

**King and Queen Department of Social Services**  
**King and Queen CH, VA 23085**  
**Advisory Board Minutes**  
**January 25, 2022**

**Present**

Angie Alley, Vice Chair  
Bette Albert, Member  
Betty Dougherty, Director  
Maddie Kieffer, Administrative Programs Assistant II  
Brittany Lawson, Program Coordinator

The meeting was called to order at 9:00 a.m. by Angie Alley.

**Public Comment Period**

There was no one present for public comment.

**Consent Agenda**

The November 16, 2021 meeting minutes, statistical reports, and the Directors report were included in the consent agenda. Bette Albert made a motion to approve the minutes, statistical reports and Directors report. Angie Alley seconded the motion. Motion passed.

**Director's Report**

**Heating Assistance Program 2021**

The pandemic has created unprecedented utility arrearage amounts for many households. When you combine this with the inflation rate and the projected increase across energy costs this winter, many families need our help more than ever. Due to the state's receipt of additional Energy Assistance Program funds, they were able to significantly increase Fuel Assistance benefits for this year.

In King and Queen County, we received and processed 202 applications for heating assistance. We approved 183 applications and denied 19. The total sum of heating benefits paid out so far in December to King and Queen County citizens was \$67,175.39. We have authorized an additional \$97,172.17 which has not been paid out yet as of the date of my report. Most of our clients received between \$850 -\$1100 with the average payment being \$898.07. This is significantly higher than last year which was an average of around \$483.

**Crisis Heating Program**

The component of crisis that covers the purchase of primary fuel and the payment of primary heat utility bills began on January 1, 2022. The maximum benefit amount for this year is \$999. The actual benefit will depend on individual circumstances such as the amount of the utility account balance (including past due plus current charges). There are also a couple of changes for this year as follows:

- A disconnection notice will not be required, however the account must be past due.
- No copayment will be required, regardless of account balance.

#### Childcare Expanded Eligibility

The expansion of childcare benefits has been extended and the Virginia Department of Education and the Child Care Subsidy Program will continue to offer temporary expanded eligibility to families until 5/31/2022. This will help more parents be able to afford their preferred child care option and secure stable employment as Virginia takes steps towards recovery from the COVID-19 health crisis.

- Parents will continue to qualify for care while searching for employment through 5/31/2022.
- Parents may also receive child care subsidy if their income exceeds normal income eligibility requirements, but is below 85% of the state median income if they have a child who is age 5 or younger (not yet in kindergarten).

#### 2021 Christmas Wishes Program

With the help of 22 sponsors were able to serve 147 Children living in 59 families this year through our Christmas Wishes program. We would like to thank the following sponsors for their donations:

New Hope Baptist

Poroporone Baptist Church

WRAR

C&F Bank

Kelly Harvey

Alpha Delta Kappa

King and Queen Elementary

Union Prospect Baptist

Rappahannock Electric

Immanuel Episcopal Church

Smyrna Christian Church

Women's Club

Tina Ammons

Kittie Scott

Kimberlyn Williams-Middleton

Mr. and Mrs. Kevin Jennings

Dominion Energy

Danielle Robinson

Howard Brown Jr.

Shackelfords Chapel UMC

United Methodist Church

King and Queen Sheriff's Department

Brittany Lawson, Program Coordinator managed the program again this year. Maddie Kieffer and Gigi Askaryar helped with calls, organization, and getting gifts out to all individuals. Maddie also helped with shopping and organizing the gifts.

## **Unite Us/ Unite Virginia**

Brittany Lawson, Program Coordinator, provided the Board with a presentation on Unite Us which is a new networking platform with the goal of having health care and social care accessible in one place to build a healthier community. “Diversity, inclusion, and understanding” are the keys to improve outcomes with the use of this online networking system. The Agency will have access to Unite Virginia to track referrals and see if the clients were helped from one of the pending 10 partners. This network is still in the beginning stages with an information session in February.

## **FY 23 Social Services Proposed Budget Highlights**

Betty Dougherty spoke on the proposed FY 23 Social Services Budget which is to possibly include recruitment for the position of Assistant Director. Asking for an Assistant Director position is important for the Agency’s succession management planning. Anyone on the Board is encouraged to be a part of the hiring panel and to promote advocacy and support for funding.

## **Planning Future Meetings**

The next meeting will be held March 22, 2022 at 9:00 a.m. in person.

The Board also discussed the planning of future meetings in regards to how the meetings would be held. Since the King and Queen Social Services Advisory Board is an advisory board, there needs to be an opportunity for the public to join. If the public has something to address or express, they must have appropriate access. Angie Alley and Bette Albert were both in agreement that meetings should be in person with social distancing. Betty Dougherty will review the state guidance which is in place through June 30, 2022 and consult with the County Attorney with how to proceed with future meetings during the pandemic.

The Director explained that each Board Member was provided a chart in their packet that is required by VDSS that provides information on Board terms so they can plan accordingly for ending their term or to communicate a desire to serve an additional term, if eligible. The Director also pointed out that the Board Chair’s second term is ending soon and asked that Board Members be prepared to elect a new Chair.

The Board expressed an interest in receiving updates on Unite Us and the Holiday Assistance program throughout the year. They would also like to have the Leadership Team do presentations on the work of their team similar to last year. The Director suggested that as soon as it is safe to do so, we could do another meeting with all employees and the Board similar to what we did just before the pandemic. The Board agreed that they would like to do that.

## **Adjournment**

Angie Alley adjourned the meeting at 10:29 a.m.

