



COUNTY OF SOMERSET DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

OFFICE OF OPERATIONS & PLANNING

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

Council Members Absent:

- David Walker, Visions and Pathways

Council Officials and Liaisons:

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)
- Ellen Russo, Office on Aging and Disability Services
- Henry Young, Office of Youth Services
- Jennifer Guyette, Office of Operations and Planning (OAP)
- Kim Cowart, Community Development
- Kristy Soriano, Office of Youth Services
- Lisa Federico, Office of Operations and Planning (OAP)

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:

Allison Reinking, Central Jersey Family Health Consortium
Andrea Strack, Legal Services of Northwest Jersey
Bob Uhrik, Rocky Hill Borough Mayor
Brendan Ward, Big Brother Big Sister of New Jersey (BBBSNJ)
Christina Martinkovic, The Learning Gate
James Parauda, Tri County Care Management Organization (CMO)
Jamie Gonzalez, Zufall Health Center
Mallory Dubuisson, Atlantic Adult Day Center
Maria Marnell, Hunterdon County Educational Services Commission
Nikki Bryant, Community Child Care Solutions
Reggie Rosarion, Tri County Care Management Organization (CMO)
Reina Garcia, Zufall Health Center
Steve Katz, Food Bank Network of Somerset County
Steve Nagel, HomeSharing, Inc.
Susan Bruder, NJ Department of Education

I. Call Meeting to Order & Introductions

Mary Jane DiPaolo called the meeting to order at 1:31 PM. A quorum was established.

II. Approval of the February 22, 2023, Minutes

Motion to approve the February 2023, meeting minutes was made by LuAnn Dias and seconded by Rajni Chopra. Motion carried.

III. Presentation – Atlantic Adult Day Center- Mallory Dubuisson

- The Atlantic Adult Day Center is a service offered by Atlantic Visiting Nurse. The Atlantic Adult Day Center, a social adult day program model, offers a warm and supervised environment for older adults to engage in a meaningful day filled with activity and socialization. Through a structured schedule and customized programming, the social, cognitive and personal care need of members are met.
- Since 1988, the warm and welcoming setting of the Atlantic Adult Day Center has been enhancing the quality of life for older adults who can benefit from socialization and supervision, including those with Alzheimer’s disease and dementia. Feel confident that the well-being, dignity and safety of your loved one is our highest priority.
- Activities
 - Art and cultural programs
 - Social and recreational activities
 - Music, pet and horticultural therapy › Daily exercise program
 - Lunch and snacks
- Financial assistance may be available through the County Respite Program and the New Jersey Adult Day Services Program for Persons with Alzheimer’s Disease or Related Dementia.

- Visit and Learn More
 - To schedule a visit and learn more about the benefits of adult day services, call 908-766-2310. We are open Monday-Friday from 8:00am-4:30pm.
 - 200 Mount Airy Road Basking Ridge, NJ 07920

IV. State and County Agency Reports

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

2023	February
Families	382 (72% intake cases)
Children	734
Children in Placement	36
Referral Type	
Child Protective Service Referrals	150
Child Welfare Referrals	27
Allegation Type	
Neglect	194
Physical Abuse	71
Sexual Abuse	24
Emotional Abuse	0

Community Development – Kim Cowart

- Somerset County held its annual Point in Time count on January 24, 2023. This is the annual survey that counts the number of people experiencing homelessness in Somerset County on one night of the year.
 - The number went up significantly from 217 people in 2022 to 332 people for 2023.
 - 90 of these people were reported by the board of social services.
 - The night of the count was a Code Blue night which mandates the board to provide mandatory housing for anyone who presents and says they are experiencing homelessness.
- The Continuum of Care Committee is recruiting for housing units for people experiencing homelessness in Somerset County. There are currently two units in Branchburg with about 13 apartments available. Eligible participants must be homeless by HUD’s definition.

Human Services Director’s Report – Mike Frost

- The Richard Hall and Zufall Health partnership ribbon cutting took place on March 13, 2023. NJDHS Commissioner Adelman and DHMAS Assistant Commissioner Mielke were in attendance.
- The Food Bank Network of Somerset County held a ribbon cutting on March 9, 2023.
- The Somerset County Department of Human Services in partnership with the Sheriff’s Department will be launching a mobile outreach van in the coming months.
- The last Human Service Director’s Association meeting with DHS reviewed the proposed DHS budget. A meaningful point is the waiving of the 28-day wait period for general assistance.

- The Somerset County budget has not passed yet but is in the final stages of development.
- The Somerset County Stigma Free Conference is scheduled for May 19th at Raritan Valley Community College.
- The Department is in the early stages of hosting the human services conference potentially in October 2023. The last one was in 2019.
- The advocacy licensing letter has been revised and will be sent to legislative liaisons.

State HSAC- Zachary Berliner

- The State HSAC meeting was held on March 3, 2023.
- Most of the meeting was regarding the improvement of 211. The state has provided funds for improvement of their digital interface including their website and data sharing.
 - 211 has been hosting a series of key informant and stakeholder user interviews.
 - If there are opportunities to participate the information will be shared to those interested.

Committee Reports

Planning Committee- Michele Boronkas

- In addition to contacting the licensing board, the committee is working on getting advocacy support around the licensing advocacy letter as a workforce issue. The more ears we can have on the issue and its impact can create awareness and will be greatly appreciated.

Membership Committee- Tim Wolf

- The committee will be focusing on fine tuning what the role of a community member would be in the HSAC.

New Business-

- **Resources and services available for de-transitioning youth- Mark Avery**
 - Mr. Avery shared there are great resources online for youth who want to de-transitioning medically but not a lot of services are available. He asked the council if they are aware of services and if there is openness to a committee looking into the issue.
 - Mr. Frost shared that from his vantage point, he has not heard of a significant demand for services of this kind, which does not indicate that there is not.
 - Ellen Russo shared that psychologically professionals would ethically provide support in the self-direction of the client.
 - Jaime Gonzalez shared part of the reason not a lot of services are available is because there is not much to do once someone decides to reverse effects of transitioning. If they are on hormone replacement therapy, once they stop, the body will naturally start reversing that itself. However, a medical professional would be involved. Unless there is a hormone issue or surgery that was completed.
 - A guest shared, there is a lot that goes into transitioning and the process is not easy to go through. There is a lot of steps that must be taken. Youth cannot medically transition and receive hormones under the age of 18 unless they have parental permission.
 - It was concluded that the existing services are available to support persons looking to transition and the council will not form a committee.

Agency Highlights/Announcements

- Ms. DiPaolo- shared childcare providers are paying based on enrollment as opposed to attendance. The DHS budget has proposed that childcare providers continue to do so for another year. The additional COVID funds being supplied for each child- \$300 additional per month full time and \$150

for part time- is also proposed to continue and be incorporated into the rate. In addition, they have not been collecting the copay and has been paying the full amount. The state is granting funds for providers to increase their infant space. There is a critical shortage of infant spaces, so this is an incentive. There are also some summer camp regulations.

- Jaime Gonzalez- shared Zufall Health has a vaccine clinic coming up at Franklin Middle School on Saturday, March 25, 2023, from 9 am – 3 pm and at the Bound Brook Presbyterian Church on April 7, 2023 from 4 pm – 7pm.
- Paul Grzella- The GRWDB just received funding for their annual summer youth employment program. This year there is funding for 80 slots (60 DOL and 20 Somerset County). The RFA was released this morning. Employers are needed. Students who participate can make \$3000 over an 8-week period.
 - On Saturday, May 6, 2023, from 11 am – 2 pm the GRWDB will be partnering with the Commission on the Status of Women to host a job fair with about 30 employers and agencies as well as a dress for success corner for women returning to work.
 - On Tuesday, May 16, 2023, the GRWDB will be returning to the Hindu Temple and Cultural Society in Bridgewater for the 2023 Greater Raritan Job Fair. Last year had over 100 employers.
- Rheanah Johnson- The March Human Services Academy is tomorrow, March 23, 2023, from 1:30 pm to 3 pm. The topic is Community Services for Persons with IDD. Chris Corvino, Executive Director of the Arc of Somerset County will be presenting.

Motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Paul Grzella and seconded Tim Wolf. The meeting was adjourned at 2:34 PM.

The next meeting will be held on April 26, 2023, at 1:30 PM in-person and via Zoom. The link will be sent out a week prior via email.