

The Cleveland County DSS Advisory Board met on Monday, November 28, 2022, at 4:00 p.m.

Board members present: Chair Allison Gragg, Mary Accor, Betsy Wells, Lendra Phillips, Deb Hardin, Danny Blanton, and Jiselle Bock

DSS staff present: Katie Swanson, Destiny Davidson, Ali Wilson, Sherry Vess, Andrea Power, Annette Pendergraft, Misti Merritt, and CJ Benson

County Attorney present: Chuck Wilson

**CALL TO ORDER/WELCOME:**

Chair Gragg called the meeting to order at 4:02 PM and led the Pledge of Allegiance and moment of silence.

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA FOR NOVEMBER 28, 2022, DSS ADVISORY BOARD MEETING:**

Chair Gragg presented the proposed consent agenda for the November 28, 2022, DSS Advisory Board meeting for consideration.

**Motion: A motion was made by Deb Hardin with a second by Mary Accor to approve the proposed agenda for the November 28, 2022, DSS Advisory Board meeting as presented. The motion carried unanimously.**

**CITIZEN RECOGNITION:**

No citizens requested to appear before the Board.

**CONSENT AGENDA:**

A. Minutes

The Clerk to the Board emailed the minutes from the September 26, 2022, meeting and the October 31, 2022, meeting to Advisory Board members prior to the November 28, 2022, meeting.

**Motion: A motion was made by Mary Accor with a second by Jiselle Bock to approve the minutes for the September 26, 2022, DSS Advisory Board meeting as presented. The October 31, 2022, minutes will be used for informational purposes only. The motion carried unanimously.**

B. Personnel Report

The Clerk to the Board emailed the personnel report to Advisory Board members prior to the November 28, 2022, meeting.

Director Swanson updated the board on current vacancies within the agency. We currently have the following vacancies in Child Welfare: (2) Social Worker III, (1) Social Worker Supervisor II, (1) Social Worker Supervisor III, (1) Social Worker IAT, (1) Social Worker III Placement, in Income Maintenance: (1) IM Caseworker III, in Clerical: (1) Processing Assistant III, (1) Administrative Assistant I, and in Child Support: (3) Child Support Agent II positions.

### C. Executive Summary

The Clerk to the Board emailed the Executive Summary to Advisory Board members prior to the November 28, 2022, meeting.

Betsy brought up that the mental health case numbers have increased. Katie spoke about the fact that we partner with Benchmarks with a program called Partnering for Excellence. They come in and do trauma informed CCA's with our children to get the correct kind of assessment and follow-up. This has helped with less medication and less placements for our children in Cleveland County.

### **CONSENT AGENDA ADOPTION:**

Chair Gragg presented the consent agenda for the November 28, 2022, DSS Advisory Board meeting for adoption.

**Motion: A motion was made by Betsy Wells with a second by Mary Accor to approve the consent agenda for the November 28, 2022, DSS Advisory Board meeting as presented. The motion carried unanimously.**

### **REGULAR AGENDA:**

#### A. Innovation Meeting Update

Chair Gragg introduced Director, Katie Swanson with an Innovation Meeting update. We have brought in some new technology to help with making things faster and more efficient. We have brought in iireception, a cloud-based version of AS400, and a foster care payment system through Information Inc. Social work has been an area that we have put a lot of focus on as we continue to receive resignations. We have been given some positions to help with over hiring for this area. We are in the process of purchasing MiFi pads for work when out in the field. We will pilot a few of these to see if this is beneficial. We have a position being posted for transportation to help with transportation of kids. We have

extended our contract with children's home to help with visitation. We are also revamping our QA team that will now be a training team to ensure that the new staff have what they need to do the job and be confident. We have also been working on a campaign for recruitment of social workers after graduation. We have done a lot of work around salary comparable so that we align with our neighboring counties.

#### B. Retention & Recruitment

Director Swanson spoke about Retention & Recruitment at Cleveland County DSS. We have done a lot of work around retention and recruitment within DSS. Salary comparable has been done across the agency to increase salaries where they may be lacking and offer more competitive salaries to those that are looking for work at DSS. We are working on training exercises for all DSS employees that can help with a better understanding of what our staff needs. These trainings will also help with team building for our staff.

#### C. DSS Team Building

Director Swanson introduced two of our staff members that participated in some cohort training that we are doing across DSS. We recently had a team building training and two of our staff members will speak about their experience at the training. Bridgett Griffin has been with the agency 21 years. Bridgett said she really enjoyed the cohort exercises that she participated in at Hanna Park. She said it felt good to get outside the building and experience a different atmosphere. Although I have worked in this agency for over 21 years, I have never had this type of interaction with coworkers outside of my department. She feels that everyone had a great time and learned something about each other. She is hopeful to have more trainings like this in the future. Kimberly Rich who works in Child Support spoke about how her experience was with the training. Kimberly feels that The Hanna Park Team Cohort Experience was a fun and innovative way to interact with different departments and coworkers. It gave her the chance to work with people she doesn't usually get to interact with. She really enjoyed the team building exercises that got everyone working together and switching rolls. It gave her a better understanding of how her coworkers adapt to new situations and she got to see them in a more relaxed setting. The overall experience was refreshing, and many people seemed to enjoy the activities. She looks forward to doing it again and would love to see it used county wide in the future.

### **BOARD REPORTS:**

#### A. Child Protection/Fatality Team:

Chair Gragg introduced Lendra Phillips with the Child Protection/Fatality Team. Lendra reported that an old case that was left open has been closed. The new active case that is open, DSS is already involved and providing services to the family.

#### B. NCACBSS

Chair Gragg introduced Mary Accor with the NCACBSS update. Mary did not have anything to report because their next meeting is not until December 16 in Burlington. They have invited the School of Government to come in and give a debriefer on legal issues pertaining to boards of DSS. Sharnese Ransome has also been invited from the director's association to talk about new ways to connect with SSI and bring boards together. Sharnese is also working on the data base for boards of DSS that will help communication among the 100 counties. The next newsletter will be coming out on December 16, and would like to include the teambuilding exercise that Cleveland County DSS just participated in.

C. Commissioners

Chair Gragg introduced Deb Hardin with a commissioner update. Commissioner Hardin updated the board and staff on the new Justice Center plans that are on display at the County Administration Building and the Library for the public to view. The reelected commissioners will be sworn in on December 5.

**MISCELLANEOUS:**

Chair Gragg asked if there was any other business to discuss. Director Swanson did invite the board members to our Holiday Luncheon scheduled for December 13, at the Gingerbread Meeting House. Andrea will send the email invite to all board members.

**ADJOURN: 5:04 PM**

There being no further business, Chair Gragg called for adjournment of the meeting.

**Motion: A motion was made by Mary Accor with a second by Deb Hardin to adjourn the November 28, 2022, DSS Advisory Board meeting. The motion carried unanimously.**

The next DSS Advisory Board meeting is scheduled for January 30, 2023, at 4:00 PM.