

**King and Queen Department of Social Services
King and Queen CH, VA 23085
Advisory Board Minutes
June 27, 2023**

Present

Vivian Seay, County Administrator
Angie Alley, Chair
Bette Albert, Vice Chair
Alda Norris, Member
Sandra Burrell, Member
Betty A. Dougherty, Director
Linda Cooke, Assistant Director
Lisa Lose, Administrative Programs Assistant II

Conflict of Interest and Freedom of Information Act Training

Vivian Seay presented the training which began at 9:58 a.m. was held in the court room.

Social Services Advisory Board Meeting Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 11:27 a.m. on June 27, 2023, by Angie Alley, Chair.

Public Comment Period

No public comment to be noted.

Consent Agenda

The April 25, 2023, meeting minutes, statistical reports, and the Directors report were included in the consent agenda. Alda Norris made a motion to approve the consent agenda and Sandra Burrell seconded the motion. The consent agenda was approved.

Director's Report

Family Reunification Month

June is celebrated as Family Reunification Month in Virginia. It takes a team of people to preserve a relationship between a parent and their child in every case we encounter. Reunification is always our first goal when a child is removed from their home and we work diligently to strengthen and support families toward making that outcome possible. Our strategies build on family strengths and support family dynamics. We strive to engage families and empower them to make decisions, assist them in maintaining family and cultural connections, and lead them to evidence-based services and education through a community approach. Our foster parents are also an integral part of our reunification mission. They care for the children when their parents are unable to care for them, support the parents to reach their goals, and work with the parents to transition the child back into their home. Reunification Month reminds us that foster care is

a temporary intervention. Please join me in celebrating the reunification heroes that work so hard to support reunification for children and families every day.

Cooling Assistance

Cooling assistance began on June 15. We can accept applications June 15 through August 15. Cooling Assistance helps with cooling equipment repairs or purchases and with payment of the electric bill to operate cooling equipment. You must have or need cooling equipment and there must be an elderly person, a person living with a disability, or a child under 6 living in the home.

New Family Visitation Room - Safe and Sound Task Force Grant

In my April report, I provided you with information about a grant opportunity for the purpose of supporting the initiatives of the Safe and Sound Task Force including community-based treatments, support for kinship, foster and adoptive families, and trauma-informed care for children in foster care who are displaced or who are at risk of being displaced.

We applied for and was awarded a mini-grant of \$12,500 with no local match under the Safe and Sound Task Force Grant to refurbish our family room and viewing/intake room inside of the agency. These rooms are where we interview and work with families during some of their most difficult times. Our goal was to create a calming environment and these rooms serve many purposes in our work with families. We coordinated with the County Administrator and Director of Maintenance on the painting part of the project. The rooms are now complete with the exception of paint in the viewing room and replacing the carpet in both rooms. We would like to give you a tour after the meeting.

New Utility Assistance Program

Some of our citizens will have access to a new program launching in November 2023. The program is called Percentage of Income Payment Program (PIPP). Legislation was passed in 2020 and 2021 to establish the program. This is the first year-round utility assistance program offered by Social Services in Virginia.

It will only be available in our county to low-income Dominion customers. Customers can participate and receive benefits in both this program and our Energy Assistance program. It is funded by a universal service fee paid by customers of Dominion. PIPP will be a state supervised locally administered program. Our Benefit Programs Specialists will accept and process the applications and provide case management for the program.

Personnel

We have successfully filled the positions of Family Services Supervisor and Administrative Office Manager through competitive recruitment. Brittany Lawson is our new Family Services Supervisor and Lisa Lose is our new Administrative Office Manager. We still have several vacant positions that we need to fill. We are recruiting for a Benefits Programs Specialist III, Benefit Programs Specialist I/II, Family Services Specialist, and Program Coordinator.

We previously planned to include all Social Service employees in our June meeting but unfortunately, we will need to move that plan to our August meeting. Board Members will have the opportunity to interact with and learn more about our employees and their roles in the community during that meeting.

Board Member Agenda Items

Alda Norris mentioned about business cards for the Board members as discussed from February 28th Advisory Board meeting. She expressed that explaining the process of going onto the website of King & Queen County to people is difficult and that people are unsure where to go for validation. Betty Dougherty questioned if she felt that business cards that they had in the past with agency name, address and contact number was sufficient and Alda Norris agreed that it would be. Betty also recommended maybe for anyone interested to

come by the office to get our agency brochures and that was praised as a better idea because of the amount of information provided on them.

Board Member Updates from Districts

Alda Norris questioned if we were going to put anything in the July County Courier for our programs or in August to inform the community of programs before school for the children starting back. Betty informed Alda that we only did the County Courier the one month and were not planning at this time to do any other inserts. The question was also raised by Alda if we were planning to participate in Sheriff's night in Aug.? Betty responded "Yes." Alda volunteered herself (5 days a week), her husband for helping for Christmas and Sandra will help (when off Resource Counsel) wherever is needed at Angie's location. It was then announced that there is a Dr. V would like to join a nonprofit clinic.

Betty Dougherty spoke about the pass outs and brochures Foster Care Recruitment Campaign QR code to sign up for being a foster parent.

Family Room Tour

Everyone left the meeting and took a tour of the Family Room at the DSS. The board thought the room turned out better than they imagined and Alda offered that if any supplies, toys etc. was needed to reach out to her.

Meeting adjourned by Angie Alley, at 1:39 p.m.