

**Commonwealth of Virginia
State Board of Social Services**

**STEPS, Inc.
100 Industrial Park Road
Farmville, VA 23901**

June 17, 2015

Attending: Mr. Willie Greene, Sr. (Chair), Mrs. Joanne Webster (Secretary), Ms. Lou Ali, Ms. Sheila Coppage, Mr. Darrell Jordan, Jr., Dr. Jack Knapp, Mr. Clyde Santana

Absent: Dr. Danny Avula, Ms. Mona Malik, Mr. Kent Willis

Also in Attendance: Ms. Margaret Ross Schultze (Commissioner), Mr. Allen Wilson (Sr. Assistant Attorney General).

Meeting called to order at 9:01 am – Mr. Willie Greene, Sr.

Introductory greetings were provided by Ms. Sharon Harrup, President & CEO of STEPS and host of the meeting, and by Ms. Roma Morris, Director of Prince Edward Department of Social Services.

Review of Agenda – Ms. Karin Clark, Regulatory Coordinator

Comments from the Commissioner – Ms. Margaret Ross-Schultze

The Commissioner thanked Sharon Harrup and STEPS for hosting the meeting and provided history on STEPS, indicating it is the newest Community Action Agency. She reviewed a letter sent to Governor McAuliffe in reference to the Council on Childhood Success. The full report is available at http://www.ltgov.virginia.gov/docs/CCCS_June12015Report.pdf.

The Commissioner reviewed provisions of 2015 child care legislation, HB 1570 and SB 1168. Governor McAuliffe signed the bills on May 28, 2015.

Commissioner Schultze announced that Virginia is the recipient of two grants from the USDA. The first is an \$8.8M grant received in conjunction with the Virginia Department of Education, targeted at ending childhood hunger. The grant supports the Governor's Executive Order 34 and the First Lady's initiative on bridging the nutritional divide. The second grant is a \$22.3M SNAP Employment and Training pilot grant received in conjunction with the Virginia Community College system. This grant is an unprecedented collaboration between the Virginia Department of Social Services, the Virginia Community College System, Local Workforce Investment Boards, local adult education providers and Virginia Commonwealth University's Adult Learning Resource Center.

Announcements

Commissioner Schultze announced the resignation of Mr. William Henderson from the Board. The last day at the agency for Paul McWhinney was June 3, 2015, but his actual retirement date is June 24, 2015. His position will not be filled. The duties will be shared between herself and Jack Frazier, Deputy Commissioner for Operations.

Proposed Permanency Regulation – Carl Ayers, Director of the Division of Family Services

Mr. Ayers explained that the current permanency regulation became effective in November 2012, but took over 2 ½ years to move through the regulatory system, at which point it was outdated due to federal and state legislative changes. Because of this delay, the permanency regulation was immediately re-opened for required amendments. A NOIRA was initiated in July 2013 and an initial briefing was provided to the Board in April 2014. Mr. Ayers provided an overview of the proposed changes.

Overview of STEPS, Inc. – Sharon Harrup, Director

Ms. Harrup explained the history and mission of the agency. STEPS is committed to creating, coordinating and delivering quality comprehensive services in an effort to achieve faster self-sufficiency and eliminate poverty. STEPS serves six counties: Amelia, Buckingham, Cumberland, Lunenburg, Nottoway and Prince Edward. They have four pillars of service- workforce development, economic development, housing, and education. STEPS has a variety of local and state/federal partnerships that makes their organization work. STEPS collaborated with two VA Tech students (entrepreneurs) who created a company called TAALUMA totes that was on the television show “Shark Tank.” The backpacks are manufactured out of the STEPS facility by people with disabilities. The website is www.carryacountry.com. Additional information on STEPS is available at <http://steps-inc.org/about/history.php>.

The Board recessed and toured STEPS’ shredding operation.

COMMENT PERIOD

No comments were offered by the public.

Comment from the VA League of Social Services Executive – Cathy Pemberton, President

Ms. Pemberton addressed some concerns with the Comprehensive Services Act (CSA). The first is permitting direct parental placement of children into facilities when the local government pays the costs. The League has expressed its concern to the Office of Comprehensive Services (OCS). The second CSA matter relates specifically to the OCS. The CSA has been in place for 23 years and has had many positive outcomes. However, there have also been some challenges with the CSA audits which resulted in administrative funding issues. Given the recent resignation of the OCS director, the League is hoping that the OCS might be housed as part of another state agency, possibly DSS, since they understand the alignment and importance of family, policy and placement of children.

Comment from Virginia Community Action Partnership – Jim Schulyer, Director

Mr. Schulyer welcomed STEPS, Inc. to VACAP. VACAP recently concluded a very successful annual conference in Richmond. The state Office on Volunteerism and Community Services (OVCS) presented two workshops that focused on new federal requirements for the administration of the Community Services Block Grant program and elements of a community needs assessment. Mr. Schulyer had the opportunity to participate in the federal monitoring visit to the state OVCS office. During the visit, he and the OVCS staff emphasized the close collaboration among the state office, VACAP and the network. Agencies have completed their self-assessments regarding their ability to meet the new organizational standards. OVCS is planning a series of webinars that will focus on the areas of greatest need. VACAP will be devoting considerable training and technical assistance efforts to meet these needs as well.

The Board recessed at 3:00 pm and traveled to the Prince Edward Department of Social Services for a tour.

DRAFT

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State Board of Social Services**

**STEPS
100 Industrial Park Road
Farmville, VA 23901**

June 18, 2015

Reconvened 9:00 am

Attending: Mr. Willie Greene, Sr. (Chair), Mrs. Joanne Webster (Secretary), Ms. Lou Ali, Ms. Sheila Copping, Dr. Jack Knapp, Mr. Clyde Santana

Absent: Dr. Danny Avula, Mr. Darrell Jordan Jr., Ms. Mona Malik, Mr. Kent Willis

Also in Attendance: Ms. Margaret Ross Schultze (Commissioner), Mr. Allen Wilson (Sr. Assistant Attorney General).

Job Readiness & Retention – Roma Morris

Ms. Roma introduced herself and members of the Job Readiness and Retention team.

Prince Edward County – VIEW Program – Lisa Chapman and Pam Snead

The VIEW program (Virginia Initiative for Employment not Welfare) provides job opportunities, work site placements and service providers. They also help clients with helpful resources such as bus schedules, pocket resumes, lists of businesses within the area, state applications and career guides.

Southside VA Community College BEST Program – Christin Jackson

The BEST (Business Employer Services Team) mission is to develop and promote a well-trained, well educated, highly skilled workforce that fulfills the needs of the local employers and fosters economic development and stability in the surrounding seven counties. The vision is to promote maximum employment opportunities that will support local and regional economic development.

Charlotte County DSS – Employment Advancement for TANF Participants Grant – Amanda Lee

There are currently ten local departments of social services participating in the program: Appomattox, Amelia, Buckingham, Charlotte, Cumberland, Halifax, Lunenburg, Mecklenburg, Nottoway and Prince Edward. The vendors participating are STEPS Inc., JACLU Inc. and John D. Rozema Employment Services. The purpose is to assist hard to serve TANF, VIEW and former TANF recipients with retaining employment and progressing towards self-sufficiency in support of their families.

Vehicles for Change (VFC) – Marie Hoge-Perkins

VFC was started in 1999 and is a non-profit organization that receives 99% of their car donations from the public. They repair cars that meet quality standards and award them for as little as \$750 to \$1,000 to eligible families referred by social services agencies. Since 1999, VFC has awarded cars to more than 4,900 low income families, changing the lives of more than 15,000 people. Ms. Kamashe Wade presented her testimony to the Board regarding the vehicle she received through this program.

Longwood University – Virginia Star Quality Initiative – Patsy Pelland

This program provides audiology services, children’s services, infant and toddler connection of the heartland, tutoring (K-12), and services for adults. The program educates parents on what to look for in a quality child-care program, in relation to speech, hearing and learning services.

Fraud Prevention – Division of Benefit Programs- Tom Steinhauser, Director

Mr. Steinhauser introduced himself, thanked Prince Edward DSS for their presentation and provided an overview of fraud prevention. This presentation was requested by a Board member who wanted information on how the agency verifies identity for the purpose of receiving benefits. FREE (Fraud Reduction / Elimination Effort) is a statewide fraud control program that enforces fraud prevention, detection and investigation. Mr. Steinhauser explained how a multitude of systems are queried for matches and closed with the 2014 fiscal year statistics.

Regulatory Update – Karin Clark, Regulatory Coordinator

ACTION ITEMS

- 1. Approve April 2015 Minutes**
On Motion Duly Made, (Ms. Ali), second (Mr. Santana), motion approved with corrections made, with all in favor.
- 2. 22VAC40-41, Neighborhood Assistance Program – Fast Track**
On Motion Duly Made, (Mrs. Webster), second (Dr. Knapp), motion approved with all in favor.
- 3. 22VAC40-295, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families - NOIRA**
On Motion Duly Made, (Dr. Knapp), second (Ms. Ali), motion approved with all in favor.
- 4. 22VAC40-201, Permanency Services – Proposed**
On Motion Duly Made, (Dr. Knapp), second (Mrs. Webster), motion approved with all in favor.

Election of Officers

Dr. Knapp read the proposed slate of officers: Chair- Mr. Greene, Vice Chair – Dr. Avula, Secretary- Mrs. Webster. No additional nominations were offered. All Board members were in favor of the proposed slate of officers.

Board Member Comments

Ms. Coppage enjoyed Farmville and her first two-day meeting.

Mrs. Webster appreciated hearing about STEPS Inc. and the Prince Edward DSS Programs.

Ms. Ali enjoyed the opportunity to visit Farmville and the information on the pilot grant. She would like to hear the outcome of whether they will reach their goal. She also enjoyed learning about the STEPS program and is interested in hearing about the poverty trap.

Mr. Santana enjoyed the presentations, the two-day meeting and the visit to Farmville.

Dr. Knapp echoed in reference to learning about STEPS Inc., having a relative who might have benefited from these programs. Regarding Mr. Steinhauser's presentation, every dollar fraudulently received deprives some family of the money they need.

Chairs Comments

Mr. Greene thanked Ms. Harrup and STEPS Inc., for their hospitality and the information provided. The next meeting will be a one-day meeting at the Central Regional Office in Henrico, VA.

Adjourned at 11:30am