SUSSEX COUNTY SOCIAL SERVICES
BARBARA GRAY, ADVISORY BOARD CHAIR
TAWANA TORAN, DIRECTOR

ADVISORY BOARD MEETING
September 8, 2026
1:00 p.m.

Call to Order
The meeting was called to order by Advisory Board Chair Barbara Gray at 1:02 p.m.

Introduction of New Employees
Ms. Tawana Toran introduced Mr. Percy Ashcraft, Interim County Administrator, and he was welcomed by all in attendance.

Roll Call/Determine Quorum
Advisory Board Members Present: Earl Rogers, Barbara Gray, Edythe Brown

Also Present: Director Tawana Toran; Advisory Board Secretary/Administrative Services Manager Melissia Hill; Fiscal Manager Jennifer Ellis; Family Services Supervisor Adrienne Sloan; Benefit Programs Supervisor LaVeeta Saunders; Benefit Programs Supervisor Jessica Upton; and Program Coordinator LaKeitha Rusan; Board of Supervisors Member The Honorable Dr. Phyllis Tolliver; Interim County Administrator Percy Ashcraft

Approval of the Agenda and Approval of Board Meeting Minutes – August 11, 2026

Mr. Earl Rogers moved to approve the agenda and minutes as presented. Ms. Edythe Brown seconded the motion, and the agenda and minutes were approved by a unanimous vote.

Unfinished Business
None at this time

New Business

Benefit Programs Report
Ms. Jessica Upton gave the update on Benefit Programs for the month of September 2026. A written report is attached to these minutes.

- Ms. Upton's unit has an upcoming opening.
- There has been a significant increase in the stealing of SNAP benefits.
- The Sheriff's office will take a report, but they are not investigating any theft of benefits because it is outside the scope of their duties. Information regarding stolen benefits is being shared with the Fraud Unit at the state level.

Family Services Report
Ms. Adrienne Sloan provided an update on Family Services.

- There are 13 foster care cases
- Six children will be adopted in the next month or so.
- We have gotten new APS reports; the referrals mostly come from hospitals.

- One Fostering Futures has transferred out of the traditional foster care system. She has her own apartment, and we will help her with her GED program.
- No new children have been admitted to Foster Care.

Program Coordinator Report
Ms. LaKeitha Rusan provided the update on CSA.

- Upcoming FAPT meeting is this Thursday.
- We have 13 school CSA cases, and there are pending referrals, possibly waiting on parent signatures.
- .There are 12 DSS-CSA cases.
- Ms. Rusan will be attending a CSA Conference in Roanoke in mid-October.
- The Regional OCS director will be doing collaborative meetings once a month to provide an opportunity to learn and share best practices.
- There is a new private provider for CPMT. Ms. Rusan met them at the Prince George CSA Resources Fair.
- CSA would like to meet with the school superintendent to share resources, as CSA is considering a vendor resource fair for this locality
- CSA is working to identify more private providers to help with referrals.
- Mr. Ashcraft will speak with Dr. Hart about Health Department representation on CPMT.

Fiscal Manager Report
Ms. Jennifer Ellis gave an update on DSS fiscal matters.

- Ms. Ellis secured an overpayment of $16,270.00 from a local private provider. She is waiting on direction from OCS regarding the return of this overpayment.
- The Sunshine Club is working on a Christmas activity for Headstart students.

Administrative Services Report
Ms. Melissia Hill provided an update on Administrative Services. A copy of her report is attached.

- Ms. Hill was part of the testing group for the new EBT chip card. She visited several merchants in Sussex County and attempted to use the card. The chip and tap were not available at any store, but the swipe did work. EBT considers this a win. New EBT cards will be mailed to all SNAP recipients beginning the end of this month. Every SNAP recipient should have a new card by the end of October, and they must be activated within 60 days of receipt. All previous card will be unusable after the 60 days.
- Angel Tree season has begun. We are mailing applications to qualified clients, and we are actively seeking community partners and donors.

Director's Report
Ms. Tawana Toran provided the update on the agency.

- Ms. Upton's unit is losing an employee. That position will be posted soon. We currently have 25 employees in this agency.
- Ms. Toran and Ms. Saunders attended a collaborative meeting at Petersburg Library regarding HR1. There were directors, supervisors, program managers and community partners there, and the discussion focused on how to help Medicaid recipients who will lose their insurance next year.
- Sussex County has about 1300 citizens who will be affected by HR1. We will work with the local Community Services Board and Virginia Workforce. Qualified Medicaid recipients must work at least 80 hours a month to qualify for Medicaid.
- Ms. Saunders was able to get resources that may help with this transition, and there is a volunteer site that may be beneficial to Medicaid recipients.
- Advisory board seats will hopefully be filled by the end of September/beginning of October.

- Badge access was discussed in the management meeting. The public safety director Chris will work on badges and access.
- AED machines need to be checked. However, Chris has been reluctant to do so. The devices will be checked to see if there is a contact number we can call for assistance. It is possible that the Heath Department may be able to help.
- We are strengthening and improving CSA processes, and everything else is going well
- We are developing SOPs for the agency.
- APS is being proactive with our seniors. EMS is working with Mr. Steve White to address concerns about our senior population, particularly having someone in the home at night for qualified seniors. We are working to find a way to help and hold other providers and community partners accountable.
- Crater District Aging on Agency may have resources. Ms. Toran may be joining their board.
- APS/Hospital cases are not closed until the client is discharged from the hospital. Part of that discharge process includes the hospitals doing UAIs before discharge, but they are not. Legally, the hospital is responsible for the UAI if the family asks. Our agency along with the health department have been doing them from hospital.

Interim County Administrator's Report

- The Board of Supervisors will meet next week.

Board of Supervisors Comments

- Toys for Tots kicked off last month and will end on November 30th.
- Volunteers are needed for the soccer program. There are nine teams this season. The games will be played at the Jessica A. Moore Foundation. The first game will be on September 19th, and two coaches and a referee are needed. The Foundation is working with Surry County on administrative tasks. The first parent meeting is September 8th at 6 p.m. There are 43 children who have signed up to play. Teams have been named according to their locality. Some children may need help with purchasing their uniforms. The uniform consists of a jersey, pants, and socks and costs $40.00. Coaches will need training, including referee training. Coaches are now designated as mandated reporters.

Public Comments

None at this time.

Board Members' Comments

None at this time.

Adjournment

A motion was made by Ms. Edythe Brown and seconded by Mr. Earl Rodgers to adjourn the meeting. The meeting was adjourned at 1:40 p.m.

Submitted by,

Melissia Hill

Melissia Hill
Sussex DSS Advisory Board Secretary