

**Wake County Human Services Board
Meeting Minutes
September 24, 2020**

Board Members Present:

Fiorella Horna
Deborah Lawson
John Myhre
Dr. John Perry
Ann Rollins
Frank Eagles
Stephanie Treadway
Angie Welsh
Commissioner James West
McKinley Wooten

Guests Present:

Sam Hershey

Staff Members Present:

Commissioner Vickie Adamson
Darryl Blevins
Caroline Harper
Leah Holdren
Brittany Hunt
Commissioner Sig Hutchinson
Christopher Kippes
Suzanne LeDoyen
Heather Miranda
Ken Murphy
Dr. Nicole Mushonga
Derwick Paige
Toni Pedroza
Paige Rosemond
Dr. Joseph Threadcraft

Call to Order

Chair Ms. Angie Welsh called the meeting to order at 7:35 A.M.

Reflections

(Presented by Mr. McKinley Wooten)

Mr. McKinley Wooten shared words from the late Ruth Bader Ginsburg, an Associate Justice of the Supreme Court who passed September 18th, 2020. When asked how she would like to be remembered, Justice Ginsburg replied, “[As] someone who used whatever talent she had to do her work to the very best of her ability. And to help repair tears in her society, to make things a little better through the use of whatever ability she has. To do something, as my colleague David Souter would say, outside myself. Because I’ve gotten much more satisfaction for the things that I’ve done for which I was not paid.” Mr. Wooten noted that as the Board does its work, the tears in Wake County should be acknowledged in order to make the County a better place.

Approval of Minutes

Chair Ms. Angie Welsh asked for a motion to approve the August 27th meeting minutes. There was a motion by Mr. McKinley Wooten and Ms. Ann Rollins seconded to accept both minutes. The minutes were unanimously approved.

Next Board Meeting – October 22, 2020

Treasurers Report

(Presented by Chair, Ms. Angie Welsh)

Chair Ms. Angie Welsh reported that the current balance of the Board fund is \$4,630.92. This reflects the donation made by the Human Services Board to the foster youth graduating high school.

Ms. Paige Rosemond, Child Welfare Division Director, asked the Board to consider a donation to assist with the activity center walls and artwork for Child Welfare visitation rooms. Recently, all the visitation rooms for Child Welfare were remodeled to be more family-centered and welcoming to visitors and children alike. This includes two family settings and a separate room for infants and toddlers. In addition, there are now separate rooms for school-aged children as well as for adolescents. While the remodels have been a success, the walls are mostly bare.

These centers and walls help facilitate conversations between foster youth and their families in hopes of prompting healing for familial bonds.

A proposal was made to donate \$1,000.00 to assist with artwork and the center walls in general. There was a motion by Mr. Frank Eagles and Mr. John Myhre seconded the motion. This proposal was unanimously accepted.

Ad Hoc Nominating Committee Update

(Presented by Vice Chair, Dr. John Perry)

Chair Ms. Angie Welsh began this update by noting three Board members would be fulfilling their term limits by November 2020. In addition, two Board members – Dr. Randy Marsh and Ms. Margaret Raynor – had recently resigned. Before this, positions were already open for Board members. It is with even greater urgency, then, that the Board is seeking new members.

Dr. John Perry, Chair of the Ad Hoc Committee and Vice Chair of the Human Services Board, provided an update for the current Board member search. As of December 2020, the Board will effectively have ten open member slots to fill. These member slots are as follows:

1. Consumer of Human Services
2. Consumer of Human Services
3. Consumer of Human Services
4. Psychiatrist
5. Optometrist
6. Dentist
7. Psychologist
8. Registered Nurse
9. General Public
10. Pharmacist

The “Consumer of Human Services” are residents who have used Human Services programs. There are potential interested candidates, but attention is needed to make sure the Board has enough members.

The Board briefly discussed the requirements for members. Ms. Ann Rollins stated that she would join Dr. Perry’s Committee to further discuss and collaborate on identifying potential members.

Request for Human Services Board Officer Nominations

(Presented by Chair, Ms. Angie Welsh)

Chair Ms. Angie Welsh reviewed the procedures for Human Services Board Officer elections, which will take place at the October 22nd Human Services Board meeting. The duties for Chair, Vice Chair, and Treasurer were briefly described.

Review of Wake County Human Services Board Operating Procedures – GOV. BRD 100 [Accreditation Benchmark #34.1 and 34.2]

(Presented by Chair, Ms. Angie Welsh)

Chair Ms. Angie Welsh asked for a review of the Board Operating Procedures. She noted that there was one recommendation from the Regional Networks Committee. Mr. Darryl Blevins, Director of the Eastern Regional Center, spoke on behalf of Ms. Annemarie Maiorano, Deputy Director of Operations. Mr. Blevins asked for Board representative Mr. Frank Eagles to make the recommendation. Said recommendation was to remove the standing committee status from the Regional Networks Committee. The requirements to be a standing committee of the Board would limit rather than assist the Regional Networks Committee. However, the Regional Networks Committee would still be included in Committee updates to the full Board every meeting to encourage collaboration between the Board and the Committee.

Currently, as the Board Operating Procedures are written, the Regional Networks Committee was only a standing committee insofar as its inclusion on the organizational chart of the Human Services Board. Thus, the recommendation is to remove the Regional Networks Committee from this chart (and, thereby, the Board Operating Procedures altogether).

Ms. Fiorella Horna also noted that Appendix B of the Board Operating Procedures did not contain any language reflective of the need for virtual meetings. With the pandemic causing the majority of meetings to move away from face-to-face, the language may be seen as outdated.

Ms. Angie Welsh noted that the Board members have reviewed the policy recommendation for the Regional Networks Committee and asked for a motion to accept this change to the policy. Mr. John Myhre motioned and Commissioner James West seconded. The Board members voted unanimously to accept this change.

The issue brought forth by Ms. Horna will be considered and language will be added and presented again at a future Board meeting for review.

Review of Wake County Human Services Board Policy on Consumer and Community Input – Board Policy 300 2.3 [Accreditation Benchmark #38.3]

(Presented by Chair, Ms. Angie Welsh)

As with the “Board Operating Procedures,” the Board discussed the implication of lacking language for virtual meetings in the Board Policy on Consumer and Community Input. The issue brought forth will be considered and language will be added and presented again at a future Board meeting for review.

Chair Ms. Angie Welsh noted that the Board members have reviewed the policy and asked for a motion to accept the policy with the suggested edit. Ms. Ann Rollins motioned and Mr. McKinley Wooten seconded. The Board members voted unanimously to accept this report with the suggested edit.

2020 Infant Mortality Workgroup Report

(Presented by Ms. Suzanne LeDoyen)

Ms. Suzanne LeDoyen, Maternal and Child Health Section Manager – Public Health Division, presented the 2020 Infant Mortality Workgroup Report to the Board. This included an update on the Improving Community Outcomes for Maternal and Child Health (ICO4MCH) Grant.

Infant mortality is the death of an infant before his or her first birthday. African-American infants born or residing in Wake County are four times more likely to die than White infants with a rate of 12.3 deaths per 1,000 births in 2018 compared to 3.2 deaths per 1,000 births for Whites. In response to this disparity, Wake County launched a new workgroup in June 2019 titled Reducing the Infant Mortality Gap for African-American Babies. The Wake County Board of County Commissioners charged this group with assessing existing services and programs. They were also tasked with identifying gaps in order to develop a comprehensive plan to support health and thriving babies and mothers. The workgroup met six times over seven months. Wake County Commissioner Jessica Holmes and Dr. Michelle Bucknor, a pediatrician and Chief Medical Officer for United Healthcare, co-chaired the workgroup. A link to the full report from the workgroup is linked here:

www.wakegov.com/humanservices/family/maternal/Documents/2020%20Infant%20Mortality%20Workgroup%20Report%20WEB.pdf

The workgroup prioritized six focus areas to address racial inequities in infant mortality. These are as follows:

- Home visiting
- Racial equity
- Safe sleep
- Prenatal care
- Preconception health
- Fathers

The workgroup was awarded the ICO4MCH Grant from the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services (NCDHHS). Established in 2015, the grant provides financial assistance to local health departments to improve birth outcomes, reduce infant mortality, and improve health among children aged 0 to 5. There is a strong emphasis placed on health equity and disparities in the grant. The funding amount was \$975,000.00 for two years.

The grant will allow for a number of staff members, including a Project Administrator, two Nurses, and two Community Health Outreach Workers. The Project Administrator, in particular, will oversee the entire grant. A half-time Administrator will also be hired. The ICO4MCH Grant has three aims: improved birth outcomes, reduced infant mortality, and improved health status of children aged 0 to 5. Evidence-based strategies for these aims have been planned and include Reproductive Life Planning (RLP), additional public lactation rooms, and newborn home visiting. Ms. LeDoyen further clarified that the two Nurses being added were in addition to eight others already established.

El Centro Hispano COVID-19 Latino Outreach Update

(Presented by Ms. Fiorella Horna)

Ms. Fiorella Horna noted that El Centro Hispano had recently published a video (<https://www.facebook.com/elCentroHispanoNC/videos/760190224826377>) to educate the community on COVID-19. The video was first released online through Facebook and will be making its way to Latino radio stations in the area. Ultimately, it will be played in local grocery stores for further dissemination of the COVID-19 guidelines. This is in hopes of spreading the information as far as possible to the community.

Community outreach has extended to food as groceries themselves may be hard to obtain, especially fresh. Transportation is a separate issue with its own challenges. Individuals in the community may not have transportation needed to travel and purchase items. And when it comes to seeking treatment should they test positive for COVID-19, patients may ride to the hospital by ambulance but may not be returned this way. This presents a need for safe, reliable transportation. Partnerships with El Centro continue to grow and expand opportunities to COVID-19 testing as well as general outreach on COVID-19.

Board members discussed different ways community outreach was being conducted and how best to reach residents to educate them on the dangers of the pandemic.

Committee Chairs Update

(Presented by Mr. John Myhre, Dr. Randy Marsh, and Mr. Frank Eagles)

Mr. John Myhre, Co-chair of the Public Health Committee, shared that the September 2020 meeting was a success. The meeting included discussions about COVID-19 and flu vaccinations as well as the changing nature of the COVID-19 response by Wake County staff. The Emergency Operations Center (EOC) would be effectively closing at the end of September 2020. In its place, staff would be working and responding to COVID-19 under the guidance of Public Health.

Ms. Angie Welsh provided the update for the Social Services Committee. Committee members received an update about Live Well Wake and discussed how best to support this work. The GOLD Coalition was also discussed.

Due to time limitations, Mr. Frank Eagles provided the following report to be included in the Board's minutes for the Regional Networks Committee.

The Eastern Regional Center (ERC) staff continue to host virtual monthly meetings with their Community Advocacy Committee (CAC) as well as their partner groups. This allows them to share resources and update the community on new or developing services. The ERC continues to provide limited Clinic Services with over 800 patients being served since June 11, 2020. Early voting will take place at ERC from October 15th through October 31st. Social and Economic Vitality (SEV) staff are meeting virtually with new and existing ERC area partners to gain insight into existing services and connect providers with other non-profits and relevant resources.

The Northern Regional Center (NRC) is offering limited lobby and drive-thru services. In September, the NRC Food Security Team was awarded just over \$30,000 in C.A.R.E.S. funding to expand its food security initiatives. A primary use of these funds will be to deliver food directly to more vulnerable communities in Wake Forest, Rolesville, and north Raleigh. Early voting will take place at NRC from October 15th through October 31st.

The Southern Regional Center (SRC) continues to provide limited lobby services and limited public computer use. In the Western Regional Center (WRC), the Food Security Action Group continues its food distribution initiative. From September through December 2020, these sites will continue as four "huddles" or Neighborhood Access Points with two in Apex and two in Cary. The "huddles" will work with local pantries to distribute food and other resources every Friday and Saturday. The WRC Food Security Action Group received more than \$10,000 in community donations and almost \$150,000 in grant funds. Currently, the WRC remains closed to the public.

At Departure Drive Human Services Center (formally Millbrook Human Services Center), staff continue to host virtual monthly CAC meetings to share resources and update members on issues affecting the County. New partnerships were added to address Food Security in the area of Departure Drive.

Human Services Director's Report

(Presented by Ms. Toni Pedroza, Dr. Nicole Mushonga, Ms. Heather Miranda, and Mr. Derwick Paige)

Ms. Toni Pedroza, Deputy Director of Social Services, shared that the County is now in Fiscal Year (FY) 2022 budget season. These internal conversations are done while acknowledging that it is impossible, especially in the face of the pandemic, to predict revenues or expenses. Even post-COVID-19, Human Services will likely still face an increase in applications to services due to the rise in poverty, the loss of jobs, and the vulnerable populations. Human Services was also celebrating the hiring of Ms. Nicole Ifill, who is now the Accreditation and Quality Assurance Coordinator. In other news, applications for recertification of Medicaid are increasing as well as applications for Food and Nutrition Services (FNS).

Dr. Nicole Mushonga, Assistant Physician Director and Epidemiology Program Director, shared that Wake County had just over 17,000 COVID-19 cases. This is a rate of about 156 per 10,000 residents. The past two weeks have given hopeful results with decreasing trends in the number of cases and positivity percentage. Mid-July and late August saw spikes with university and college clusters, but the downward trend is encouraging.

Ms. Heather Miranda, Clinical Operations Director, reminded the Board that COVID-19 Mass Testing was still taking place at the Wake County Sunnybrook Human Services Building every day of the week except Wednesdays and Sundays. Approximately 303 tests are conducted each day. Mr. Christopher Kippes, Public Health Division Director, is working to identify a static site that will be a more appropriate response location for Mass Testing as well as the eventual COVID-19 vaccinations. Services are still offered at Sunnybrook and the Eastern Regional Center (ERC). There is a notable increase – by 100% - for requests for STD treatment. This is being discussed and evaluated as most visits are still being conducted by telehealth. When COVID-19 hit the nation in March 2020, there was a 4300% increase in telehealth. This has slightly declined since. In addition, the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Child (WIC) grant that allowed staff to work remotely has been extended one month past the COVID-19 health emergency. This is a relief for staff who were originally facing the end of the grant and more in-person meetings.

In other news, the Flu Clinic has been running for County employees. The first week, there were 183 vaccinations given. The second week, over two hundred vaccinations were administered. Flu Clinics for the community are being planned. In another effort to assist the youngest of the community, Public Health will be rescheduling dental buses to visit Regional Centers in the month of October. This will allow children to receive preventative dental care.

Mr. Derwick Paige, Chief Community Vitality Officer, reminded the Board that the Assessment Center for the Director of Human Services position search would be held during the second week of October 2020.

Environmental Services Director's Report

(Presented by Dr. Joseph Threadcraft)

Dr. Joseph Threadcraft, Director of Environmental Services, briefly reviewed the Environmental Services' response to the pandemic. Dr. Jennifer Federico, Animal Services Director, and her staff had implemented response to emergency calls only at the very beginning of the pandemic. This was done to most effectively manage pet intake while lowering the need for euthanasia. Mr. Andre Pierce's Environmental Health and Safety staff have been the primary COVID-19 responders from Environmental Services. This is in addition to regular inspections that protect residents' health. The Comprehensive Solid Waste Action Plan is being updated by the Solid Waste Management Director, Mr. John Roberson. Mr. Roberson also recently spoke to the Board of Commissioners in response to complaints by residents and elected officials from Holly Springs in regards to waste management odors. An overview of the progress made to-date was presented as well as an outline for future mitigation strategies. Mr. Michael Orbon and his team in Water Quality are working to improve the permit experience among the community. A subcommittee is being established to further discuss and shape permit applications moving

forward. Dr. Sharon Foster (Public Health Committee Community Member) and Mr. John Myhre will serve on this subcommittee and Ms. Ann Rollins will serve as an alternate.

Mr. Ken Murphy, Deputy County Attorney, provided an update to the Board about an appeal that would likely be coming before the Board. This appeal deals with an interpretation of the septic regulations of the County. Board members would be asked to serve on the Appeal Panel, likely within the first few weeks of October.

Public Comments

- None

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 9:35 A.M.

Board Chair's Signature: Angie C. Welch Date: 11/4/2020

Respectfully submitted by Ms. Brittany Hunt