



**LINCOLN COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES
BOARD MEETING MINUTES
October 29, 2024**

The regular meeting of the Lincoln County Social Services Board was held on Tuesday, October 29, 2024 at 1:30 p.m. in the Board Room of the Social Services Building. Members present were Chrystal Hoyle, Chairperson; Dr. Sherry Hoyle, Vice Chairperson; and Jill Eaddy. Others in attendance were Matthew Hillman, Director; Kelley Miles, Deputy Director; Ruth Lockman, Business Manager; Mendie Kelly, Children Services Program Manager; Jason Hughes, Placement Services Program Manager; Tiffany Barnette, Medicaid Program Manager; Roni Duckworth, Economic Services Program Manager; Jennifer Sigmon, Adult Services Program Manager; and Denise Dula, Economic Services Support Supervisor/Designated Clerk to the Social Services Board.

Call to Order-Chrystal Hoyle called the meeting to order at 1:30 p.m.

Invocation-Matthew Hillman gave an invocation.

Adoption of the Agenda-Adoption of the Agenda was approved by motion from Dr. Sherry Hoyle, second by Jill Eaddy, with all members in favor.

Public Comment-No public comments were made.

Minutes-Minutes from the September 24, 2024 meeting was approved by motion from Jill Eaddy, second by Dr. Sherry Hoyle, with all members in favor.

Old Business-Matthew Hillman provided an update on the Recipient Eligibility Determination Audit (REDA)-Round Two. Monthly, twenty cases are randomly selected for review. Mr. Hillman noted there has been two consecutive months of great REDA results. If this trend continues, Lincoln County DSS will pass the REDA. Mr. Hillman expressed managers, supervisors, and staff should be congratulated on a job well done.

Matthew Hillman stated he and Lincoln County Health Director, Lena Jones, attended the Lincoln County Board of Commissioners Meeting on Monday, October 21, 2024 to present Session Law 2023-134 which changes North Carolina's child fatality prevention system and making the Community Child Protection Team and Community Child Fatality Team one local team. These changes are required to be made by the local teams by January 2025. The Board of Commissioners must determine if the Local Team will proceed as a single county or multi-county team (regionalized). Mr. Hillman and Ms. Jones recommended to the County Commissioners that Lincoln County maintain a single county model and continue the Community Child Protection Team process for DSS reviews. Mr. Hillman noted the Lincoln

County Board of Commissioners voted unanimously to approve the Community Child Protection Team and Community Child Fatality Team transition under 2023 Appropriations Act (Section 9H.15. of Session Law 2023-134).

New Business-Matthew Hillman noted on October 1, 2024 North Carolina was approved for a Timely Reporting Waiver which provided additional time for Food and Nutrition Services (FNS) clients residing in 23 county disaster areas impacted by Hurricane Helene to report a food loss to their local Department of Social Services office due to displacement, transportation issues, or other storm-related hardships through October 26, 2024.

Also, on October 4, 2024 North Carolina was approved for a Hot Foods Waiver that allows FNS participants to temporarily use their benefits to purchase hot food, including food prepared for immediate consumption, from authorized Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) retailers using their EBT card. This ensures families who are not able to prepare food at home due to displacement or power outages can still access warm meals. FNS clients will be able to purchase hot food using their FNS benefits through November 3, 2024.

Next, on October 6, 2024 Automated Mass Replacements were approved allowing people in 23 western North Carolina counties affected by Hurricane Helene who were enrolled in FNS to receive replacement benefits on their EBT cards due to power outages. The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) approved North Carolina to allow current FNS participants in the 23 counties to receive 70 percent of their total monthly September benefit back on their EBT card. The benefit replacement was automatic and did not require any action from the FNS client.

Matthew Hillman stated the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services (NCDHHS) worked with the USDA to receive federal authority to operate a Disaster Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (D-SNAP). D-SNAP allowed more people afflicted by Hurricane Helene, who were not already receiving FNS, to qualify for one month of temporary food assistance benefits. D-SNAP was operated in 25 counties from Friday, October 18, 2024 through Thursday, October 24, 2024. Mr. Hillman expressed D-SNAP was a huge undertaking for Lincoln County DSS. In Lincoln County, there were over 2000 clients assisted through D-SNAP. To meet the needs of our community, DSS management and staff worked countless hours on the logistics of D-SNAP. Meetings were held with other counties that had participated in a D-SNAP event. Robeson County DSS sent five staff members (two program managers and three supervisors) to Lincoln County DSS for a week to help execute our plan. The program required “all hands on deck” from staff. Mandatory requirements included working seven straight days with the possibility of 12 hour shifts and 30 minute lunches. Overtime and informal leave hours were approved by County Manager Davin Madden. Food for staff was provided several days including lunch and donuts from the Lincoln County Coalition Against Child Abuse (CAC). Mr. Hillman noted every DSS employee played an important role in the success of D-SNAP. Employees exhilarated grace, adaptability, flexibility, and unity throughout the event. Mr. Hillman stated he was extremely proud of every person who helped make this immense operation a success.

Board members expressed their gratitude and appreciation to all staff for their diligent efforts to serve the citizens of Lincoln County.

Also, Matthew Hillman discussed the disaster response to Hurricane Helene executed in Lincoln County. On Friday, September 27, 2024 at 10:00 a.m. a Red Cross shelter was activated to assist residents displaced because of the hurricane. The shelter was operated at Lincoln High School then moved to Lincoln Middle School due to generator issues. DSS staff worked 12 hour shifts to manage the shelter. There was a total of four residents accommodated. The shelter ended on Saturday, September 28, 2024 at 10:00 a.m. In addition, Mr. Hillman stated he wanted to make Board members aware, DSS adult wards and children in foster care were not displaced for long periods of time due to the hurricane.

Next, Matthew Hillman stated the pre-county budget meeting for Fiscal Year 2025-2026 (FY 25-26) was held recently with County Manager Davin Madden. Mr. Madden seemed receptive of budget request ideas. Proposals included emergency placement staff compensation; I-Reception for customer service; position reclassification; clerical support for Children Services; office furniture replacement plan; and maintenance of security gate in back parking lot of DSS. Mr. Hillman noted he will keep the Board updated throughout the budget process.

Budget Reports-During the meeting, Ruth Lockman presented Expenditure-Revenue reports to Board members. Ms. Lockman noted 1st Quarter FY 2024-2025 projections were listed on the agenda for discussion. However, because of D-SNAP expenditures and outstanding D-SNAP reimbursements, the data for projections was not available this month and may not be ready next month. Ms. Lockman stated once more totals are in from D-SNAP, she will prepare a spreadsheet reflecting preliminary numbers and the affect from D-SNAP on 1st Quarter FY 2024-2025 projections, etc. Board members thanked Ms. Lockman for her hard work.

Statistical Reports-Matthew Hillman expressed statistical data remains on track.

Other-Matthew Hillman noted the rescheduled agency cookout will be on Thursday, October 31, 2024 from 11:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m. in the large training room at DSS. Hotdogs, chips, and drinks will be served. All Board members are invited to attend.

Closed Session-No Closed Session needed.

Date of Next Meeting-November 26, 2024

Motion to adjourn by Dr. Sherry Hoyle, second by Jill Eaddy, with all members in favor.

This meeting adjourned at 2:20 p.m.

Date Minutes Approved

Chrystal Hoyle, Chairperson

Matthew Hillman, Director

Respectfully Submitted:

Denise S. Dula
Economic Services Support Supervisor;
Designated Clerk to the Social Services Board of Lincoln County DSS
Cc: file copy