**Cherokee County Department of Social Services**

**Board Meeting**

**MEETING MINUTES**

January 17, 2024

1. **Call to Order**

The regular meeting of the Cherokee County Department of Social Services was duly hold on January 17,2024 at 12:03 P.M. at 4800 West Highway 64, Murphy, N.C. 28906.

**Present were:**

Dixie Carter, Member

Bo Phillips, Member

James Jallah, Member

**Staff present were:**

Amanda McGee, Director

Member, Bo Phillips called the meeting to order at 12:03 P.M., and Brandy Clonts, Clerk to the Board recorded the minutes.

1. **DSS Program Update**
   * Medicaid Expansion

* 11,000 Families participating in Cherokee County
* 40% of our county population, which is an increase from 30%
* There was a suspected increase of 1,500, but the increase is already at 2,000.
* Each caseworker has around 600 cases.
* There are two vacancies for IMC II at this time, but if hired, current caseworkers do not have time to train with the current caseload.
* Most applications received are through Federal Market Place.
* There have been a lot of inaccuracies in applications due to being completed by insurance brokers.
* The State is stating to not be concerned about the inaccuracies as we will not be responsible for paybacks.
* The Board Report was provided to Board Members showing the increase in applications since 2023.
* The allowance provided from the state has not been used. Currently $42,000 is available.
* There will a proposal sent to the County Manager, Randy Wiggins requesting to give the money to Income Maintenance Employees in the form of bonuses.
* Amanda will send the proposal to the Board Members prior to sending to the county commissioner for approval.
* Overtime for current IMC employees has already been approved.

1. **Child Welfare** 
   * CFSR - Federal Review was received and was emailed to all Board Members
   * Results were almost perfect with only two areas that showed “In need of Improvement”
     1. Federal Plan does not agree with the State Plan of requirements …
     2. An adoption didn’t happen within a Federal Time Framed due to court delayed.
     3. Everything else in review had strength ratings.
   * Two paid interns started on January 16, 2024 from Western Carolina University. They are two of three paid internships approved for this year. The interns will work up to 400 hours. They will work with each unit to better understand the scope of Child Welfare. The first intern worked first as an IMC II and transferred to the paid internship program, and has since graduated and working in CPS.
2. **Child Fatality / Child Protection Team Up-Date**
   * Dixie Carter and Bo Phillips sit on the Child Fatality Team. The staff are very pleased and feel supported.
   * There will be a report showing trends for Child Fatality that will be submitted to the County Commissioners and Health Board.
   * One trend is teen driver accidents that occur after dark and usually involve alcohol.
   * The second trend is toddler and infant deaths that including co-sleeping
   * Two campaigns will be organized. One activity will be for safe activities for teens. The second campaign will be for safe sleeping for toddler and infants, and will include the dangers of co-sleeping.
   * DSS will provide community wide education regarding co-sleeping, along with keeping Pack and Plays available for families in need.
   * There will be a meeting that will provide information regarding autopsy reports and what they mean.
3. **Not on Agenda**
   * Budget for next fiscal year will be worked on over the next two months
   * Included in budget will be increase for IMC program, and Program Manager for the IMC department
   * Currently over time has been approved to try to keep up with the Medicaid expansion. IMC employees are allowed to work four – 10-hour days, along with work from home under certain circumstances. If employee is working from home they had to sign policy and abide by policy to continue work from home if needed.
   * Board will start meeting at a different time due to one board member starting employment.
4. **Adjourn**

Meeting was adjourned at 12:40 P.M. with Mr. Jallah making a motion to adjourn, Mrs. Carter seconding the motion, with all in favor.