

**Minutes of the Meeting
of the
Bergen County Board of Social Services
June 1, 2021**

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

ABSENT: Yris Encarnacion, Board Member

A regular meeting of the Bergen County Board of Social Services was held on June 1, 2021 at 4:30 p.m. by way of Webex video/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 June 1, 2021 has been provided in the following manner:

1. By a prominent posting of the schedule of meetings for 2021, 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 May 20, 2021 and to the Herald News, which was published on May 20, 2021.
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 May 17, 2021.

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	BERGEN COUNTY COMMISSIONER	X	
THOMAS J. SULLIVAN	BERGEN COUNTY COMMISSIONER		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 Commissioner Tracy S. Zur, 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	BERGEN COUNTY COMMISSIONER	X			
THOMAS J. SULLIVAN	BERGEN COUNTY COMMISSIONER				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			

As there were no members of the public that wished to address the Board, Chairman William E. Connelly 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 Commissioner 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	BERGEN COUNTY COMMISSIONER	X			
THOMAS J. SULLIVAN	BERGEN COUNTY COMMISSIONER				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			

Adoption of Minutes:

(a) Open Session Minutes of May 4, 2021

Chairman William E. Connelly requested a motion to adopt the Open Session minutes. A motion to adopt the Open Session minutes of May 4, 2021 was offered by Elaine K. Meyerson, seconded by Randi Duffie, 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	BERGEN COUNTY COMMISSIONER	X			
THOMAS J. SULLIVAN	BERGEN COUNTY COMMISSIONER				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			

For the record, Erin N. Delaney joined the meeting by phone at approximately 4:37 p.m.

Treasurer's Report:

(a) Bills List:

Chairman William E. Connelly requested a motion to approve the Bill's List. A motion to approve the Bill's List was offered by Erin N. Delaney, 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	BERGEN COUNTY COMMISSIONER	X			
THOMAS J. SULLIVAN	BERGEN COUNTY COMMISSIONER				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 Commissioner Tracy S. Zur, 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	BERGEN COUNTY COMMISSIONER	X			
THOMAS J. SULLIVAN	BERGEN COUNTY COMMISSIONER				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			

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 240 to 236 and is down by 4 cases from last month and compared to one year ago it went down by 46 cases, SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) caseload increased from 22,001 to 22,230 and is up by 229 cases from last month and compared to one year ago it went up by 3,493 cases, GA (General Assistance) caseload decreased from 444 to 437 and is down by 7 cases and compared to one year ago it went down by 80 cases, and Medicaid individuals decreased from 35,507 to 35,365 and is down by 242 individuals.

In May, the agency received a total of 1,305 cash and SNAP applications. The agency also received 888 Medicaid applications for a total of 2,193. In May, we processed 2,341 new applications compared to April when we processed 2,715 new applications. In May, we processed 7,784 total actions compared to April we processed 8,436 total actions. The reason for the decrease is the numbers were taken on the 29th due to the long weekend. We continue to remain timely for all our programs.

In the month of May, our Emergency Assistance Unit assisted homeless individuals and families. Currently, we have 39 individuals/families in motels. We have 16 families in the HEARTS Program, 8 in the Emergency Shelter, and 8 in TANF/Bridge side. We have 7 families placed at the Center for Hope and Safety (DV shelter). We received 12 homeless hotline referrals

from 211. We have 122 Temporary Rental Assistance cases. We have 256 active DDD cases. Our Adult Protective Service (APS) Unit received 79 referrals and is managing 29 open cases.

The Emergency Assistance Unit has been working on obtaining documentation that will allow our SSI TRA recipients to transition to DCA vouchers. We have also been collecting housing ready documents for our motel placed clients so that they can take advantage of new rapid rehousing initiatives funded through COVID dollars.

The reopening of the Bergen County Housing, Health & Human Services Center is now postponed to June 7, 2021. We will have two staff members out-stationed there.

For the record, Commissioner Thomas J. Sullivan joined the meeting by phone at approximately 4:42 p.m.

In response to Commissioner Tracy S. Zur's request, Adina Yacoub will send her the current active SNAP caseload by town.

Susan Silverstein asked about the Bergen County Housing, Health & Human Services Center, and Adina Yacoub explained that we will have staff outstationed there three days per week. Prior to their closing due to the pandemic, we always had staff there and now they want our presence back.

Commissioner Tracy S. Zur expressed that it would be helpful if a representative from the BCBSS could be present at food distribution sites to connect individuals with resources that they need. Adina Yacoub advised that we would do that as long as we have dates. Further discussion will follow offline.

(b) Memoranda to the Board

Adina Yacoub reported that the following actions were initiated or occurred in May 2021.

ABD/FC/SNAP Match update: For ABD clients we mailed 3,712 SNAP applications and 569 were returned; about 15%. Out of 569 returned: 377 were approved, 175 were denied, and 17 are pending. Last month, our new applications decreased so we started to mail 500 SNAP applications a week for those who are on NJ FamilyCare and not receiving SNAP benefits. 1,783 applications were mailed. So far, 112 were returned and 16 approved, 12 denied, and 84 are still pending. This initiative thus far provided 5,495 households an opportunity to apply and receive SNAP benefits. Our Burial Assistance Program offers burial assistance to individuals who are active on Medicaid and don't have the funds for a proper burial. In May 2021 we had 15 inquiries, 27 approved cases, and 3 denied cases. We paid out \$109,878 in assistance and recovered \$4,152 from those who had PNA (personal needs allowance accounts). FEMA is offering a burial program that pays up to \$9,000 for those who lost their lives due to COVID-19. The HEARTS team was successful in submitting eight vouchers to Opening Doors for the participants at 40 Passaic Street.

Four were processed and the other four are in process. The goal is to get families in permanent housing in less than twelve months and the staff is diligently working to assist families to achieve that goal. There are ongoing negotiations between our Negotiations Committee and CWA Local 1089 and CWA Local 1031. Our labor attorney will update the Board in Closed Session this afternoon. We currently have about 140 employees who are fully vaccinated, which is about 60% of staff plus those who are still in their 90-day period from getting COVID and plan to be vaccinated in June. People who are not vaccinated will continue to get tested until we achieve 100% vaccination. Vaccination reminders are e-mailed weekly to encourage additional staff to get vaccinated. On May 25, 2021, we had visitors, that were fully vaccinated, from the Mercer County Board of Social Services who came to the agency and learned about our lobby kiosks and Qless system. Our staff met with them and it was a successful visit for Mercer County. Adina Yacoub shared a press release with the Board regarding the extra SNAP benefits that N.J. Human Services were able to provide for 430,000 NJ households totaling \$770 million dollars since March 2020. Our Assistant Administrator, Mr. Larobardier, made a presentation to the Bergen County Division of Senior Services regarding the SNAP program for seniors and submitted a Q&A that was very helpful. Representatives from Bergen New Bridge Medical Center, Catholic Charities, Heightened Independence Progress, Bergen Family, Jewish Family, Christian Health and Korean Community Centers were in attendance. Our Assistant Administrator, Maria Aberasturi, participated in Operation Homecoming for the town of Englewood. We received a thank you e-mail from the Englewood Police Department on the success of this operation and how the team worked together to make contact with 6-8 homeless sleeping at the MacKay Park Ice Rink. These individuals are being assisted for housing. All our TANF families received an early Christmas gift. They were all given a one-time \$1,700 additional payment with their June benefits as the State had received extra funds for TANF clients.

Chairman's Report

Chairman William E. Connelly asked if anyone was opposed to meeting virtually on July 6th by way of Webex and returning to an in-person meeting at the August Board Meeting. With no one opposed, the Board will meet virtually by way of Webex on Tuesday, July 6, 2021.

Committee Reports:

(a) **Welfare, Fraud, and Abuse Committee**

Alexandra Harwin, Esq. reported from May 1 to May 31, 2021 the agency received Medicaid recoveries in the amount of \$31,988.57 and the year-to-date 2021 is \$95,331.17. No new cases were referred to the Prosecutor's office during the month of May.

(b) **Audit & Budget Committee**

No report.

(c) **Building & Grounds Committee**

No report.

OLD BUSINESS:

None

NEW BUSINESS:

(a) Next Board Meeting Date

The next Board Meeting is scheduled to be held virtually on **Tuesday, July 6, 2021 at 4:30 p.m.** by way of Webex.

For the record, Commissioner Tracy S. Zur left the meeting and was no longer present.

Action Items:

Resolutions:

- (a) 2021.6.01 (1) – Resolution Approving Additions, Elimination, and/or Changes to Positions within the Bergen County Board of Social Services
- (b) 2021.6.01 (2) – Resolution Authorizing the Advertisement of Employment for Multiple Openings
- (c) 2021.6.01 (3) – Resolution Authorizing a Change in Hours from Part Time to Full Time for One Internal Clerk 1
- (d) 2021.6.01 (4) – Resolution Authorizing the Hiring of One External Part-Time Clerk 1
- (e) 2021.6.01 (5) – Resolution Authorizing the Hiring of One External Part-Time Human Services Aide
- (f) 2021.6.01 (6) – Resolution Authorizing the Hiring of One External Part-Time Human Services Aide
- (g) 2021.6.01 (7) – Resolution Authorizing a Promotion for One Internal Part-Time Clerk 1 to Part-Time Human Services Aide
- (h) 2021.6.01 (8) – Resolution Authorizing the Hiring of One External Part-Time Human Services Aide
- (i) 2021.6.01 (9) – Resolution Authorizing a Promotion for One Internal Full-Time Accountant to Provisional Senior Accountant
- (j) 2021.6.01 (10) – Resolution Authorizing the Advertisement and Offer of Employment for One Internal Provisional Administrative Supervisor of Income Maintenance
- (k) 2021.6.01 (11) – Resolution Approving Crime Policy with Otterstedt Insurance Agency
- (l) 2021.6.01 (12) – Resolution Approving Memorandum of Understanding with New Jersey Office of Emergency Management
- (m) 2021.6.01 (13) – Resolution Approving Proposal and Agreement with Hannon Floors for 2nd Floor Carpeting
- (n) 2021.6.01 (14) – 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 approve Resolutions (a) – (m) was offered by Randi Duffie, seconded by Erin N. Delaney, 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	BERGEN COUNTY COMMISSIONER				X
THOMAS J. SULLIVAN	BERGEN COUNTY COMMISSIONER	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			

A motion to discuss and approve Resolution (n) 2021.6.01 (14) 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 and to go into Closed Session was offered by John E. Ten Hoeve, Jr., Esq., 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	BERGEN COUNTY COMMISSIONER				X
THOMAS J. SULLIVAN	BERGEN COUNTY COMMISSIONER	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			

The Board went into Closed Session at approximately 5:15 p.m.

CLOSED SESSION:

The Board went into Closed Session to discuss closed session minutes, personnel matters, litigation, and collective bargaining negotiations. The minutes from the Closed Session will be available to the public once the items have been resolved or no longer require the minutes to be held and not distributed to the public. The Board will be in Closed Session for approximately 30 minutes at which time the Board will reopen the meeting and may take further public action in matters dealing with the Bergen County Board of Social Services. The public will be able to access the meeting remotely once the meeting reopens in Open Session.

OPEN SESSION:

The Board reconvened in Open Session at approximately 6:00 p.m.

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 6:00 p.m. was offered by John E. Ten Hoeve, Jr., Esq., seconded by Randi Duffie, 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	BERGEN COUNTY COMMISSIONER				X
THOMAS J. SULLIVAN	BERGEN COUNTY COMMISSIONER	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