

**MINUTES OF MEETING
BOARD OF HUMAN SERVICES
HELD
January 18, 2012**

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:

Tiena Fletcher, Chair
Frank Auman, Vice Chair
Monica Walters, Secretary
Scott Johnson
Randy Smith
Jack Williams

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:

Lisa Alexander
Sandra Smith
Ann White

Ms. Tiena Fletcher, Chair, called the Department of Human Services' (DHS) Board meeting to order at 1:45 p.m., January 18, 2012. Ms. Fletcher welcomed and thanked everyone for attending.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A motion was made and seconded that the minutes of the December 14, 2011 meeting be approved. There being no further discussion, the motion passed.

COMMISSIONER'S REPORT

Commissioner Clyde L. Reese, III welcomed everyone to the meeting and said there were three items he wanted to mention.

1. In December, 2011, the Board was given an overview of financial restructuring. In some ways our financial house is in disorder and the goal is to bring about clarity. The primary reason there are audits is the concept of too many findings of prior year fund balance and the need to understand where to start every year to work through the financial processes. The firm of Nichols Cauley, a CPA firm headquartered in Warner Robins, Georgia, has been engaged to help in this process. They have been used in the past few years across the health agencies to help with the restructuring of the old Department of Human Resources (DHR) and the movement of entities into the Department of Community Health (DCH). They also helped with the movement of the Department of Public Health (DPH) and the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities in becoming their own agency, so they are familiar with State government. A procurement isn't needed because they are a CPA firm that is exempt under the Department of Administrative Services' (DOAS) rules for this type of work. They will provide four people who will assist us on how to clean up the prior year fund balance issue. The Commissioner is hopeful that at the end of this engagement, there will be a time limit that will help with cost and we can begin to go forward and get our financial house in order, therefore having audits with fewer findings. The ultimate goal is to have a completely clean audit. We are hopeful that the process will be completed in four to six months. We have staff that could do this but it would be better time wise to bring in someone who will devote a 100% effort toward this. The Board will receive progress updates.
2. Commissioner Reese then introduced a new staff member, Dr. Alka Aneja. In past months, he has expressed the need for a Medical Director and the money was found to fund the position. Dr. Aneja was selected through an interview process and has been with us since the first of the year. She is a psychiatrist by training and most recently with Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore. She's very accomplished and we're very pleased that she's here. She is going to provide a lot of help primarily in DFCS and also with Aging Services to give a clinical point of view. One of the issues that Commissioner Reese became interested in early last year was the issue of the use of psychotropic drugs among children in foster care. He stated that his numbers may be a little off but

there are some statistics that state over 60% of the children in foster care are on one or more psychotropic medication prescriptions, wherein the percentage in the general population is much less. From a layman's point of view he doesn't understand why there is that broad discrepancy. There are troubled children in State custody but to the extent that using chemical prescriptions to restrain and not to treat -- it's something we need to take a strong look at and determine if we're actually providing the right treatment for kids that move from placement to placement. They may go from one county to another and have different physicians, and sometimes getting additional prescriptions. There are stories of some kids on 4, 5, and 6 strong medications, both antipsychotic and psychotropic. The Commissioner has asked Dr. Aneja, as one of her first priorities, to take a look at this. He stated that a group was doing a study last year as a sort of pilot and had hoped for more progress, but now that Dr. Aneja is here, more focus can be given to that area. She'll be working on other projects but this will be one of the main focuses. After she's settled and have met with the various players, she will come before the Board to discuss some of the things she's uncovered and ways that she can help. This is a positive development for her to be here.

2. Commissioner Reese will make the budget presentation tomorrow morning to the Joint Committees of the House and Senate Appropriations Committee on the FY12 and FY13 Amended Budgets. The State's revenues are on the upswing and the Department has come out better this year than in previous years. The Governor has made it clear he intends to remain fiscally conservative and has program additions and appropriations throughout the entirety of State government. He's very much interested in building up the financial reserves that have been depleted in the past few years. But that being said our reductions this year are much less than in previous years. Those details will be presented to the Appropriations Committees tomorrow morning.
3. In December Commissioner Reese was asked to give his thoughts on the possible synergies that might exist with moving the Vocational Rehabilitation Services that are currently housed in the Department of Labor (DOL), to the DHR. He stated that in the year 2000 and prior to that back to the 1970's, this program was housed in the old DHR. It was moved over to the DOL. Governor Deal proposed in his budget to move those services back to the new DHS, a much different department than the old DHR and Commissioner Reese feels that if the focus of Vocational Rehabilitation Services is to put people with developmental disabilities including those of vision impaired back to work, there are tremendous synergies of what we already do here with TANF, in many respects a back to work program, a time limited benefit assistance program with the focus on work participation. In Child Support we find work for non-custodial parents so they can fulfill their responsibilities. We do work and job training with children who are aging out of foster care; 18 to 21 year olds so that they can become self-sufficient. It's in our mission and vision that we help strengthen families to become independent and self-sufficient. We also do work in the Division of Aging with elderly people providing them the ability to stay in their homes and community by being able to continue to work. So we have a lot of synergy with these programs. In anticipation of making this move, a transition team has been put in place. The goal is to have the move completed effective

July 1, 2012. Commissioner Reese has met and spoken with Commissioner Mark Butler of the DOL and he has pledged his participation and the support of his department and staff to help accomplish this. There has been an outreach to the advocacy community who work in this arena. They have been invited to participate in helping us accomplish this. Commissioner Reese has asked Keith Horton, who is currently the Director of Child Support Services, to lead the transition team. The transition team will meet every Monday at 2:00 pm. The Commissioner then asked Mr. Horton to give details of the transition efforts that have begun and that will continue for the next few months.

Mr. Horton stated he was honored that Commissioner Reese had asked him to lead the transition team. There have already been successful meetings with the advocates. He echoed the Commissioner in saying the goal is to make this move as efficient as possible without causing any disruption to the services that Vocational Rehabilitation has with their customers. He stressed the importance, among other things, of everyone at Vocational Rehabilitation and the DOL being treated with respect and dignity because it is difficult to move from one organization to another.

Finally, he stated the goal was to be transparent with this move and that Commissioner Reese has invited the advocacy community to come to the meetings. The second transition team meeting was held yesterday and a representative from the DOL attended. Regular updates will be provided to all parties involved and to the Board members as well. Mr. Horton is looking forward to Vocational Rehabilitation coming on board with the DHS.

Commissioner Reese thanked Mr. Horton for the update. He mentioned that these services comprise five programs; there are two health care facilities in Warm Springs, Georgia that are well known; a long term acute care facility; an in-patient rehabilitation facility and an in-patient residential rehabilitation component for mainly 18 to 20 year olds --- there's a very large campus in Warm Springs. There's a program called Disability Adjudication Services and these are essentially folk who do eligibility determinations for social security disability. There is about 559 staff who work at the facility in Stone Mountain. There's a program called Georgia Business Enterprises for the Blind. There are two factories, one in Bainbridge and one in Griffin. They manufacture and sell goods to the public and government entities. They are entirely self-sufficient. They receive no state or federal dollars but they operate on the profits they receive from the sale of the goods they make. There's a program that helps the visually impaired establish snack shops and dining facilities and are primarily on government sites both local state and federal. Then there's the overall Vocational Rehabilitation Services so it's a total of about 2,000 people, a budget of about \$185,000,000, maybe around \$53,000,000 that's actual state dollars. He thinks that legislation will be introduced early next week after the General Assembly returns and the plan is to make the Vocational Rehabilitation Services a 5th program. At present there's DFCS, Aging, Child Support, Residential Child Care, so this would be a 5th program. It would be the second largest program after DFCS. The Department has had experience in managing an enterprise that spreads across the state and Vocational Rehabilitation Services themselves have 53 offices at various locations. The Commissioner feels that we have the leadership to move forward and run this program effectively. The Board will receive a progress report each month.

This concluded the Commissioner's report.

CHAIR'S REPORT

Ms. Tiena Fletcher said she was pleased to hear of the transition of the Vocational Rehabilitation Services to the DHS and that the Commissioner has chosen well in asking Keith Horton to help make this transition. She is excited about the enhanced transitions jobs grant in the partnering with Goodwill and is looking forward to the end results.

Ms. Fletcher welcomed Dr. Alka Aneja and is looking forward to the help she can provide with medical issues in the Department. The Department is making very good progress. She then asked if there were comments from the other Board members.

Board Member Jack Williams stated he is pleased that Vocational Rehabilitation is coming back home. These are outstanding programs with a great range of services. He echoed the Chair in saying that he could not think of a better person to head the transition team. He offered that a number of law students from Georgia State University who are in the healthcare clinic and do a lot for individuals in the Disability Adjudicative Services, would be happy, through their externship programs, to provide services for a program of this type. He would be happy to make that introduction if needed.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 2:05 p.m.

THE NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Board of Human Services will be Wednesday, February 15, 2012, Two Peachtree Street, N.W., Suite 29.250, Atlanta, Georgia 30303.

Monica Walters, Secretary

APPROVED:

Tiena Fletcher, Chair