



COUNTY OF SOMERSET DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

OFFICE OF OPERATIONS & PLANNING

27 Warren Street • P.O. Box 3000
Somerville, New Jersey 08876-1262
(908) 704-6300 • Fax (908) 704-1629
HumanServices@co.somerset.nj.us
www.co.somerset.nj.us



Human Services Director
MICHAEL FROST

Planning Administrator
ZACHARY BERLINER

Mental Health Administrator
AFN Coordinator
MEG ISBITSKI

Addictions Services Director
LISA FEDERICO

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, June 28, 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
Michele Boronkas, Safe + Sound Somerset
Mike Frost, Director of the Department of Human Services
Nicci Spinazzola, Richard Hall Community Health and Wellness Center

Council Members Excused:

LuAnn Dias, Catholic Charities Diocese of Metuchen (CCDOM)
Lucy Forgione, Bernards Township Health Department
Dr. Mark Avery, Zarephath Christian Church
Michelle Dufour, Division of Child Protection and Permanency (DCP&P)
Nancy Good, Alternatives, Inc
Paul Grzella, The Greater Raritan Workforce Development Board (GRWDB)
Rajni Chopra, Martin Luther King Youth Center (MLKYC)

Council Members Absent:

David Walker, Visions and Pathways
Joanne Kemp, Board of Social Services
Richard Schumann, Family and Community Services (FCS)

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)
Dameon Stackhouse, Office of Operations and Planning (OAP)
Jan Goodman, Greater Raritan One-Stop
Ihinosen Akhagba, Intern Office of Operations and Planning (OAP)
Kristy Soriano, Office of Youth Services
Meg Isbitski, 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:

Andrea Strack, Legal Services of Northwest Jersey
Brian Rubenstein, Catholic Charities
Denise Kilby, Norwescap
Jaime Gonzalez, Zufall Health
James Parauda, Tri County CMO
Joanne Hala, United Way of Northern New Jersey
Jonathan Davis, Community Hope
Mallory Dubuisson, Atlantic Adult Day Center
Monica Mulligan, Juvenile Institution Services & Greater Raritan One Stop
Nikki Bryant, Community Child Care Solutions
Richard Novak
Steve Katz, Food Bank Network of Somerset County

I. Call Meeting to Order & Introductions

Tim Wolf called the meeting to order at 1:32 PM. A quorum was established.

II. Approval of the May 24, 2023, Minutes

Motion to approve the May 2023, meeting minutes was made by Monica Mulligan and seconded by Michele Boronkas. One abstention was made by Mary Jane Dipaolo. Motion carried.

III. Presentation – NJ ALICE Report on COVID-19 Impact: Joanne Hala, Community Impact & Grants-United Way of Northern New Jersey

- Most of the data is taken from the American Community Survey from 2019-2021.
- The initial question the research was trying to answer, “Why are we helping people but never getting anywhere”.
- ALICE is an acronym for **A**sset **L**imited, **I**ncome **C**onstrained, **E**mployed
- United for ALICE was founded and powered by United Way of Northern New Jersey
- This is a measure different than the federal poverty level.
- The data looks at the household survival budget: the bare-minimum costs of basic necessities (housing, childcare, food, transportation, health care, and a smartphone plan).
 - This budget is the basis for determining whether households are above or below the ALICE threshold by county.
- Cost of living varies across New Jersey.
 - The annual total for the Household Survival Budget for a family of four with two adults, an infant and a preschooler ranged from \$66,876 in Camden County to \$101,976 in Somerset County.
- Competing force in 2021 included:
 - Inflation
 - Job disruption
 - Pandemic assistance
- Households below the ALICE threshold:

- 2019: 1,135,420
- 2021:1,292,430
- Demographics, Highest % Hardship
 - Black (52%) and Hispanic (51%)
 - Under 25 (69%) and 65+ (49%)
 - Single-parent (71% female; 54% male)
- Respondents below ALICE Threshold
 - 26% not have enough food
 - 29% of renters behind ion rent
 - 25% nervous, anxious or on edge
- Next Steps
 - Dig into national, state, and local data (county, ZIP code, etc.) on UnitedForALICE.org
 - See ALICE data by Legislative District and connect to your state and federal representatives
 - Connect with United Way of Northern NJ for support and volunteer opportunities
 - Use the ALICE in Action Database to learn more about the programs, practices, and policies that are partners are implementing to make a difference for ALICE households. And submit your actions!

IV. State and County Agency Reports

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

2023	May
Families	380 (71% intake cases)
Children	739
Children in Placement	37
Referral Type	
Child Protective Service Referrals	131
Child Welfare Referrals	26
Allegation Type	
Neglect	189
Physical Abuse	62
Sexual Abuse	11
Emotional Abuse	0

Human Services Director’s Report – Mike Frost

- The Somerset Helps Mobile Outreach Van is moving forward. An email will be sent this week explaining procedures with a link to our website.
- Crisis Intervention Training (CIT) formal 40-hr curriculum for municipal law enforcement was held June 19-June 23. 23 officers and 3 mental health professionals graduated. Somerset is the final county to adopt the program.

- The search for the Community Police Alliance Coordinator in Bound Brook has been slow. It is important for candidates to be licensed and bilingual.
- The 2023 budget was passed on June 27th.
- The New Jersey Division of Consumer Affairs (“DCA”), welcomes you to join DCA's Social Work outreach program: New Jersey Social Work Licensure: You've got questions, we've got answers. As you may recall, this is the promised follow up to the discussion Mary Jane, Somerset County HSAC Chair and Mike Frost, SCDHS Director had with DCA Deputy Director Howard Pine and DCA Director Cari Fais a few weeks back at the behest of the Somerset County HSAC based on reported concerns about delays in LSW/LCSW licensing and process questions that were attached to that. On July 10th at 2:30 p.m., DCA will screen a presentation that acts as an orientation for the licensure process. Following the presentation, attendees will be invited to pose questions to the Executive Director of the licensing Board. Topics discussed will include licensure, renewal, educational requirements, and more! This is an opportunity to engage directly with the licensing Board to help demystify the licensure process and to get an overview of the Board’s mission for the profession and the public.

Committee Reports - None

V. New Business - None

VI. Agency Highlights/Announcements

- James Parauda– Tri County CMO - Annual Family Picnic at Forrest Lodge for all families. Over 425 people attended. The feedback shows that it was a great event.
- Tim Wolf- Pioneer Family Success – Continuing to connect with fathers regarding 90-minute fatherhood workshops.
- Michele Boronkas- Safe+Sound Somerset- Received funds from Somerset Hills Community Foundation to launch sexual abuse counseling for children under the age of 13. Will be one of the first providers in the county to provide this service. Seeking a professional to provide the service. Would be happy to share the parameters and referrals for the program.

Motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Zach Berliner and seconded Mary Jane Dipaolo. The meeting was adjourned at 2:29 PM.

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