

**Kent County Department of Social Services
Advisory Board Meeting Minutes
May 15, 2023**

Present: Beverly Birkmire, Vienna Walker, Porita Turner, Jen Cole, Tom Herz, Catherine Boyer-Sterling and Shelly Neal-Edwards

Absent: Caitlan Gartland and Commissioner Ronnie Fithian

Funding Request: Martie Lively requested \$300 for an adult guardian for clothing and personal hygiene items. Motion to approve by Catherine and 2nd by Tom, all in favor. Caitlan voted yes by proxy. Second request for \$200 for promotional items for Elder Abuse Awareness Day. Services will be setting up a table at Peoples Bank to bring awareness to financial exploitation of the elderly. Tom suggested asking the Town Counsel if Services could set up a table at the local Farmers Market on a Saturday in June. Council meeting June 3th @ 6:20pm. Motion to approve by Catherine and 2nd by Tom, all in favor. Caitlan voted yes by proxy.

Chairperson's Report:

- Approval of minutes from April 17, 2023.
- **Review of Spring Musical** - Consider moving the date to early March. Location and space were perfect. Reach out to other singing groups. Better Advertising. (Advertised in LMB, Economic Development, Chestertown Happenings) Look at WCTR, Chestertown Spy, Tidewater Trader. Possible other fundraiser using Washington College teams (Pat Nuejent) KCHS Service Learning Hours coach (Shonique Comegys). Car wash, bakesale, etc.
- **Recruitment** - Beverly has reached out to Linwood Lively for possible board membership. May possibly attend the June meeting.
- Tom reports the Governor will be in Chestertown June 2nd touring with Shelly Heller.
- **SFY 2024 Activity Schedule** - Bd members reviewed the activity schedule. Suggestion for Sheriff Hickman to attend the July meeting for Kent Goes Purple info and introduce Board Members. Tom Herz suggested having the person in charge of the Farmers Market attend the Sept bd mtg and discuss the partnership with FIA. Will need to find a presentation for May 2024.

Director's Report:

- **The Divisional Performance Report** – Child Support is on target with a slight increase due to tax collections. Services have 2 children that have returned to their families. May have voluntary placement . FIA numbers have reduced due to income increase which closes cases. We have had an increase in energy assistance requests due to the ending of funding.
- **Staffing Update** - Jen was promoted to Human Resources, recruitment for her replacement will begin. Interviews for the front desk and OHEP positions will take place on May 18th. .
- **Secretary Raefel Lopez visit** - Secretary Lopez visited Kent County DSS May 9th. Staff met with him in the conference room which gave the opportunity to ask questions.
- **Employee Recognition Day** - The Governor proclaimed May 10th celebration for Employee Appreciation week. AD's cooked lunch for staff and arranged for Isiah's Ice Cream truck for a special treat.
- **SummeSummer Snap** - Shelly will meet with the commissioners tomorrow to request additional funding for the summer snap program. DHS did not include Kent County in funding for summer break. In the past Kent families received \$100 per child and targeted 256 children.
- **Agency Outreach**- Staff attended the Community Baby Shower, plan to attend Mental Health Awareness Day at KCHS, Potter's House Health Fair at Calvert Heights May 20th.

The next meeting will be held on Monday, June 20th at 3:30pm. The committee will be meeting in person in the Child Support Conference Room.

Respectfully submitted,
Jen Cole, Executive Assistant