The Buncombe County Health and Human Services Board met on November 17, 2023 at 12:30 p.m. The meeting was virtual.

* Health and Human Services Board Members: Lucy Lawrence, Chair; Linda Weldon, Vice Chair; Amy Lenell, Dick Needleman, Martha Salyers, Savannah Lamb, Yvette Jives, Jacquelyn Hallum, Gregory Narron, LeeAnne Tucker, Johnnie Grant and Dan Frayne were in attendance.
* Health and Human Services staff: Stoney Blevins, Rebecca Smith, Mitchell Albers, Kelli Buckner, Phillip Hardin, Ellis Matheson and Christa Lance were in attendance.
* Johanna Cano with CAPE was in attendance.
* Dakisha Wesley, Assistant County Manager was in attendance.
* Curt Euler, County Attorney was in attendance.

**CALL TO ORDER**

* Board Chair, Lucy Lawrence called the meeting to order at 12:00 p.m.

**REVIEW AND ACTION OF BOARD AGENDA**

* The Board reviewed the November 17, 2023 agenda. Board member LeeAnne Tucker motioned that the agenda be approved as presented. Board member Jacquelyn Hallum seconded the motion and the vote was unanimous in approval. The agenda is attached and made a part of these minutes.
* The Chair asked if any Board member had any known conflict of interest or appearance of conflict with respect to any matter coming before the Board and none were stated.

**REVIEW AND ACTION OF BOARD MINUTES**

* The Board reviewed the October 27, 2023 minutes.  Board member Dan Frayne motioned that the minutes be approved with the addition of the Adult Placement Waitlist Policy discussion. Board member Yvette Jives seconded the motion and the vote was unanimous in approval. The minutes are attached and made a part of these minutes.

**PROGRAM COMMITTEE UPDATES**

* BC Public Health Director Dr. Ellis Matheson told us that the Public Health Department has recently received a federal grant in the amount of $682K over 4 years that will bn disbursed by the state for workforce development and infrastructure. The funding came from COVID pandemic funds from the CDC. It will be distributed by the NC Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Public Health. Ellis has considered how the Department can best utilize the grant, guided by areas recommended by the CDC. She is creating a plan to submit to the BC Board of Commissioners for approval after the first of the year and prior to allocating the money. She proposes using the funds to: support and sustain current staff, train new and existing staff, and create ties with UNC School of Public Health in order to develop an academic Health Department at BC.
* Rebecca Smith presented an overview of services within Social Work and what the group hoped to accomplish for the year. The Safety Committee plans is to identify 3-4 priorities, have discussion around those priorities then select 1-2 items to work on.
* Martha Saylers led the Community Benefits and Opportunity committee and discussed Energy Assistance, which is getting ready to kick in from December to March. There are 3 different programs, Crisis Intervention, Emergency Assistance and LIEAP (Low Income Energy Assistance Program). Medicaid expansion passed and we will have it in our county. It will present a tremendous amount of work to get people who are entitled enrolled. There is a tremendous amount of work coming and not enough workforce. Buncombe has been able to complete 95% of their application in a timely manner. We have one ask to have the state study results that Phillip mentioned be presented to the Board in the future.

**PRESENTATION/UPDATES**

* Board member Martha Salyers presented on Land Use Acknowledgement to the Board. The Board discussed how they could help. Board Chair, Lucy Lawrence proposed forming an Ad Hoc committee. Martha Salyers, Amy Lenell and Lucy Lawrence would like to serve on this committee. Curt proposed that Lucy appoint an Ad Hoc committee to decide if the Board develop this. The PowerPoint is attached and made a part of these minutes.
* Mitchell Albers, Harm Reduction Coordinator presented an update on the Naloxone Distribution. Below are bullet points from the presentation:
  + Review of services and supplies offered at the Syringe Service Program
  + How to request and attain Narcan
  + Notice of our standing monthly training at 40 Coxe Ave, the 1st Friday of the month at noon
  + What is reviewed at a training
  + How to request training for businesses and organizations
  + Contact info: [Mitchell.albers@buncombecounty.org](mailto:Mitchell.albers@buncombecounty.org) / 828-250-5089

The presentation is attached and made a part of these minutes.

**OLD BUSINESS**

* Savannah Lamb talked about the child welfare staff shortage. She was asking the Board about ideas in helping to find resolutions for this staff shortage and how we can help the children in custody. Stoney shared that Strategy and innovation, and Social Work Leadership will be meeting with HR to talk about issues, strategies and next steps in child welfare recruitment and retention.

**NEW BUSINESS**

* Board Chair, Lucy Lawrence discussed with the Board the Executive Committees recommendation to add Stephanie Stewart to the Board. She currently works at MAHEC and has previously received HHS services. Dan Frayne vouched for her as she is currently serving on the Safety Net committee. Lucy asked for a motion to recommend Stephanie Stewart to the Board of Commissioners for a seat on our Board. Board member Dan Frayne motioned to recommend Stephanie Stewart to the Board of Commissioners. Board member Linda Weldon seconded the motion and the vote was unanimous in approval.

**DIRECTORS REPORT**

* Stoney gave an update on our advocating for increasing the Energy Assistance limits as well as the Low Income Energy Assistance Program (LIEAP). The limits have not been raised in the past 20 years and the cost of living has increased. The legislator approved increases in both programs. Both programs sit at $600.00 per year and the legislator has upped the possible limits up to $1000.00 per year. Unfortunately, they did not include any extra funds for this so the Department of Health and Human Services has been hesitant to raise the limits.

**CHAIRPERSONS REPORT**

* Lucy talked about the Veteran Services Documentary that was hosted by our Board at the Irene Wortham Center. It was titled “Veterans Battlefield”. This was about veterans in North Carolina.
* We will not be having a Board meeting in December but will be having a Holiday meeting with no business on December 15th.

**ADJOURNMENT**

* Board Chair Lucy Lawrence informed the Board that she would take a motion to adjourn. Board member Linda Weldon motioned the board to adjourn the meeting at 1:40 pm. Board member LeeAnne Tucker seconded the motion and the vote was unanimous in approval.

Minutes read and approved this \_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, 2024.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_                                         \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Lucy Lawrence, Chairperson                                                               Stoney Blevins, HHS Director

Health and Human Services Board                                                    Executive Secretary to the Board