



# Minutes for Muscogee County Georgia Division of Family and Children Services Board

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## Call to Order

- Muscogee County Georgia Division of Family and Children Services Board (GA DFCS) was held on August 16, 2018, at the Muscogee County GA DFCS office, 2100 Comer Avenue, Columbus, GA 31904
- Meeting began 9:02 AM and was presided over by Jennifer Melvin

## Attendees

- Voting members in attendance included Tolua Puailoa, Jennifer Melvin, and Barbara Storey-Jones
- Georgia Division of Family and Children Services staff in attendance included Jena Jones, Muscogee County Director, Rhonda Wingfield, Permanency Program Director, Cherry Jones, Safety Program Director, Corey Neal, Program Operations Manager, Stacey Hamilton, Administrative Support Supervisor, Deedre Ligon, Office of Family Independence Administrator, DeAngela Collins, Executive Secretary, Deborah Nolan, Community Liaison, and Denise L. Thompson-Mosley, Executive Assistant
- Members not in attendance included Dr. Agarwal and Charonda Huff

## Approval of minutes from last meeting

- Ms. Storey-Jones moves for the June 21, 2018 minutes to be approved
- Ms. Puailoa seconded the motion and the minutes were approved
- Board votes and the motion is unanimously carried

### **Finance Report – Corey Neal**

- Columbus City Council awarded Muscogee County DFCS (MCD) \$41,000.00 for FY2019, the same amount as the previous fiscal year
- There is \$3,000 remaining
- Letter will be sent from Ms. J. Jones to ask to use the funds for current fiscal year

### **Personnel Report – Jena Jones**

- Two new hires since the last board meeting: Ms. J. Jones and Ms. Thompson-Mosley
- The previous hiring hold lifted as of 8/15/18 and MCD has approval to fill four vacancies in Child Welfare
- This is a move in the right direction because caseloads have been demanding and there is an expected spike with the beginning of the school year
- Inquiry about the possibility of recruitment at Ft. Valley State even though there is no Social Work major there
- Could someone with a psychology degree apply to work at DFCS? Yes.

### **Office of Family Independence Report – Deedre Ligon**

- 96% accuracy
- Two new supervisors – reduced management load from 13-14 direct reports to 8-9
- One supervisor position open
- Client delays (missing interviews, not providing correct documentation, etc.) increased numbers of non-expedited cases not being timely
- Question raised about why SNAP application line is long
  - Staff works efficiently
  - SNAP benefits must be applied for in person at the MCD office or with a paper application mailed or sent via facsimile
  - Initial SNAP application cannot be completed on Georgia Gateway because of problems with fraud and timeliness

- Renewals for SNAP can be completed online
- DFCS 2 has been opened to relieve some of the pressure of the SNAP intake line

**Social Services Report – Rhonda Wingfield and Cherry Jones**

**Permanency:**

- Total number of children in care – 447
  - Number of foster homes – 77 (146 beds)
- Total number of case managers – 14; total number of supervisors – 5
  - Average caseloads – 32

**Safety:**

- Open investigations – 55
- Open Family Support Cases – 75
- Open ongoing/family preservation cases – 109
- Safety Resource Cases – 6 (7 children involved)
- Total – 245
- Family Preservation case managers – 7; supervisors – 2
- Family Support case managers – 12; supervisors – 3
- Drug Court case managers – 2; supervisor – 1

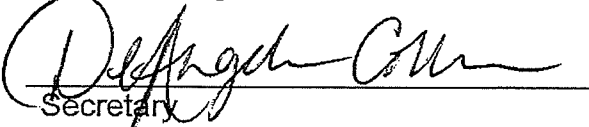
**Director’s Report – Jena Jones**

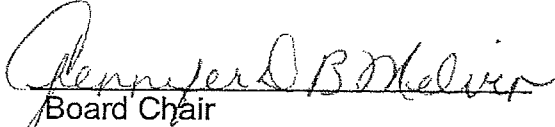
- Board members were thanked for \$300 contribution for Ms. Ross’ retirement party
- DFCS 2 explained as general intake for clients who are veterans, elderly, homeless, mothers with children who would like to apply for benefits other than SNAP
  - There will be a food pantry as well – Deborah Nolan is working with grocery stores, organizations, and churches to place collection barrels for non-perishable food items
  - Reduction in food stamp benefits will lead to more people seeking food assistance
- Deborah is also organizing Christmas gift collection for children in contact with the agency through Family Preservation (FP) and Child Protective Services (CPS)

- Most current toy drives are for children in foster care and nothing is collected for children involved in FP or CPS cases
- Potential partnership with Salvation Army or Meals on Wheels mentioned
- Inquiry if DFCS can partner with Chester Jackson to get some of the free refurbished bikes he gives away every Christmas
  - DFCS cannot take refurbished items because of potential liability
- Inquiry if DFCS should do a coat drive
  - DFCS would like to give children in contact with the agency new items, as much as possible
- Inquiry if DFCS has requested support from the new Care Management Organization (CMO) in Georgia, CareSource – new in the area and would be looking for opportunities for positive press
- Employee Appreciation Day – 11:00 AM – 2:00 PM on October 18, 2018 at the Columbus Trade Center
  - Average cost \$17/person
  - Request the Board to approve \$6,000.00 to use for the event
  - Ms. Storey-Jones moves to approve
  - Ms. Puailoa seconds
  - Board votes and the motion is unanimously carried
  - Ms. J. Jones thanks Ms. Collins for work of the committee to plan event and reduce cost from \$11,000.00 to \$6,000.00
- Proposal to change the standing meeting time from 8:30 AM to 12:30 PM
- The day, third Thursday of the month, will remain the same
- The Board agrees
- The next meeting would be Thursday, September 20, 2018 but Ms. J. Jones has a conflict so the Board agrees to have the meeting Wednesday, September 19, 2018.

**Adjournment**

The meeting ended at 9:55 AM.

  
 Secretary  
 Georgia Division of Family and  
 Children Services Muscogee County  
 Board

  
 Board Chair  
 Georgia Division of Family and  
 Children Services Muscogee  
 County Board