be held on April 19, 2022:

TBD

XII. ADJOURNMENT

THE MEETING WAS ADJOURNED AT 4:50 PM.

Lynn Russo
Lynn Russo, Chairman

April 19, 2022
Date

Nancy Pinkerton
Nancy Pinkerton, Vice-Chairman

4/19/2022
Date