



COUNTY OF SOMERSET DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

OFFICE OF OPERATIONS & PLANNING

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Planning Administrator
ZACHARY BERLINER

Mental Health Administrator
AFN Coordinator
MEG ISBITSKI

Addictions Services Director
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Aging & Disability Services
JOANNE FETZKO

Community Development
KIMBERLY COWART

One Stop Career Center
Juvenile Institutional Services
MONICA MULLIGAN

Richard Hall Community HWC
NICCI SPINAZZOLA

Rutgers Cooperative Extension
LISA ROTHENBURGER

Veterans Services
PETER NIEMIEC

Volunteer Services
WILLIAM F. CROSBY

Youth Services
LINDA M. PORCARO

HUMAN SERVICES ADVISORY COUNCIL

Wednesday, February 22, 2023 Meeting Minutes
Meeting held via Zoom

Council Members Present:

- Chair Mary Jane DiPaolo, Community Child Care Solutions
- Vice-Chair Pastor Tim Wolf, Pioneer Family Success Center
- Secretary Diann Robinson, Adult Day Center
- Joanne Kemp, Board of Social Services
- LuAnn Dias, Catholic Charities Diocese of Metuchen (CCDOM)
- Dr. Mark Avery, Zarephath Christian Church
- Michele Boronkas, Safe + Sound Somerset
- Michelle Dufour, Division of Child Protection and Permanency (DCP&P)
- Mike Frost, Director of the Department of Human Services
- Nicci Spinazzola, Richard Hall Community Health and Wellness Center
- Paul Grzella, The Greater Raritan Workforce Development Board (GRWDB)
- Rajni Chopra, Martin Luther King Youth Center (MLKYC)
- Richard Schumann, Family and Community Services (FCS)

Council Members Excused:

- Lucy Forgione, Bernards Township Health Department
- Nancy Good, Alternatives, Inc

Council Members Absent:

- David Walker, Visions and Pathways

Council Officials and Liaisons:

- Nelson Troche, New Jersey Department of Human Services (DHS)
- Paul Drake, Somerset County Board of County Commissioners
- Rick Hager, New Jersey Department of Children and Families (NJDCF)

Somerset County Department of Human Services (SCDHS) Staff:

- Coordinator Rheanah Johnson, Office of Operations and Planning (OAP)
- Angelica Sandi, Office of Operations and Planning (OAP)
- Antonietta Phelan, Office of Youth Services
- Ellen Russo, Office on Aging and Disability Services
- Jennifer Guyette, Office of Operations and Planning (OAP)

Kristy Soriano, Office of Youth Services
Meg Isbitski, Office of Operations and Planning (OAP)
Monica Mulligan, Juvenile Institution Services & Greater Raritan One Stop
Sandra Avellan, Office on Aging and Disability Services
Stephanie Billitz, Office of Operations and Planning (OAP)
Zachary Berliner, Office of Operations and Planning (OAP)

Guests:

Abbey Berberian, Community Food Bank of New Jersey
Brendan Ward, Big Brother Big Sister of New Jersey (BBBSNJ)
Cecilia Genao, Norwescap Career & Life Transition Center
Christina Martinkovic, The Learning Gate
Danielle Stanley, Community Food Bank of New Jersey
Daryn Plummer, Franklin Public Schools
Eric Meyer, Council on Compulsive Gambling on NJ
Jamie Gonzalez, Zufall Health Center
Jeff Phillips, Freedom Trail, Collaborative Support Programs of NJ
Mallory Dubuisson, Atlantic Adult Day Center
Maria Marnell, Hunterdon County Educational Services Commission
Nashlie Calderon, Central Jersey Family Health Consortium
Quiyon Peters, Franklin Public Schools
Reggie Rosarion, Tri County Care Management Organization (CMO)
Richard Novak, Rocky Hill Council Member
Steve Katz, Food Bank Network of Somerset County
Susan Bruder, NJ Department of Education

I. Call Meeting to Order & Introductions

Mary Jane DiPaolo called the meeting to order at 1:32 PM. A quorum was established.

II. Approval of the January 25, 2023, Minutes

Motion to approve the January 2023, meeting minutes was made by LuAnn Dias and seconded by Tim Wolf.
Motion carried.

III. Presentation – Community Food Bank of New Jersey- Danielle Stanley, Resource Access Manager

- CFBNJ's mission is to fight hunger and poverty in New Jersey by assisting those in need and seeking long-term solutions. We engage, educate, and empower all sectors of society in the battle.
- We serve 15 of New Jersey's 21 counties, moving food through our locations in Hillside and Egg Harbor Township.
- CFBNJ All-Inclusive Approach
 - Year-round access to healthy food
 - Our Child Nutrition Programs offer schools/after school programs/childcare centers well-balanced meals for the children + families they serve.
 - Influence healthy behaviors through nutrition education
 - Free Nutrition Education classes via NJ SNAP-Ed
 - Sustainable change
 - Policy, systems + environmental

- Caregiver + family resources
 - Our multi-lingual Resource Access Team provides onsite or virtual assistance with: SNAP applications, cash assistance applications, and other direct referrals.
- Resource Access
 - RA provides multilingual virtual or in-person information session to Partner’s community.
 - Screening event for interested applicants is scheduled. Application assistance via appointments or walk-ins in a community space.
- Visit www.cbfnj.org for more information.
- Danielle Stanley, Resource Access Manager dstanley@cbfnj.org

IV. Appointment of 2023 Secretary

Tim Wolf made the motion to nominate Diann Robinson as secretary. Mary Jane DiPaolo seconded the motion. Motion carried establishing Ms. Robinson as the SCHSAC secretary for the 2023 term.

**V. State and County Agency Reports
Board of Social Services - Joanne Kemp**

TANF	139
GA	209
Food Stamps	5,445
Medicaid	15,997
Temp Rental Assist	105
People Facing Homelessness	152

NJ FamilyCare/Medicaid is going to start re-determining members’ eligibility on April 1, 2023. Members will be notified by their County Board of Social Services. They have 60 days to send in their verification. Verification includes bank statements, income, where they live, social security cards and birth certificates for everyone in the family.

Division of Child Protection and Permanency (DCP&P) – Michelle DuFour

2023	January
Families	359 (69% intake cases)
Children	720
Children in Placement	39
Referral Type	
Child Protective Service Referrals	146
Child Welfare Referrals	22

Allegation Type	
Neglect	198
Physical Abuse	81
Sexual Abuse	10
Emotional Abuse	2

Ms. DuFour shared that currently the division has not been working with this volume of clients since March 2020. The volume of referrals for intake is higher and has been increasing. February is shaping up to be significant. Nelson Troche shared there are some significant trends across the state with an increase in the need for services especially in the southern counties. There is also a crisis in the shortages of frontline staff. There was some discussion on the ripple effects and the implications on access to housing.

Department of Children and Families (DCF) – Rick Hager

- DCF’s “New Jersey Youth Resource Spot” is an updated online set of resources for young people, addressing a number of areas to support youth, ages 14 to 21. This is the website: <https://www.nj.gov/njyrs>
- DCF’s Division on Women has their “culturally specific services” which include domestic and sexual violence prevention and supports as well as economic self-sufficiency and financial empowerment, on this webpage: <https://www.nj.gov/dcf/women/culturally-specific/>

Department of Human Services (DHS) – Nelson Troche

- The Temporary Emergency Supplemental Food Assistance Benefits will be concluding in March 2023. Participants will receive letters with the details. Additionally starting March 2023, all households eligible for SNAP will receive a minimum of \$95 monthly benefit. More information can be found by accessing the link <https://www.nj.gov/humanservices/njsnap/emergency/covid19/>
- DHS is working to provide pharmacies with Narcan. A list is being compiled and recommendations are being accepted.

County Commission Remarks- Paul Drake

- Acknowledged the issues with staffing and commended the work of the agencies around Somerset County.
- Discussed the Somerset County Department of Human Services Open House that took place on February 9, 2023.
 - The Open House was an event that provided information on the different councils and boards the County has to offer.

Human Services Director’s Report – Mike Frost

- On February 10, 2023, the Human Services County Director’s Association met with Commissioner Beyer and DCF. There was discussion on the school-based service change, the student support services plan and what is going to happen with the plan.
 - The Commissioner explained the hubs are conceptual and not brick and mortar.
 - There was also discussion on opiate settlement funds. Programming is already in place in Somerset County.

- General discussion on federal oversight of DCP&P which is now exiting with continued input from a state-wide body.
- Zufall opening of medical and dental suites in Richard Hall Health and Wellness Center is still solidifying some licensing. A ribbon cutting is scheduled for March 13, 2023.
- The County is continuing conversations with Bridgewater to continue the Community Police Alliance Program and formalize a shared service agreement.
- Meg Isbitski - shared Somerset County is getting on board with CIT training –a 40-hour mental health de-escalation training for police officers. The training exists to reduce negative and unnecessary use of force situations. Also, to prevent people from being incarcerated who need mental health treatment.
 - The 2nd Annual Stigma Free Conference will be on Friday, May 19, 2023, at Raritan Valley Community College. More information will be shared.
- Zachary Berliner- Community outreach van is projected to be rolled out this Spring. The County is looking for partners who want to do outreach in the community.
 - In the beginning stages of an outreach initiative to connect with immigrant communities. Requested suggestions for leaders and connections in the community.
- Commissioners have signed off on Non-Profit for Services and American Rescue Plan (ARP) projects for 2023. Allocation have been sent out.

Committee Reports

Executive/Advocacy Legislative Committee- Paul Grzella

- The committee discussed priorities and how many will be focused on this year.
- More information on some of the past priorities and further research.
- The goal is to come back to the council with suggestions.

Planning Committee- LuAnn Dias

- Focusing on the advocacy work needed to get credentialed licensed professionals their licenses in hand due to the 6-month delay.
- The committee is now discussing how the council can get involved in legislation to address some antiquated processes.
- Assemblyman Danielson has been connected to the NASW Legislative Committee to look at legislation to help fix the staffing crisis throughout New Jersey.

New Business- None

Agency Highlights/Announcements

- Tim Wolf – EmPoWER Somerset has Narcan available for free. Please contact Tim@empowersomerset.com
- Antonietta Phelan – The Office of Youth Services is hosting a Community in Connections Workshop on Friday, February 24, 2023, from 10 am – 11:30 on Youth and Human Trafficking. The presenter is Steven DeLuca from the New Jersey Coalition Against Human Trafficking.
- Mallory Dubuisson – Atlantic Adult Day Center is collaborating with the Alzheimer’s Association to offer education programs to the community. On March 9, 2023, there is a dementia education program in-person from 5:30 pm – 6:30pm.
- Paul Grzella – There are several job fairs coming up.
 - Hillsborough is hosting a fair on February 28, 2023, for Hillsborough residents and surrounding towns.

- A joint manufacturers job fair is being held on February 28, 2023, at 27 Warren Street, Somerville, NJ
- More information can be found on the following website www.theGRWDB.org

Motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Tim Wolf and seconded by Rajni Chopra. The meeting was adjourned at 2:46 PM.

The next meeting will be held on March 22, 2023, at 1:30 PM via Zoom. The link will be sent out a week prior via email.