

BEAUFORT COUNTY DISABILITIES AND SPECIAL NEEDS ADVISORY BOARD
100 Clear Water Way
Beaufort, SC 29906
October 21, 2025

MEMBERS PRESENT: Wendy Bukowski, Lea Cifranick-McFadden, Frankie Middleton, Galen Sturup Comeau, Lynn Russo

MEMBERS ABSENT: Faye Alston, Mary Ann Radke, Andy Thacker, Audra Antonacci (Ex-officio)

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

GUESTS PRESENT: Justin Palmer

I. CALL TO ORDER – Galen Sturup Comeau, Chairman

Mr. Comeau called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m.

II. WELCOMING GUESTS

Mr. Sturup Comeau welcomed our guest, Mr. Justin Palmer.

III. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF JULY 15, 2025, BOARD MEETING

A VOTE WAS TAKEN TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE JULY 15, 2025 MEETING. A MOTION WAS MADE BY LYNN RUSSO AND SECONDED BY FRANKIE MIDDLETON TO APPROVE THE MINUTES. APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

IV. ADOPTION OF OCTOBER 21, 2025, AGENDA

A VOTE WAS TAKEN TO APPROVE THE AGENDA OF THE MEETING OF OCTOBER 21, 2025. A MOTION WAS MADE BY WENDY BUKOWSKI AND SECONDED BY GALEN STURUP COMEAU TO APPROVE THE AGENDA. APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

V. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT – Galen Sturup Comeau, Chairman

Mr. Sturup Comeau said when they did their last community review, there were some issues in one of the homes. Nobody was home but the staff office was left unlocked, a mattress was outside, and cleaning supplies were left unlocked. Ms. Russo said cleaning supplies are okay unless it is something toxic. Ms. Mayse said a ticket was put in with county maintenance to remove the mattress, but that is not a priority for them. They are short-staffed too, so they have to prioritize everything. At another home there was a utility box left open. Ms. Mayse stated that the administrative assistant usually sends the team an update on the corrections that are made as noted on the community review sheets. This has not been done consistently. She will check with her and have her send you an update.

Mr. Comeau informed the board that Ms. Williamson resigned as of this morning. Her work schedule does not allow her to attend the meetings. We now have three openings. Mr. Comeau asked for a vote from the board to accept Mr. Justin Palmer as a member of the board. The board voted unanimously to approve him.

VI. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT – Bill Love

- A. Department Updates – Nursing – Ava White – Ms. White said the annual flu clinic hosted by Palmetto Rx was held on September 23rd. It went very well. In July one client was hospitalized for a small bowel obstruction and pneumonia, and another visited the ER for a suspected seizure. In August one client presented to the ER for pneumonia without admission and another was treated for Flu B with bronchitis. In September one client had an ER visit for suspected cellulitis without admission. All clients received appropriate care, medical orders were followed, and each has recovered well and remains stable. PDR clinics continue under the care of Dr. Gonzalez. The most recent clinic was on September 16th with no major medication adjustments. The care team continues to monitor and report on two clients. All clients reviewed this year for Dysphagia were cleared and deemed stable to continue current diet plans by Mika Walpole, except for one who has additional records and orders pending. One minor choking incident occurred in July and was promptly evaluated and cleared by Mika Walpole. Medication errors: July out of 80,571 opportunities for error there were 16 actual errors and 6 red flags; August out of 106,222 opportunities for error there were 19 actual errors and 8 red flags; September out of 67,669 opportunities for error there were 10 actual errors. There were no adverse effects on clients. RN audits of all CTH II homes were completed on July 17-18 with no major discrepancies noted. The Semi-Annual Medication Audits with Palmetto Rx are scheduled for November 14. There was a total of 19 falls over the last 3 months: 5 in July, 8 in August, and 6 in September. Causes included loss of balance, client noncompliance, staff error, and environmental factors. Three ER visits occurred for facial trauma, fractured ankle, and rib fractures. The remaining incidents required only minor first aid or urgent care. Fall frequency remains consistent, primarily among the same clients. Physical therapy and staff/client retraining continue regularly.

EI/Case Management – Cherie Scoggins - Ms. Scoggins said Early Intervention continues to provide services to 0-5 year olds. We are starting to take referrals from Ridgeland/Jasper County because we have the staffing capacity to do that and there are very limited resources in those areas. We look at referrals based on location. OIDD has just done a new Early Intervention manual. We will be studying and training on the changes over the next couple of months to make sure everyone has a clear understanding of their role and expectations. We are getting 11-13 referrals per month. EI continues to do well. Case Management continues to thrive and continues to get referrals. Regulations say that if somebody receives case management that is Medicaid targeted case management or state funded case management, we only have to make contact every 60 days. If they have a waiver which is a Medicaid waiver, we have to make contact with them every 30 days. There is lots of noise out there about government shutdown, benefits stopping, and stuff like that. Families are getting a lot of things in the mail, and it gets confusing for them. We are trying to build relationships with churches. We had a death of a client who was hit by a vehicle. We were looking for residential placement for him.

Day Program – Terry Geitner – Mr. Geitner said he is down to one part-time direct care vacancy in the Day Program. There is one full-time direct care going through new hire with the county. We have had a lot of outings for the clients. They did a Coastal Discovery Tour and Indigo Tie Dye session. The flu clinic for the clients was very successful. There were no issues. We are still doing Music Therapy, but we just found out our music therapist is moving to Cincinnati. Literacy sessions continue. We hosted the final testing for Therapeutic Dogs International and from that graduating class, we will now have a therapy dog assigned to our program that will start this fall. Hopeful Horizons did a session on appropriate relationships and boundaries. The clients went on a crabbing event at Sands Beach and caught 6 crabs and 4 fish. Day Program will be having our annual Trail of Treats on October 31st from 10:30 – 1:00. The whole trail around the building is decorated. All of you are invited.

Budget – Beth Cody – Ms. Cody said she and Bill attended the FY27 Budget Kick-off meeting with the County Administrator. There are going to be a lot of changes. We are going to have to be more detailed with planning for travel and training. We will have to anticipate any travel and training and build it into the budget prior to the budget being approved. Merit raises will be tied to educational opportunities - training and certificates. All purchases are being scrutinized very closely.

Ms. Cody went over the current FY26 budget report to date. We are 30% of the way through this budget year. Revenue is 17% because the county has not yet deposited our money. Personnel is 23%, Purchased Services is 22%, Supplies are 18%, and Total Expenditures are at 23%. Nothing except overtime looks high.

- B. Pinning Ceremony – Sonia Simmons will be recognized at the December 8th County Council meeting for 15 years of service.
- C. Generators – Ms. Mayse has already reported that we are having generators installed at all of the CTH II homes.
- D. Haunted Halloween Trail – Mr. Geitner has already mentioned the Halloween Event. It was done really well last year. You can see it on YouTube and possibly on the county channel.
- E. State Meeting – Mr. Love said that the governor does not want to appoint a director for this department. They combined three departments, Mental Health, Disabilities and Special Needs, and Drug and Alcohol. They will wait until a new governor is appointed.
- F. Certificates – We have purchased “Certificates of Recognition” for supervisors to acknowledge their staff who have really gone above what is required of their position.

VII. DEPUTY DIRECTOR’S REPORT –Wanda Mayse

Ms. Mayse reported the passing of one of our long-time residents. She was 83 years old and was with us for 28 years. She was moved into a nursing care facility in July due to a change in health status that required a higher level of care. We had another resident at the Waddell home, which serves individuals with lower support needs and is not staffed 24 hours, who experienced a decline in functional skills and was transferred to the Bostick Circle home. This

leaves a vacancy at the Waddell home. We are reviewing applications for placement. Case Management currently has four potential local candidates being reviewed for possible placement. We try to serve Beaufort County residents first.

We are dealing with maintenance and repairs at several of the homes. Chloe Way had water damage occur in a bedroom and hall closets. The walls have been repaired but the floor tiles in the closets still need replacement. A resident was displaced for several weeks while repairs were being done. They have returned but the work is not completed. The county maintenance department is understaffed so if they start work on a project and get redirected to something that is of higher priority, they have to leave.

Center Drive has ongoing issues with leaks from the bedroom to the common area. Access from the living room has been permanently closed off and a wall has been installed. Floor reconstruction and bedroom modifications are in progress. The shower is being rebuilt to improve sealing and prevent future leaks. A fence installation is planned to enhance backyard safety and allow residents to use the outdoor space safely. It has been delayed due to a neighboring property encroaching on county land. The neighbor has been notified, and negotiations are in progress to resolve the issue. The driveway drop-off to the sidewalk has been identified as a safety hazard and we are awaiting a plan from the county to mitigate this concern.

Fraser Drive there is ongoing communication with the city to restore access to the adjacent walking trail, which remains blocked by vegetation overgrowth. Generator installations are underway in all residential homes to ensure safety and continuity of care during power outages.

Facilities Maintenance has contracted with an outside vendor to conduct building inspections and energy audits on the homes.

There are currently three full-time and six part-time vacancies across residential programs. These numbers do not reflect the true staffing needs, as several positions have been difficult to fill and were subsequently retracted by the county after remaining open for an extended period. Despite the retraction, the positions remain essential to ensure adequate coverage for 24-hour residential operations. Staffing shortages have been temporarily managed through overtime coverage by dedicated team members.

The Residential Department continues to prioritize the safety, stability, and well-being of residents while addressing ongoing staffing challenges and facility improvements. Efforts remain focused on ensuring that all homes are maintained to high standards, residents receive consistent quality care, and appropriate placements are identified for individuals in need of additional support.

We have an ongoing partnership with the Knights of Columbus, who will be hosting their annual cookout on Saturday, October 25th. Following the cookout, residents and staff will present a fall festival that they have planned together.

IX. COMMITTEE REPORTS

- Hospitality Committee, Wendy Bukowski, Chair – N/A
- Personnel Committee, Lynn Russo, Chair – N/A
- Public Relations/Legislative Committee, Galen Sturup Comeau, Chair – Mr. Comeau expressed concerns about the government shutdown and if it will affect any of our clients. Ms. Mayse and Ms. Scoggins reassured Mr. Sturup-Comeau that DSN clients and families were given information relating to soup kitchens and food assistance sources in Beaufort and surrounding counties to ensure that none of our clients would go hungry if SNAP benefits were paused due to the government shutdown.

X. PUBLIC COMMENT

Mr. Love gave Christmas gifts to the board members to thank them for being a part of our board since we will not meet again until January.

XI. The next board meeting will be held on **January 20, 2026, at 4:00 PM:**

**100 Clear Water Way
Beaufort, SC 29906**

XII. ADJOURNMENT

A MOTION WAS MADE BY WENDY BUKOWSKI AND SECONDED BY LYNN RUSSO TO ADJOURN THE MEETING. THE MEETING WAS ADJOURNED AT 5:05 PM.


Galen Sturup Comeau, Chairman


Lynn Russo, Vice-Chairman


Date


Date