

**Charlottesville**  
**Social Services**  
**Advisory Board**

City of Charlottesville, City Hall Annex, P.O. Box 911,  
Charlottesville, VA 22902



**Kathryn Gallanosa, Vice Chair**

Board Members:

Lisa Brown  
Shayla Givens  
Sena Magill  
Rebekah Menning  
Janet Morrow  
LD Perry  
Judith Zeitler

**MINUTES**

Charlottesville Department of Social Services  
Advisory Board

October 26, 2020

**Board Members Present:** Kathryn Gallanosa, Sena Magill, Rebekah Menning, Janet Morrow, Judith Zeitler

**Board Members Absent:** Lisa Brown, Shayla Givens, LD Perry

**Staff Members Present:** Diane Kuknyo, Laura Morris, Autumn Scott

The online meeting was called to order at 12:06 p.m.

**Public Comment:**

None

**Approval of Meeting Minutes:**

The September meeting minutes were approved as submitted.

**Members' Report:**

None

**Chair's Report:**

None

**Update on Chair & Vice Chair Nominations:**

The board is looking to appoint a new Chair and Vice Chair. The Chair of the board is responsible for presenting the annual report to City Council and leading board meetings. Board members interested in applying should contact Ms. Kuknyo directly.

**Director's Report:**

**Board Vacancies:** Ms. Kuknyo shared that the board has three vacancies. The agency would like to recruit community members that are currently or have previously been served by social services. Ms. Kuknyo asked board members to encourage anyone with this experience to apply by Friday, December 11.

**Annual Holiday Luncheon:** The department is unable to host an annual holiday luncheon for staff due to COVID-19 safety concerns. Instead, the agency is looking to host a virtual lunchtime meeting in December to celebrate the holidays. A \$15 gift certificate will be awarded to staff pending approval from the Interim City Manager to use to purchase lunch for the meeting. Ms. Kuknyo also invited board members to attend the celebration.

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Annual Report to City Council: This year, the board will present a brief annual report to City Council that will discuss agency metrics, new state regulations, and how the department has adapted work processes due to COVID-19. Ms. Morrow volunteered to present the report.

Ms. Kuknyo shared information that the Chief of Benefit Programs, Mary Jane Skidmore, gathered for the report. Ms. Skidmore reported that staff began teleworking full-time after the City Manager required all non-essential personnel to stay home starting on March 17. Many department staff members are continuing to work from home unless business needs require them to be in the office. Laptops and agency cell phones were issued to around 20 workers to help manage client phone calls. As in-person client visits were no longer allowed, the Benefits division adapted the process of how documents are received and handled in the office. The department now has a permanent virtual fax process and a new way to handle client mail. Ms. Skidmore also noted that the Benefits division has seen a large increase in workload due to the COVID-19 pandemic. From March to August, workers were not required by the state to complete case reviews. Since this grace period has ended, workers are facing an increased workload due to the number of reviews that are now due along with ongoing application and renewal processing.

In her report, Jenny Jones, Chief of Family Services, noted that during the pandemic, the Service division has focused on solving how to meet the client's needs while protecting staff. Workers were still required to do monthly visits for prevention and foster care cases. The visits have been a mix of virtual and socially distanced in-person meetings. However, the Virginia Department of Social Services now requires all visits to be in-person. There has been a significant decrease in Adult Protective Services and Child Protective Services referrals. There is concern that the decrease is due to cases not being reported as a result of the pandemic. The agency believes that when schools reopen and normal activities resume, there will be a sharp increase in reports. Ms. Kuknyo also shared that after an interview with the Casey Foundation, the agency was noted for its high rate of kinship placement.

This information will be included in the annual report to City Council. The department's Leadership Team will work to finalize the draft report. The board would like to present the annual report at the first City Council meeting in December.

**The next board meeting is scheduled for Monday, November 23, 2020 and will be held virtually using Zoom to promote social distancing.**

The meeting was adjourned at 12:56 p.m.

Recorded by:  
Autumn Scott