



**LINCOLN COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES
BOARD MEETING MINUTES
February 25, 2025**

The regular meeting of the Lincoln County Social Services Board was held on Tuesday, February 25, 2025 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; Jill Eaddy; Daphne Ingram; and Alex Patton. 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; 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 the invocation.

Public Comment-No public comments were made.

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

Minutes-Minutes from January 28, 2025 meeting was approved by motion from Alex Patton, second by Jill Eaddy, with all members in favor.

Old Business-Matthew Hillman gave an update on the Recipient Eligibility Determination Audit (REDA)-Round Two. Lincoln County will be placed on an Accuracy Improvement Plan (AIP). These plans are being seen across the state in many counties. The REDA is an extremely hard audit that puts immense pressures on staff members. Mr. Hillman paraphrased and shared a recent resignation letter from a Medicaid Income Maintenance Caseworker. In the letter, the worker stated she had gained a whole line of respect for Income Maintenance Caseworkers. Considering herself as a strong person, her mental health has declined. She expressed she was resigning not due to the work environment but because of the substance of work. Mr. Hillman noted Lincoln County DSS has lost three Income Maintenance Caseworkers within the last five months. A meeting has been scheduled with Lincoln County Human Resources to discuss worker retention.

Matthew Hillman stated the FY 2026-2028 Work First Plan was approved by Lincoln County Board of Commissioners on February 3, 2025 maintaining electing county status which allows

counties to develop their own plan to assist Work First recipients to become employed and self-sufficient. After the plan was submitted to the state, there was feedback from the Department of Health and Human Services on changes needed with no impact on the budget or substance of the FY 2026-2028 Work First Plan. Mr. Hillman noted the Updated FY 2026-2028 Work First Plan will be placed on the consent agenda on March 10, 2025 for approval by the Board of Commissioners ensuring Lincoln County remains an electing county.

New Business-Matthew Hillman noted “Meet our Staff” included Foster Care Visitation Coaches. Jason Hughes introduced Brittany Deal and April Gullate, Foster Care Permanency Planning Supervisors. Ms. Deal and Ms. Gullate presented a slide show featuring Kierra Whitesides and Kenzi Miller, Foster Care Visitation Coaches. The visitation coach roles have been very beneficial in assisting Foster Care Social Workers on their caseloads; providing visitation supervision with coaching and redirection; transportation for children and parents; case management activities; crisis management; parenting education; and facilitating child and family team meetings. These positions were requested in the last two fiscal year Budget proposals. This model will be utilized in asking for a Child Protective Services visitation coach in next year’s budget.

Matthew Hillman presented the North Carolina Association of County Directors of Social Services Legislative Priorities draft. These priorities were chosen from a larger list as focus areas including providing adequate funding for guardianship and adult protective services; fully funding the child welfare workload recommendations study through state funds; and, to establish a study for caseload standards in Food and Nutrition Services and Medicaid Programs, timeframe for policy updates in DSS programs, and the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) to establish an ongoing training program for Food and Nutrition and Medicaid Programs. The priorities listed will be presented during a legislative day in Raleigh showing how we can work together to bridge gaps and achieve goals.

Matthew Hillman stated the new Children and Families Specialty Plan (CFSP) will go in effect December 1, 2025. Blue Cross Blues Shield of North Carolina was awarded the contract for the Children and Families Specialty Plan in August 2024. The plan is a single, statewide NC Medicaid Managed Care health plan designed to support Medicaid-enrolled children, youth, and families served by the child welfare system in receiving seamless, integrated, and coordinated health care. As a statewide entity, the Children and Families Specialty Plan, regardless of the person’s geographic location or situation, will provide members with the same basic benefits and services. The goals of this plan are to improve current and long-term health outcomes, increase access to health services, and provide strength and stabilize families. A huge benefit includes an in house case manager liaison at DSS.

Ruth Lockman stated since 2nd Quarter Fiscal Year 2024-2025 Projections and Fiscal Year 2025-2026 Budget Proposals were presented last month, there was not a lot to add regarding budget reports. Ms. Lockman expressed if Board members had questions regarding any line items, please reach out and she will be glad to explain.

Statistical Reports-Matthew Hillman stated Lincoln County DSS continues to produce great statistical data which reflects the hard work of all staff members. Board members noted the achievements and growth in various areas within the agency in the last several years.

Other-Matthew Hillman stated the Fiscal Year 2025-2026 budget meeting with County Manager Davin Madden is on Wednesday, March 5, 2025. Also, the Lincoln County Community Child Protection/Fatality Team Annual Report 2024 was presented to the Board of Commissioners on February 17, 2025 and will be shared during the Board meeting on March 25, 2025.

Closed Session-No Closed Session needed.

Date of Next Meeting-March 25, 2025 at 1:30 p.m.

Motion to adjourn by Jill Eaddy, second by Alex Patton, with all members in favor.

This meeting adjourned at 2:10 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