

The Northampton County Board of Social Services met in the Board Room of the Social Services Building on December 19, 2023. The meeting was called to order under Virginia code §2.2-3708.2 at 11:00 am. Present were Chairman, Spencer Murray, Board Member, Ernest Smith, and Mozella Francis, Director.

Mr. Smith moved to approve the minutes of the November 21, 2023, meeting and Mr. Murray seconded the motion. There was no public comment or correspondence.

The Board was provided with a copy of the FY2024 budget. Ms. Francis reviewed budget line 849, Medicaid Expansion/Staff and Operations, of which the State has allotted approximately three years ago. This budget line currently does not carry a local match. Ms. Francis will continue to monitor. The state has made known that at some point, localities will have to provide the local match to continue pulling down funding.

Budget line 855, Staff and Operations, is steadily increasing especially during the month of September due to a three month pay period as well, during October and November due to the hiring of a new staff member and Emergency staff worker. Ms. Francis continued that retirement cost is a significant impact to overall personnel cost.

Ms. Francis is preparing for insurance to increase by approximately 10% for this upcoming fiscal year which has been the historical trend. Ms. Francis is working closely with the county should this be the case

this year. The goal is always how to decrease the impact to the staff. Discussion ensued amongst the board members.

Ms. Francis continued under another budget line for Public Assistance indicating that we are mid-year and will need to return monies that we feel we will not utilize. We can, however, request funds going forward. Under budget line 829, Families and Preservation, we have requested additional funding from the State. Discussion ensued amongst the Board members.

Ms. Francis provided an update on the FY-2025 budget. She advised that she will be presenting the budget to the County's director of Finance and the County Administrator which includes an increase of 10-15% of what was presented in FY 2024. If the proposed budget will be required to be presented to the county board of supervisors for explanation, the Social Services board will be in attendance along with Ms. Francis for support.

Ms. Francis updated the Board on the outcome of the Salvation Army Angel Tree and Toy Closet program. The program was a wonderful success this year and almost 300 children were provided gifts and well needed necessities. We are very proud of the outcome and the tremendous community's involvement and so very thankful for their support.

Ms. Francis purchased an application called Translation Live to support translation for our clients with over 120 languages and support translation real time as well, teleworking.

The Board was presented with the Agency Program Updates. Ms. Francis updated that there are no significant changes in our programs however we would like to highlight that we are at the final phase of our adoptions and waiting for a scheduled court date and appearance to finalize the process.

Mr. Murray presented the final review of Ms. Francis' 2023 EPPE (Agency Employee Evaluation) in conjunction with the accolades from the board members as follows:

*“Director Francis is a dedicated professional who possesses all the necessary management skills to perform her duties at an outstanding professional level. She has excellent relations with the local and state leaders which gives her the credibility to advocate for Northampton County specifically and for the DSS mission statewide. Mozella communicates effectively with the DSS Board and brings helpful ideas and suggestions to make the operation fairer and more effective when strict enforcement is required.*

*Northampton County, and the State of Virginia, are fortunate to have director Francis as a leader and a major contributor to the community's quality of life.”*

On a motion by Mr. Smith the board went into Closed Session in accordance with Section 2.1-344 of the code of Virginia, as amended, for the purpose of discussion or consideration of employment, assignment, appointment, promotion, performance, demotion, salaries, disciplining appointees, or employees of any public body.

The board returned to Open Session.

On a roll call vote certifying to the best of each member's knowledge, only public matters exempted from the public meeting and in the original motion were discussed. The vote was Chairman Murray, yes, Board Member Smith, yes.

The next Board of Directors meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, January 23, 2023, at 11:00 a.m.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:59 p.m.

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Spencer Murray, Chairman  
December 19, 2023,

Attested by \_\_\_\_\_

Mozella F. Francis  
Director