

**MIDDLESEX COUNTY BOARD OF SOCIAL SERVICES
SEPTEMBER 12, 2024 MEETING MINUTES**

Chairperson Barbara Blackwell opened the meeting by reading a statement of compliance with the Open Public Meetings Act of 1975.

Roll Call was taken. Board Members Attending were: Chairperson Blackwell, Vice Chairperson Sandra Coleman, Janelle Rodriguez, Commissioner Claribel Azcona-Barber, and Commissioner Leslie Koppel (joined the meeting at 10:07 a.m.) A quorum was established.

A motion was made by Ms. Coleman, seconded by Commissioner Azcona-Barber, approving the Minutes of the previous meeting as distributed. The motion was unanimously adopted.

A motion was made by Ms. Coleman, seconded by Commissioner Azcona-Barber, ratifying transactions accomplished by direction and authority of the Director from August 8, 2024 to September 12, 2024. The motion was unanimously adopted.

A motion was made by Commissioner Azcona-Barber, seconded by Janelle Rodriguez, approving the Treasurer's Financial Report. The motion was unanimously adopted.

A motion was made by Commissioner Azcona-Barber, seconded by Janelle Rodriguez, authorizing the requisitioning of funds. The motion was unanimously adopted.

A motion was made by Commissioner Azcona-Barber, seconded by Janelle Rodriguez, approving the payment of bills as listed. The motion was unanimously adopted.

COMMUNICATIONS:

Each Board member was sent a copy of correspondence received by the Board since the August 8, 2024 Meeting of the Board, including Certifications from the Civil Service Commission for the following titles: Social Service Technician; Social Worker.

OLD BUSINESS:

Copies of the State Statistics Report for the month of June 2024 were submitted to the Board for review. These reports are issued by the Division of Family Development and provide statistics on the NJSNAP, TANF, GA and Child Support programs. The report shows the WFNJ/TANF caseload in Middlesex County was 637 families (1,654 individuals); the SNAP food stamps caseload was 31,016 households (56,146 individuals); and 723 General Assistance cases were active.

Staff reports on New Applications in August 2024 showed 336 TANF applications; 608 GA applications, and 1,683 applications for SNAP. SNAP recertifications totaled 2,140 in August. In August our receptionists assisted 3,337 individuals, with 465 of them visiting the Perth Amboy office. During the month, our call center answered 11,127 calls.

A copy of the Medicaid Redetermination Report for the month of August 2024 was submitted to the Board for review. The report shows a total caseload of 43,590 individuals. Approximately 40% of our redeterminations are overdue.

Commissioner Leslie Koppel joined the meeting at 10:07 a.m.

NEW BUSINESS:

Public Comment

Jennifer Johnson, representing CWA, Local 1032, said the Agency is understaffed and there is a need for additional recruiting.

A motion was made by Ms. Blackwell to discuss personnel matters, client reimbursements and protective payees, workers compensation and attorney-client privileged communications in closed session. A roll-call vote was taken. The motion was unanimously adopted.

A motion was made by Ms. Coleman, seconded by Commissioner Azcona-Barber, to go into Closed Session. The motion was unanimously adopted.

RETURN TO PUBLIC SESSION

RESOLUTIONS (CONSENT AGENDA)

#24-060 Approval of payrolls from September 16, 2024 to September 30, 2024, and from October 1, 2024 to October 15, 2024

#24-061 Confirm overtime payroll from August 1, 2024 to August 31, 2024

#24-062 Approve the purchase of 250 Nitro Pro Software Licenses from SHI for a one (1) year period commencing September 18, 2024 in the amount of \$25,382.50 (New Jersey Cooperative Purchasing Alliance)

#24-063 Approve the purchase of a maintenance agreement for the visitor pass management system from SHI for a one (1) year period commencing November 1, 2024 in the amount of \$778.99 (New Jersey Cooperative Purchasing Alliance)

#24-064 Accept the proposal of SHI in the amount of \$1,974.42 to provide an extended service agreement for a high-speed scanner for a period of one (1) year, retroactive to August 2, 2024 (New Jersey Cooperative Purchasing Alliance)

#24-065 Approval to submit grant application to New Jersey Department of Community Affairs for Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP)

#24-066 Approval to submit grant application to New Jersey Department of Community Affairs for Universal Service Fund (USF) program

#24-067 Approval of Personnel Report

REQUESTS FOR LEAVES OF ABSENCE

Bautista, Jesenia	Human Services Specialist 4, Bilingual, S/E	08/08/24 – 09/11/24
Kershaw, Amanda A.	Social Services Technician	08/16/24 – 09/16/24
Tejeda, Jenny	Social Services Technician, Bilingual, S/E	08/12/24 – 09/04/24
Chaprin, Halyna Y.	Senior Building Services Worker	10/01/24 – 11/18/24
Saranczak, Jessica	Social Services Technician	08/19/24 – 10/03/24

PERMANENT APPOINTMENTS

Janocko, Marissa	Human Services Aide	\$42,920	09/06/24
Malena, Issel E.	Human Services Aide, Bilingual, S/E	\$42,920	09/06/24
Colon Gonzalez, Aldo	Clerk, Bilingual, S/E	\$39,015	09/06/24
Restivo, Sabrina	Social Worker	\$63,705	09/06/24
Khalil, Christine	Social Worker	\$72,972	09/06/24

PROMOTION, RECLASSIFICATION, TITLE, SALARY CHANGE

Bersani, Stacey	Administrative Analyst, Provisional	\$132,463	09/06/24
Tharrington, LaToya Joy	Human Services Specialist 3, Provisional	\$79,150	09/10/24

RESIGNATIONS

Nunez, Selenny	Human Services Aide, Bilingual, S/E	08/15/24
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TERMINATIONS

Cruz, Cristina M.	Human Services Aide, Temporary	08/09/24
Marshall, McKenzie Olivia	Human Services Aide, Temporary	08/09/24

Ms. Blackwell asked if any Board Member had any questions on the resolutions. There were none.

A motion was made by Ms. Coleman, seconded by Commissioner Koppel, to adopt the Consent Agenda, consisting of Resolutions #24-060 through #24-067. The motion was unanimously approved.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Charles Kratovil, of New Brunswick and editor of New Brunswick Today, asked who the Board Attorney is. Mr. Trent responded he is and gave the name of his law firm. Mr. Kratovil asked if the Board was aware of any issues with EBT cards. Director Harkay said there is an issue nationwide in which SNAP benefits are being skimmed either from the card itself or from the account. She said protocols are in place, and the Federal Government is looking at ways to improve security for EBT cards.

Deirdre Newsom, a member of the public, asked about the process of applying for Emergency Assistance and Temporary Rental Assistance. Ms. Harkay said such individuals must be receiving SSI, GA or TANF cash assistance.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the Board, a motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Ms. Coleman and seconded by Janelle Rodriguez. The motion was unanimously approved.

The meeting adjourned at 10:32 AM.

Respectfully submitted,



Dara Harkay, Director

