

**Wake County Human Services Board
Meeting Minutes
November 19, 2020**

Board Members Present:

Ed Buchan
Fiorella Horna
Dr. John Perry
Ann Rollins
Frank Eagles
Commissioner James West
McKinley Wooten

Guests Present:

Ms. Tonya Minggia
Mr. John Myhre
Ms. Stephanie Treadway
Dr. Mary Faye Whisler

Staff Members Present:

Commissioner Vickie Adamson
Caroline Harper
Leah Holdren
Brittany Hunt
Christopher Kippes
Heather Miranda
Ken Murphy
Dr. Nicole Mushonga
Derwick Paige
Toni Pedroza
Paige Rosemond
Liz Scott
Dr. Joseph Threadcraft

Call to Order

Dr. John Perry called the meeting to order at 7:32 A.M. Dr. Perry introduced Dr. Mary Faye Whisler, who was applying to fulfill the Human Services Board Pharmacist slot. Dr. Whisler is a registered pharmacist in both North Carolina and Ohio and currently resides in Cary. She is currently retired and met previous Board member Mr. John Myhre at the Wake County Pharmaceutical Association.

Dr. Perry then introduced Ms. Tonya Minggia, Health Services Administrator for the Wake County Detention Center. Ms. Minggia is a Registered Nurse (RN) and provides administrative assistance to all on-site services at the Sheriff's Office. A liaison with the jail administration, Ms. Minggia is responsible for hiring and training of medical staff and personnel management. Ms. Minggia explained that she also has experience with hospital nursing, geriatric nursing, and emergency care. She served three years with the United States Army. The Wake County Board of Commissioners (BOC) voted earlier in November to make Ms. Minggia a member of the Human Services Board. She will be sworn in during the December 2020 Board meeting.

Dr. Perry then noted that the Board had received, reviewed, and discussed Dr. Whisler's application. He asked for a motion to recommend Dr. Whisler to the Board of Commissioners to fulfill the vacant Pharmacist slot. Mr. Frank Eagles motioned and Ms. Ann Rollins seconded. The Board voted unanimously to recommend Dr. Whisler for the Human Services Board.

Approval of Minutes

Dr. John Perry asked for a motion to approve the October 22nd meeting minutes. There was a motion by Ms. Ann Rollins and Mr. McKinley Wooten seconded to accept both minutes. The minutes were unanimously approved.

Next Board Meeting – December 17th, 2020

Human Services Board Officers Oath of Office

(Presented by Mr. Kenneth Murphy)

Mr. Kenneth Murphy administered the Oath of Office to:

Chair Dr. John Perry

Vice Chair Ms. Ann Rollins

Treasurer Mr. McKinley Wooten

Treasurers Report

(Presented by Treasurer, Mr. McKinley Wooten)

Treasurer Mr. McKinley Wooten reported that there was an addition of \$600 from the previous month's reported \$3,630.92. This addition represented stipends from Board members that had selected to donate the money back to the Board fund. The current balance of the Board fund is \$4,230.92.

Ad Hoc Nominating Committee Update and Discussion

(Presented by Chair, Dr. John Perry)

Dr. John Perry, Human Services Board Chair, gave an update on the Ad Hoc Nominating Committee. He shared the member list for 2020-2021 Board members, noting that nine members were currently on the Board. With Ms. Tonya Minggia, this would be increasing to ten with nine open vacancies in the following slots:

1. Psychologist
2. Pharmacist
3. Dentist
4. Optometrist
5. Psychiatrist
6. Consumer Representative
7. Consumer Representative
8. Consumer Representative
9. General Public Representative

Dr. Perry thanked the members of the Ad Hoc Nominating Committee (Commissioner James West, Commissioner Vickie Adamson, and Ms. Ann Rollins) for their continued work and

collaboration. Commissioner West noted that diversity was at the forefront of the Committee's discussions in order to have a Board that was a representation of all of Wake County.

Committee Chairs Update

(Presented by Ms. Ann Rollins and Mr. Frank Eagles)

Ms. Ann Rollins, Chair of the Public Health Committee, noted that the November Public Health Committee meeting would be held the next day on November 20th. The Committee would be looking forward to an introduction to Ms. Leslie Beckstrom, Health Promotion and Disease Prevention Section Manager. The Committee will also hear a COVID-19 update as well as an update from Mr. Paul Koh, Assistant Superintendent of Student Support Services for the Wake County Public School System, about how COVID-19 is impacting life at school. The Committee itself will continue to discuss its priorities and goals.

There was no Social Services Committee update.

Mr. Frank Eagles provided a detailed report on the Regional Networks Committee. From center to center:

1. Millbrook/Departure Human Services Center: Community Advocacy Committee (CAC) members partnered with community organizations, police, and faith leaders for the "Back to School After Party" event at Spring Forest. This initiative was part of the CAC communications and marketing objective to promote the new location of the Center.
2. Crosby Garfield/Social and Economic Vitality (SEV): SEV has rebranded the life-coaching program (previously called Middle Class Express (MCE)). It has been renamed MINDSET. This is a 10-week group coaching program designed to aid participants in creating a life plan that navigates the social determinants of health leading to self-sufficiency. SEV recently applied for the NC IDEA grant. The funding would go toward an Eastern Wake County Entrepreneurial Hub proposal to help expand the support for entrepreneurship in Knightdale, Wendell, and Zebulon. In other news, over 150 residents, partners, and staff participated in the three-day "Community Weekend" with virtual programming and drive-thru food and resource distribution at Crosby (Southeast Raleigh) and the Carver Center (Eastern Wake County).
3. Western Human Services Center: Held a virtual volunteers celebration acknowledging all three towns, local restaurants, more than twenty grassroots organizations, and over 400 volunteers who have been delivering and distributing food since March. The Food Security Action Group is distributing 1,200 boxes of produce weekly and 1,500 boxes of shelf-stable boxes or bags monthly at twenty sites between Apex, Cary, Morrisville, Holly Springs, and West Central Raleigh. At the Center itself, a lobby space for the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infant, and Children (WIC) was renovated to add Medicaid and Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) Caseworkers. A Customer Service Specialist expansion position has also been posted.
4. Northern Regional Center (NRC): Continues to partner with Wake County Public Schools to serve meals via a drive-thru, contactless system. October included the addition of 177 produce boxes, 100 backpack buddies' shelf-stable food items, and 157 activity kits provided through partnership with the Wake Forest Library. The Northern

Community Good Security Team met to develop a plan for ensuring those with needs receive Thanksgiving meals. The towns of Wake Forest and Rolesville, various faith-based partners, local food pantries, and the NRC collectively developed a plan that will provide for 2,000 turkeys and meals to local citizens with needs. The plan features pick-up and delivery options. COVID-19 precautions have been recognized and are built within the plan. Meanwhile, the Oasis Health and Wellness Center International, an agency operated by a CAC member, Ms. Bettie Murchison, has been extremely active in Northern Wake County. Through numerous partnerships, they have provided 5,700 fresh produce boxes to at-risk families, 660 socks, and hundreds of masks and other personal protective equipment (PPE) to those with needs.

5. Southern Regional Center (SRC): Was partially opened on August 24th with the Administration/Operations Team providing limited services in the lobby. These services included revenue, birth certificates, scanning and general assistance with application, and NCWorks Employment. Since re-opening, the SRC has been able to assist approximately 1200 residents. The SRC also served as a polling site on Election Day. Over three hundred residents voted in person. This is down considerably from previous years as approximately 70% of the precinct had already voted prior to Election Day. The SRC is not an early voting site due to the size of its conference rooms being too small. Advance Community Health continues to provide weekly COVID-19 testing at the SRC for four hours every Tuesday. During the month of October, over two hundred tests were administered.
6. Eastern Regional Center (ERC): Has served over 1200 patients since its June re-opening. Over 2,000 boxes of shelf-stable food and produce has been distributed from Eastern Region Community Hubs in October. Unlike SRC, ERC was an early voting site. Over 9,000 citizens turned out for early voting and the ERC is currently awaiting numbers from Election Day.

Environmental Services Director's Report

(Presented by Dr. Joseph Threadcraft)

Dr. Joseph Threadcraft, Director of Environmental Services, noted that his report would focus on Environmental Health and Safety, which is overseen by Mr. Andre Pierce. Mr. Pierce has put forth an initiative to resume nursing home inspections. In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, Environmental Services discontinued routine inspections at nursing homes in March 2020 hoping to slow foot traffic and allow the residents to properly quarantine. This was especially important given the vulnerability of nursing home residents to COVID-19. Environmental Health and Communicable Disease Nurses have been involved with Strike Team response to nursing homes.

This response has been coordinated by Mr. Pierce in collaboration with Human Resources staff as well as a legal advisory team. Mr. Pierce has also produced a quarterly report that notes operation facilities net increase was only 0.004%. This is the smallest increase in recent years. Inspections and re-inspections in facilities decreased by 11.5%. This decrease occurred due to the COVID-19 response and has looked more like pre-COVID-19 numbers as of September 2020 when staff returned to work from the Emergency Operations Center (EOC). Permit sales remained steady while 46 pools were added (3.7% increase). There are 1,300 public swimming

pools in Wake County. Temporary festivals and, most notably, the North Carolina State Fair were all cancelled due to the ongoing pandemic.

Finally, Environmental Services received a notification from the North Carolina Public Water Supply Branch of a positive fecal result in Fuquay-Varina. This has been further isolated to four taps. Samples have been taken for re-testing and results should be arriving very shortly.

Human Services Director's Report

(Presented by Ms. Toni Pedroza, Mr. Derwick Paige, Dr. Nicole Mushonga, Mr. Christopher Kippes, Ms. Heather Miranda, Ms. Liz Scott, and Ms. Paige Rosemond)

Ms. Toni Pedroza, Deputy Director of Social Services, began by informing the Board of the County's status in case number for Medicaid and Food and Nutrition Services (FNS) participation as of September 2020. When compared to cases from September 2019, numbers are notably up. There are approximately 8,000 extra cases for Medicaid. FNS participation is up by 19,300 cases. Medicaid Transformation is also quickly approaching – in approximately seven months, anywhere from 1.6 to 1.8 million individuals across North Carolina will be moving to Medicaid Managed Care. These individuals will be selecting from five plans. During the October 2020 Board meeting, Ms. Pedroza had touched on the upcoming specialized Medicaid Managed Care system for foster children being offered through North Carolina. Staff from Wake County Human Services have since been invited to sit on the design team for this plan to make their needs known to the State. This is in light of the State selecting only one of the plans from the new Medicaid Managed Care to apply to all foster children across North Carolina. Ms. Ann Rollins inquired about a future report on seniors in the County and Ms. Liz Scott agreed that this was still planned as a future presentation to the Human Services Board.

On the search for the new Human Services Director, Mr. Derwick Paige, Chief Community Vitality Officer, confirmed that the County Manager, Mr. David Ellis, did make an offer to one of the candidates. This offer has been accepted and an announcement will soon be made to celebrate the onboarding of the new Human Services Director. While a name could not be shared during the time of the meeting, Mr. Paige noted that the candidate was especially well suited for the position and would be attending meetings and meeting with executive members of staff prior to her formal arrival to the County in mid-January 2021. Ms. Pedroza noted that staff were already crafting an orientation notebook for the new Director in order to allow them a reference guide to several aspects of the County (i.e., organization charts, budget information, Board member profiles, etc.).

Ms. Heather Miranda, Clinical Operations Director, noted that the clinics were also preparing for Medicaid Transformation. The Sunnybrook Human Services Building received a visit from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) on behalf of the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) in order to tour the facilities. Representatives were impressed with the location as well as the technology and processes put in place for employees to work remotely. The visit was also used to discuss the possibility of WIC participants placing orders online for food. These online orders would be similar to those done in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). Ms. Miranda also shared that clinics

had begun working with Resolve to Save Lives in order to have rapid testing made available for COVID-19. This would be done hand-in-hand with the typical nasal (PCR) COVID-19 test.

There was a brief discussion about the uptick in testing as the holidays approach. As noted, COVID-19 testing records an individual's status at a set point in time. So if the goal was to be "safe" for Thanksgiving, this could not be guaranteed. Dr. Nicole Mushonga, Assistant Physician Director and Epidemiology Program Director, then went on to provide a detailed COVID-19 update. Both the State and Wake County track four metrics of the pandemic in order to evaluate opportunities for re-opening as well as the community's health. These metrics are COVID-like illnesses, total number of confirmed cases, positivity rate, and hospitalizations. All four of these have been on the rise. COVID-like illnesses are described as cases that enter the emergency room (ER) with COVID-like symptoms. For this measurement, the County saw 33 individuals the first week November. As of November 15th, this number had grown to 64, nearly doubling. Daily case averages are anywhere from 200 to 350. Most recent days have seen a steady trend of over 300 cases each day. Over the past two weeks, the positivity rate has increased from 4.4% to 5.7% (as of November 16th). Hospitalizations, in turn, have seen a 66% increase. Because of this increased volume of need, staff have begun discussing how the County's response to COVID-19 could change to address community needs.

Ms. Ann Rollins shared that there was a smartphone application from the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services (NCDHHS) that promoted an opt-in notification system allowing individuals to anonymously share a positive COVID-19 test result. It will also notify individuals who have spent too much time near an individual with positive test results. The application is free to use. More information about the application can be found here: [NC DHHS COVID-19: SlowCOVIDNC](#)

Ms. Fiorella Horna brought up the case of individuals who received a positive COVID-19 test result, quarantined for fourteen days, and subsequently tested positive yet again after their quarantine was complete. Dr. Mushonga cautioned that those who tested positive once may still receive positive test results though they are not actively contagious. This could occur for weeks or months past when they were actively infected with COVID-19. The best advice would be to follow the initial quarantine and, if there are no further symptoms, move forward with vigilance. Additional tests are not needed unless the individual continues to display COVID-19 symptoms. Contact Tracers assist with these needs as they follow-up with positive cases and evaluate symptoms and subsequent steps. Dr. Mushonga said that it would take a ninety-day gap between the first positive COVID-19 test and the next for representatives to regard it as a new infection and not as a continuation of the original positive.

Mr. Christopher Kippes, Public Health Division Director, informed the Board of the hire of Ms. Leslie Beckstrom, Health Promotion and Disease Prevention Section Manager. Ms. Beckstrom is the replacement to Ms. Sonya Reid. She will be formally introduced to the Public Health Committee at their November meeting. Additionally, work continues to transition COVID-19 testing to the Departure Drive/Millbrook Human Services Center as a fixed location. Testing at the new location will begin December 1st, 2020. Vaccination planning is also at the forefront with vaccines quickly coming into sight.

Ms. Liz Scott, Economic Services Division Director, provided a brief update about the programs being funded through the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES Act). Ninety-six hundred applications have been accepted for utilities assistance. This helps individuals who have fallen behind on payments for their water, gas, or power bills directly due to COVID-19. So far, almost 4,000 of those applications have been processed. Over a million dollars has been issued to utility companies to cover these bills. Wake Supports is another program funded through the CARES Act that specifically addresses childcare for those whose children are in virtual learning. The Wake Supports applications have only been open for a couple of weeks, but six hundred applications have been submitted already. All of these applications must be processed prior to the end of December 2020 unless CARES Act funds are extended.

Ms. Paige Rosemond, Child Welfare Division Director, shared that the Child Welfare Community Outreach Sponsorship Team (COST) received a National Association of Counties (NACo) 2020 Achievement Award. This group coordinates, distributes, and tracks donations. Established in 2018, the group has since distributed 200 Easter baskets, 280 bookbags, 100 Thanksgiving meals to families, and Christmas sponsorship for more than 1,400 children with over 7,000 gifts. COST has rallied around community partnership to meet the needs and wants of foster care children. Child Welfare will be meeting with the Wake County Public School System (WCPSS) later in the week due to an increase in truancy reports. These are children who have not been engaged with virtual learning. Typically, statutes require the WCPSS to take several steps to assess truancy. These requirements have been waived due to the pandemic and the virtual aspect of the classroom, meaning that the reports to Child Welfare have grown exponentially. This can skew data as truancy, in and of itself, is not child abuse or neglect. Otherwise, reports continue to rise in opposition to the lows seen during the month of April into early summer. While school reports are not necessarily high, reports from law enforcement and other entities is increasing.

There was a brief discussion about the Child Fatality Task Force and an appointee from the Board being assigned to the team. Discussion will follow as an appointee is determined and the process for this appointment is formalized.

Public Comments

- Mr. John Myhre thanked the Human Services Board as well as the County staff for his experience serving with the Board over the past eight years.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 9:17 A.M.



Board Chair's Signature: _____ **Date:** 12/17/2020

Respectfully submitted by Ms. Brittany Hunt