

**Minutes of the Meeting
of the
Bergen County Board of Social Services
September 1, 2020**

PRESENT: William E. Connelly, Jr., Chairperson
Randi Duffie, Vice-Chairperson
Erin N. Delaney, Secretary Treasurer
Elaine K. Meyerson, Assistant Secretary Treasurer
Freeholder Tracy S. Zur, Board Member
Freeholder Thomas J. Sullivan, Board Member (Arrived Late)
Alexandra Harwin, Esq., Board Member
Yris Encarnacion, Board Member
Susan Silverstein, Board Member
John L. Schettino, Esq., General Counsel
Adina Yacoub, Director
Michele M. Darmochwal, Administrative Secretary

ABSENT: John E. Ten Hoeve, Jr., Esq., County Adjuster

A regular meeting of the Bergen County Board of Social Services was held on September 1, 2020 at 4:30 p.m. by way of audio teleconference.

PUBLIC SESSION:

John L. Schettino, Esq. called the meeting to order and read the notice required by the Open Public Meetings Act as follows:

"Pursuant to the Open Public Meetings Act, adequate notice of the meeting scheduled for September 1, 2020 has been provided in the following manner:

1. By a prominent posting of the schedule of meetings for 2020, including a notice of the scheduled time, scheduled date, and location of this meeting at the Bergen County Administrative Building, One Bergen County Plaza, Hackensack, New Jersey.
2. The mailing of this notice of the time, date, and location of this meeting to "The Record", which was published on August 13, 2020 and to the Herald News, which was published on August 13, 2020.

3. By filing of the notice of the time, date, and location of this meeting with the Bergen County Clerk, said filing having taken place on August 10, 2020.
A quorum being achieved, the Board met in Public Session.

PUBLIC SESSION:

Chairman William E. Connelly chaired the meeting.

Flag Salute

Chairman William E. Connelly led those present in a salute to the flag.

Roll Call

A Roll Call was taken for Open Session:

MEMBERS	TITLE	PRESENT	ABSENT
WILLIAM E. CONNELLY	CHAIRPERSON	X	
RANDI DUFFIE	VICE CHAIRPERSON	X	
ERIN N. DELANEY	SECRETARY TREASURER	X	
ELAINE K. MEYERSON	ASST. SECRETARY TREASURER	X	
TRACY S. ZUR	FREEHOLDER	X	
THOMAS J. SULLIVAN	FREEHOLDER		X
JOHN E. TEN HOEVE, JR., ESQ.	COUNTY ADJUSTER		X
YRIS ENCARNACION	BOARD MEMBER	X	
ALEXANDRA HARWIN	BOARD MEMBER	X	
SUSAN SILVERSTEIN	BOARD MEMBER	X	

Open Public Comment Period

Chairman William E. Connelly requested a motion to open the meeting for public comment. A motion to open the Open Public Comment Period, for a three-minute limit with the option of speaking again, was offered by Alexandra Harwin, Esq., seconded by Freeholder Tracy S. Zur, and approved as follows:

MEMBERS	TITLE	AYE	NAY	ABSTAIN	ABSENT
WILLIAM E. CONNELLY	CHAIRPERSON	X			
RANDI DUFFIE	VICE CHAIRPERSON	X			
ERIN N. DELANEY	SECRETARY TREASURER	X			
ELAINE K. MEYERSON	ASST. SECRETARY TREASURER	X			
TRACY S. ZUR	FREEHOLDER	X			
THOMAS J. SULLIVAN	FREEHOLDER				X
JOHN E. TEN HOEVE, JR., ESQ.	COUNTY ADJUSTER				X
YRIS ENCARNACION	BOARD MEMBER	X			
ALEXANDRA HARWIN	BOARD MEMBER	X			
SUSAN SILVERSTEIN	BOARD MEMBER	X			

Matthew Bonaventure – Employee of the Bergen County Board of Social Services

Matthew Bonaventure commented that he called in at the July Board Meeting and at no point since then has he been contacted by any agency representative in regard to the concerns that he

brought forward at that meeting. He mentioned that he has made multiple attempts to obtain information from Personnel, but they have been ignored. He also mentioned that the Senior Personnel Technician has disregarded his multiple e-mails. He forwarded a letter to each Board Member in regard to Administration’s timeline with communication to employees, as well as, a list of concerns regarding COVID-19 specific safety protocols. He hoped to get answers in regard to the questions he presented as to why the agency has not provided any training on face coverings or social distancing or anything. He talked about the agency’s policy in which you can remove your face covering at your desk, but didn’t understand how that could be allowed under the Governor’s mandate. He mentioned that staff have not been provided with any guidance as to what social distancing standards are. He discussed our hallways are not labeled one way and they are not six-foot wide. He also discussed the cubicle barriers do nothing to prevent the circulation of droplets. He expressed that he does not understand why the agency chooses not to conform with safety guidelines.

Chairman William E. Connelly was disconnected from the audio teleconference.

As there were no other members of the public that wished to address the Board, John L. Schettino, Esq. requested a motion to close the Open Public Comment Period of the Open Session. A motion to close the Open Public Comment Period was offered by Randi Duffie, seconded by Elaine K. Meyerson, and approved as follows:

MEMBERS	TITLE	AYE	NAY	ABSTAIN	ABSENT
WILLIAM E. CONNELLY	CHAIRPERSON	X			
RANDI DUFFIE	VICE CHAIRPERSON	X			
ERIN N. DELANEY	SECRETARY TREASURER	X			
ELAINE K. MEYERSON	ASST. SECRETARY TREASURER	X			
TRACY S. ZUR	FREEHOLDER	X			
THOMAS J. SULLIVAN	FREEHOLDER				X
JOHN E. TEN HOEVE, JR., ESQ.	COUNTY ADJUSTER				X
YRIS ENCARNACION	BOARD MEMBER	X			
ALEXANDRA HARWIN	BOARD MEMBER	X			
SUSAN SILVERSTEIN	BOARD MEMBER	X			

Chairman William E. Connelly returned to the meeting by way of audio teleconference.

John L. Schettino, Esq. addressed some of Mr. Bonaventure’s comments. He mentioned that the Board received his letter. The Director met with the President of CWA Local #1089 and discussed all the communications that have been made regarding the protocols, which are consistent with County and State guidelines and the Governor’s Executive Orders. In regard to the rules for social distancing and wearing a mask, he discussed they are published all over the place.

Adoption of Minutes:

(a) Open Session Minutes of August 4, 2020

Chairman William E. Connelly requested a motion to adopt the Open Session minutes. A motion to adopt the Open Session minutes of August 4, 2020 was offered by Erin N. Delaney, seconded by Susan Silverstein, and approved as follows:

MEMBERS	TITLE	AYE	NAY	ABSTAIN	ABSENT
WILLIAM E. CONNELLY	CHAIRPERSON	X			
RANDI DUFFIE	VICE CHAIRPERSON			X	
ERIN N. DELANEY	SECRETARY TREASURER	X			
ELAINE K. MEYERSON	ASST. SECRETARY TREASURER	X			
TRACY S. ZUR	FREEHOLDER	X			
THOMAS J. SULLIVAN	FREEHOLDER				X
JOHN E. TEN HOEVE, JR., ESQ.	COUNTY ADJUSTER				X
YRIS ENCARNACION	BOARD MEMBER	X			
ALEXANDRA HARWIN	BOARD MEMBER	X			
SUSAN SILVERSTEIN	BOARD MEMBER	X			

Treasurer’s Report:

(a) Bills List:

Chairman William E. Connelly requested a motion to approve the Bills List. A motion to approve the Bill’s List was offered by Elaine K. Meyerson, seconded by Freeholder Tracy S. Zur, and approved as follows:

MEMBERS	TITLE	AYE	NAY	ABSTAIN	ABSENT
WILLIAM E. CONNELLY	CHAIRPERSON	X			
RANDI DUFFIE	VICE CHAIRPERSON	X			
ERIN N. DELANEY	SECRETARY TREASURER	X			
ELAINE K. MEYERSON	ASST. SECRETARY TREASURER	X			
TRACY S. ZUR	FREEHOLDER	X			
THOMAS J. SULLIVAN	FREEHOLDER				X
JOHN E. TEN HOEVE, JR., ESQ.	COUNTY ADJUSTER				X
YRIS ENCARNACION	BOARD MEMBER	X			
ALEXANDRA HARWIN	BOARD MEMBER	X			
SUSAN SILVERSTEIN	BOARD MEMBER	X			

(b) Schedule of Vouchers:

Chairman William E. Connelly requested a motion to approve the Schedule of Vouchers. A motion to approve the Schedule of Vouchers was offered by Yris Encarnacion, seconded by Randi Duffie, and approved as follows:

MEMBERS	TITLE	AYE	NAY	ABSTAIN	ABSENT
WILLIAM E. CONNELLY	CHAIRPERSON	X			
RANDI DUFFIE	VICE CHAIRPERSON				
ERIN N. DELANEY	SECRETARY TREASURER	X			
ELAINE K. MEYERSON	ASST. SECRETARY TREASURER	X			
TRACY S. ZUR	FREEHOLDER	X			
THOMAS J. SULLIVAN	FREEHOLDER				X

JOHN E. TEN HOEVE, JR., ESQ.	COUNTY ADJUSTER				X
YRIS ENCARNACION	BOARD MEMBER	X			
ALEXANDRA HARWIN	BOARD MEMBER	X			
SUSAN SILVERSTEIN	BOARD MEMBER	X			

In regard to Resolution 2020.9.01 (7) Approving Flooring Proposal, Scott Modery reported that this is a state contract, and he has done full diligence with the County Qualified Purchasing Agent to replace the carpeting on Floor 5. He explained that we are sharing some of the cost with the building owner. The building owner agreed to do the elevator lobby, and we are going to do the first-floor client entrance with remaining building moving money that we still have.

Chairman’s Report

Chairman William E. Connelly thanked the agency for standing up during very tough times while doing an exceptional job. He thanked Adina Yacoub and Dolores Phillips for working with each other and with the Board in trying to be on the same page even though it is not always easy. He commended them both on their open communication. The Chairman talked about how the Board wanted to proceed and with what forum to hold future Board Meetings. The Board agreed to hold the October 6, 2020 Board Meeting by way of Lightpath Audio Teleconference. The Chairman requested that at next month’s meeting Scott Modery discuss Zoom so if the Board decides to hold future meetings that way they know what is involved.

Administration Report:

(a) Monthly Reports – Statistical & Financial:

A snapshot of caseload and expenditures was included in each of the Board Member’s packet.

Adina Yacoub reported that the TANF (Temporary Assistance to Needy Families) caseload decreased from 282 to 265 and is down by 17 cases from last month and compared to one year ago it went up by 43 cases, SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) caseload decreased from 19,442 to 19,049 and is down by 393 cases from last month and compared to one year ago it went up by 783 cases, GA (General Assistance) caseload decreased from 557 to 547 and is down by 10 cases and compared to one year ago it went up by 47 cases, and Medicaid individuals decreased from 39,600 to 39,422 and is down by 178 individuals.

In August, the agency received a total of 1,988 cash and SNAP applications. The agency also received 1,596 Medicaid applications. In the month of August, we received a total of 3,584 new applications compared to July which was 2,666.

In August, staff processed 2,573 new applications compared to the July count of 2,836. In June, we processed 4,055 applications and in May we processed 5,657 new applications. In August, staff processed 8,272 total actions compared to the July count of 9,495. In June, staff processed 11,013 and May’s actions were 10,198. We remain timely with our processing of TANF, General Assistance, SNAP, and Medicaid applications.

In the month of August, our Emergency Assistance Unit was busy and assisted homeless individuals and families. Currently, we have 56 individuals/families in motels, 26 families at the Passaic Street transitional shelter, and 11 families placed at the Center for Hope and Safety (DV shelter). We received 18 homeless hotline referrals from 211. We have 92 on Temporary Rental Assistance cases, and we received 62 Emergency Assistance applications in the month of August.

(b) Memoranda to the Board

Adina Yacoub reported that the waivers from the federal and state government not to have face-to-face interviews have been extended until September. They have also given clients the maximum SNAP allotment. We were advised that on September 13, 2020 they are going to release 2,500 prisoners statewide and the Division of Family Development is trying to work with the Department of Corrections to coordinate services for them from county welfare agencies. We also learned that an additional 4,000 inmates statewide will be released early on September 30, 2020. They expect that a lot of them may be homeless when they come out so they may need emergency assistance services. To accommodate employees that are parents with school aged children under the age of 12, we sent out surveys to staff to get details on their particular situation. We were able to accommodate approximately 90% of them. The reason we cannot accommodate 100% is because very few of those people are not able to do their work remotely. Last night, Ms. Yacoub attended a N.J. together sponsored zoom call on Racial Equity & Criminal Justice Issues in New Jersey. In our continued quest to keep our staff safe, the second phase of installation of partitions was completed last week. This afternoon, the Director and Fiscal Officer attended a zoom call with the County regarding the CARES Act and discussed how they could help us get reimbursed for COVID-19 related expenses. The Division of Family Development considered our agency a successful model of how we rolled out remote work access and being efficient at the same time. The Division of Family Development asked Ms. Yacoub to present to the rest of the Directors on how we did it and share our best practices. Ms. Yacoub thanked CWA Local #1089 for providing hot lunch to all staff today.

In response to Alexandra Harwin's inquiry regarding what measures are being taken in the building, Adina Yacoub reported that the agency has everyone wear mandatory masks in all public places and in common areas. We also now have dividers between employees. We distributed several communications to staff on COVID-19 and what measures they should take. Last week, we also sent staff guidance from CDC on training and how to put your mask on and how to keep six feet. She feels very confident and knows that the agency is following all CDC guidelines. We also had a few people socializing, and we sent out instructions to staff not to congregate at each other's desks because it goes against our rules. If staff do not follow the rules, we address it as soon as we are aware of it.

For the record, Freeholder Thomas J. Sullivan arrived at approximately 5:21 p.m.

Freeholder Tracy S. Zur thanked Adina Yacoub for her participation on the Food Security Task Force. They are currently in the process of putting together a webinar for all the folks who are on the front line to explain what types of services the County has, and she is really grateful for the

Board of Social Services' participation. She expressed the importance of the folks on the front lines knowing how to connect a resident with the services that they need.

Committee Reports:

(a) Welfare, Fraud, and Abuse Committee

Alexandra Harwin, Esq. reported from August 1 to August 31, 2020 the agency received Medicaid recoveries in the amount of \$24,112.77. No new cases were referred to the Prosecutor's office during the month of August.

(b) Audit & Budget Committee

The 2019 final audit report was provided to all the Board Members.

(c) Building & Grounds Committee

No report.

OLD BUSINESS:

NEW BUSINESS:

(a) Next Board Meeting Date

The next Board Meeting is scheduled to be held on **Tuesday, October 6, 2020 at 4:30 p.m.** by way of remote access.

For the record, Yris Encarnacion left the meeting at approximately 5:30 p.m.

Action Items:

Resolutions:

- (a) 2020.9.01 (1) –Resolution Approving Additions, Elimination, and/or Changes to Positions within the Bergen County Board of Social Services
- (b) 2020.9.01 (2) – Resolution Authorizing the Advertisement of Employment for Multiple Openings
- (c) 2020.9.01 (3) –Resolution Authorizing a Change in Hours for One Part-Time Records Support Technician 1 to Full-Time Records Support Technician 1
- (d) 2020.9.01 (4) –Resolution Authorizing a Change in Hours for One Part-Time Human Services Aide to Full-Time Human Services Aide Bilingual Spanish/English Preferred
- (e) 2020.9.01 (5) –Authorizing the Advertisement and Offer of Employment for One Part-Time Clerk 1 Bilingual Spanish/English Preferred
- (f) 2020.9.01 (6) –Resolution Approving Memorandum of Agreement with County of Bergen to Combat Spread of COVID-19
- (g) 2020.9.01 (7) –Resolution Approving Flooring Proposal

(h) 2020.9.01 (8) –Resolution Providing for a Meeting Not Open to the Public in Accordance with the Provisions of the New Jersey Open Public Meetings Act, N.J.S.A. 10:4-12

A motion to discuss and approve Resolutions (a) – (g) was offered by Susan Silverstein, seconded by Freeholder Tracy S. Zur, and approved as follows:

MEMBERS	TITLE	AYE	NAY	ABSTAIN	ABSENT
WILLIAM E. CONNELLY	CHAIRPERSON	X			
RANDI DUFFIE	VICE CHAIRPERSON	X			
ERIN N. DELANEY	SECRETARY TREASURER	X			
ELAINE K. MEYERSON	ASST. SECRETARY TREASURER	X			
TRACY S. ZUR	FREEHOLDER	X			
THOMAS J. SULLIVAN	FREEHOLDER	X			
JOHN E. TEN HOEVE, JR., ESQ.	COUNTY ADJUSTER				X
YRIS ENCARNACION	BOARD MEMBER				X
ALEXANDRA HARWIN	BOARD MEMBER	X			
SUSAN SILVERSTEIN	BOARD MEMBER	X			

In regard to (h) Resolution 2020.9.01 (8), action was not taken on this item as the Board had no business to discuss and there was no need to go into Closed Session.

Adoption of Minutes:

There were no closed session minutes of August 4, 2020.

Chairman William E. Connelly requested a motion to adjourn the meeting. With no further business to conclude, a motion to adjourn the meeting at approximately 5:38 p.m. was offered by Erin N. Delaney, seconded by Freeholder Thomas J. Sullivan, and approved as follows:

MEMBERS	TITLE	AYE	NAY	ABSTAIN	ABSENT
WILLIAM E. CONNELLY	CHAIRPERSON	X			
RANDI DUFFIE	VICE CHAIRPERSON	X			
ERIN N. DELANEY	SECRETARY TREASURER	X			
ELAINE K. MEYERSON	ASST. SECRETARY TREASURER	X			
TRACY S. ZUR	FREEHOLDER	X			
THOMAS J. SULLIVAN	FREEHOLDER	X			
JOHN E. TEN HOEVE, JR., ESQ.	COUNTY ADJUSTER				X
YRIS ENCARNACION	BOARD MEMBER				X
ALEXANDRA HARWIN	BOARD MEMBER	X			
SUSAN SILVERSTEIN	BOARD MEMBER	X			

Respectfully submitted,



Adina Yacoub
Director