



**LINCOLN COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES  
BOARD MEETING MINUTES  
October 28, 2025**

The regular meeting of the Lincoln County Social Services Board was held on Tuesday, October 28, 2025 at 1:30 p.m. in the Board Room of the Social Services Building. The members present were Alex Patton, Chairperson; Daphne Ingram, Vice Chairperson; Jill Eaddy; and Mike Devine. Others in attendance were Matthew Hillman, Director; Kelley Miles, Deputy Director; Ruth Lockman, Business Manager; Mendie Kelly, Children Services Program Manager; Tiffany Barnette, Medicaid Program Manager; Roni Duckworth, Economic Services Program Manager; Jennifer Sigmon, Adult Services Program Manager; and, Denise Dula, Business Operations Supervisor/Designated Clerk to the Social Services Board. Also in attendance was County Manager Davin Madden and County Attorney Megan Gilbert.

**Call to Order**-Alex Patton called the meeting to order at 1:30 p.m.

**Invocation**-Alex Patton gave the invocation.

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

**Public Comment**-No public comments were made.

**Minutes**-Minutes from September 23, 2025 meeting was approved by motion from Daphne Ingram, second by Mike Devine, with all members in favor.

**Old Business**-Matthew Hillman noted the shortage for Medicaid rebase State Fiscal Year 2025-2026 remains. On September 22, 2025, a mini budget covering the 300-million-dollar gap for the Medicaid rebase passed in the Senate. However, the House would not agree to the proposal and ended negotiations. The apprehension is reduced rates and elimination of services will force providers out of the Medicaid program threatening care of those who really need it the most.

Matthew Hillman stated North Carolina has not passed a comprehensive 2025-2026 budget and is operating under the previous budget. Mini budgets have been passed to ensure government operations continue to address immediate needs like disaster relief, education, and infrastructure. Food and Nutrition (FNS) funding in North Carolina is facing significant changes, with a planned reduction in federal administrative funding starting in Fiscal Year 2027 dropping the federal governments share from around 50 percent to 25 percent. The shift in administrative funding will force states and counties to cover a larger portion of the costs to run the FNS program.

Matthew Hillman explained that the Children and Families Specialty Plan will go live on December 1, 2025. This is a single, statewide NC Medicaid Managed Care health plan designed to support beneficiaries in receiving integrated and coordinated health care they need, including mental health services, and continue to work with their doctors if placements move them across the state. Blue Cross Blue Shield of North Carolina was awarded the contract for the Children and Families Specialty Plan and will be managed under Healthy Blue Care Together.

Matthew Hillman expressed that the DSS office replacement plan continues. There will be 18 offices upfitted with new paint, office furniture, etc. Mr. Hillman praised Ruth Lockman's coordination of movers, painters, etc. to make this project a success. Staff are very proud of their new office features, and it has boosted morale. Also, DSS had another meeting with architects regarding the space needs assessment. DSS greatly needs a new office building.

**New Business**-Matthew Hillman discussed the federal shutdown. Currently, there are many unknowns. There are programs within DSS that are almost fully funded by federal dollars. There has been a shift in duties of staff within those programs. DSS is trying to be good stewards and continues to monitor the situation by exploring internal options. The economic impact of the federal shutdown is being felt across the state.

Matthew Hillman stated a pre-budget meeting had occurred with County Manager Davin Madden for County Budget Fiscal Year 2026-2027. DSS continues to use a realistic approach to meet the expectations of the county by requesting main priorities first. Mr. Hillman discussed the budget requests presented to the County Manager during the preliminary meeting and stated work to finalize the budget will continue.

**Budget Reports**-During the meeting, Ruth Lockman presented 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter Fiscal Year 2025-2026 projection reports. Line items having the most impact due to over or under spending were discussed. Ms. Lockman noted DSS is still going through the county single audit. Unexpended costs were explained. Also, social worker overtime pay continues to be monitored. Lapsed salaries of budgeted positions that are vacant were noted. Ms. Lockman stated if Board members had any questions, to please contact her at any time regarding the budget.

**Statistical Reports**-Matthew Hillman stated Lincoln County DSS statistical data continues to look strong. On Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) Child Welfare Assessment Goal One, DSS did fall short of the goal of 95 percent of all screened in reports being initiated within required time frames. Children Services Program Manager Mendie Kelly gave a detailed explanation of the number of reports screened in for assessment including those initiated timely and untimely with diligent efforts noted on all. Delays in initiation included an interference/obstruction petition filed on one of the reports and an assist sent to another county initiated out of time frame by that county. Ms. Kelley noted interpretation of policy is looked at differently by each county. On several of the immediate reports received, Lincoln County DSS would not have screened them as immediate responses, instead each would have been given 72-hour time frames. Lincoln County Child Protective Services' focus is to keep children safe and will always err on the side of caution.

**Other**-Matthew Hillman expressed Lincoln County DSS would like to invite Board members to the agency Christmas breakfast on Friday, December 12, 2025 at 8:30 a.m. Board members noted the Social Services Board Meeting for December 2025 could be held right after the event. All Board members agreed the Social Services Board Meeting will be on December 12, 2025 at 10:00 a.m. The Social Services Board Meeting for November will be on the regular scheduled date of Tuesday, November 25, 2025 at 1:30 p.m.

County Manager Davin Madden stated he would like to commend Director Matthew Hillman, Deputy Director Kelley Miles, and Business Manager Ruth Lockman on their well-organized, thorough, prepared pre-budget presentation. Mr. Madden noted he would like to thank Lincoln County DSS for being well-prepared each year.

Matthew Hillman acknowledged appreciation to both Davin Madden and Megan Gilbert for being a part of the Board meeting held today.


**Closed Session**-No Closed Session needed.

**Date of Next Meeting**-Tuesday, November 25, 2025 at 1:30 p.m.

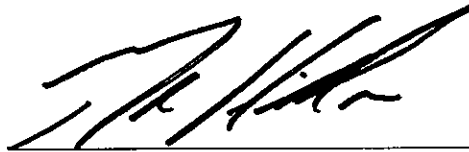
Motion to adjourn by Jill Eaddy, second by Mike Devine, with all members in favor.

This meeting adjourned at 2:20 p.m.

**Date Minutes Approved**-November 25, 2025



Alex Patton, Chairperson



Matthew Hillman, Director

Respectfully Submitted:



Denise S. Dula, Designated Clerk  
Social Services Board

Cc: file copy