

Kent County Department of Social Services
Advisory Board Meeting Minutes
September 21, 2020

Present: Kevin Karpowicz, Beverly Birkmire, Olythea Hunley, Shelly Neal-Edwards, Charlotte Pots, William Washington, Tracey Williams, Caitlin Gartland and Jen Cole

Absent: Bob Jacobs and David May

Presentation: KCCAC Project Summary - Rachel Boyle, she provided a powerpoint presentation. Jen to send to the Board the links in the presentation that is additional information about the project.

Chairperson's Report:

- Approval of minutes from July 20, 2020. Motion to approve was made by William Washington and 2nd by Beverly Birkmire. All were in favor.

□ **Kent County CARES Foundation**

- Website Development - Dr. Karpowicz stated the website exists, however, it needs development. Dr. Karpowicz and Rachel are the current administrators. He has suggested hiring a web developer to complete the project. He proposed looking into possible local resources for grant funding for this project. Rachel will contact Queen Anne's county for information on pricing and Dr. Karpowicz will contact Beth Evertt of United Way and Jean Yeager from Mid Shore to get an idea of how much their re-designs cost.
- United Way Volunteer Award for Kent County - Shelley Heller, Kent County Administrator was awarded the 2020 Volunteer Award from United Way, Shelley is a huge advocate for KCDSS and the services we provide to the county.
- Kent County Goes Purple - Beverly shared the press release with the committee. This year the month long event is on a much smaller scale due to COVID. The committee was able to utilize WCTR, the high school radio station, and facebook to share their PSA's. Kent County Prevention also provided virtual narcan training.
- MASSB Nominations for Board Members - MASSB is looking for nominees to fill the President and Vice President board officers. If you are interested in becoming a nominee please contact Shelly. Shelly will also send the duties of both officers to the Advisory Board members.

□ **Director's Report:**

- **Divisional Performance Report** – August was reviewed by attending members. Child Support collections and arrears continue to increase due to tax returns and stimulus payments. Staff in this division are returning to court for child support cases. FIA is having trouble compiling active cases due to case workers processing statewide. Only 20% of their cases are Kent County residence and the rest are throughout the state. The number of cases are expected to increase once the moratorium is lifted September 30th. Customers will have 45 to 90 days to apply for assistance with utilities, housing and other services. Supervisors are to report to DHS how many staff are available per day, most caseworkers are processing 18 to 25 applications per day. The statewide processing for counties will be permanent. FIA is also learning a new processing system, Eligibility and Enrollment. Kent, Frederick and Washington counties will be pilot programs to be rolled out on October 12, 2020. This should make processing a bit easier and help staff follow up with Kent County customers as the redetermination interviews are done over the phone every 6 months. Staff encourage customers to call the main office if they are having trouble, the front desk is covered daily and staff continue to rotate throughout the week. Child Welfare Services has 6 children in placement and 5 adult guardians. Three 3 tested positive for covid, two are fully recovered and one is in rehabilitation to regain her strength.
- **Updates for KCDSS & State of Maryland** – KCDSS staff continue to telework since March 13, 2020. Staff, especially FIA Staff are in the office on a rotation basis to answer the telephones, get mail, etc.
 - In FIA, the waivers for face to face requirements for certain programs ended at the end of

August. Staff continue to do telephone interviews but have to allow customers to make an appointment to complete their applications. FIA continues to work very hard on the “Statewide Processing Model.” All workers are processing cases from all over the State of Maryland. Kent County DSS will be participating as a pilot for the Eligibility and Enrollment (E&E) system. Kick Off conference call was held on August 31st. Training has begun now and the Go-Live will be in October. Summer SNAP- has been approved and all eligible families received their benefits in one lump sum for June, July and August. August was Child Support Awareness month. Lindsay Blume was recognized for KC for her exceptional work she has done during this pandemic. Child Support staff have begun telephone interviews for the establishment of new cases and modifications. In the Services Division, they went “Live” with their new system called CJAMS at the end of July. Staff have begun face to face visits for out of home and in home services. The CFSR “on-site” virtually was held on September 14 and 15. Shelly will share the results with the Advisory Committee when they are received. In the Administrative Division, KC is scheduled to have an upgraded phone system, VOIP by the end of September. We have a day porter every day in each office from 9am-3pm to ensure the safety of the staff and customers. With all of the computer system upgrades and transitioning to a new system, the LAN Admin has been extremely busy.

➤ **KCDSS Space Utilization Exercise**

- Each LDSS had to submit a “Space Utilization Assessment. The Director with the 4 AD’s assisted in the preparation of this. This was to look at the space and how we could down size. Each LDSS had to submit a “KCDSS Response to COVID-19” report. This captured what the agency did to ensure the safety of everyone. This addressed all 4 divisions and how we all implemented new procedures, etc.
- KCDSS Customer Service Excellence Award - Keesha Emory our front window staff person was nominated and awarded the 2020 Excellence Award.

➤ **Other**

- **Motion to Adjourn:** With no additional business at hand, a motion to adjourn at 4:40 pm. Motion carried by unanimous vote.

□ The next meeting will be held Monday, October 19, 2020 at 3:30pm via Google Meet.

Respectfully submitted,
Jen Cole
Executive Assistant