

**Minutes of the Meeting  
of the  
Bergen County Board of Social Services  
September 9, 2021**

**PRESENT: William E. Connelly, Jr., Chairperson  
Randi Duffie, Vice-Chairperson  
Erin N. Delaney, Secretary Treasurer (Arrived Late)  
Yris Encarnacion, Board Member  
Alexandra Harwin, Esq., Board Member  
John L. Schettino, Esq., General Counsel  
Adina Yacoub, Director  
Michele M. Darmochwal, Administrative Secretary**

**ABSENT: Elaine K. Meyerson, Assistant Secretary Treasurer  
Tracy S. Zur, Bergen County Commissioner, Board Member  
Thomas J. Sullivan, Bergen County Commissioner, Board Member  
John E. Ten Hoeve, Jr., Esq., County Adjuster  
Susan Silverstein, Board Member**

A regular meeting of the Bergen County Board of Social Services was held on September 9, 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 September 9, 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 August 22, 2021 and to the Herald News, which was published on August 22, 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 August 18, 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

For the record, Erin N. Delaney joined the meeting by phone at this point.

**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 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	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

**Gina Kennedy – BCBSS Employee**

Gina Kennedy read aloud a letter that was written by one of the union members, which 175 of the union members signed. She read, “we the members of CWA Local 1089 want to use this

opportunity to convey our concerns regarding the future of our staff and workplace. As we all are aware these past 16 months have been extremely trying for labor forces across the globe; our small county agency included. Throughout this unprecedented crisis our BCBSS workers, from those who work diligently from home, to those who risk their consequences of coming to the office, learned a great deal about themselves and the work ethic and most importantly saw a glimpse of the potential futures with the agency. The members of CWA Local 1089 under coordination and direction of our supervisors, administrators, and IT Department truly went above and beyond in order to keep this agency not simply afloat but actually functional and productive. We rightly received plenty of praise from our supervisors, administrators, and the Director herself for the work that was done and the effort that was put forth and although there is almost a pliable sense of accomplishment and pride present within the halls of our agency there is also a great feeling of concern as we patiently yet anxiously await the results of our contract negotiations. In solidarity, our membership believes vehemently that if we are to build a better future and continue to grow the strength of our agency there must be an appropriate response from the Board and our Director at the negotiation table. As we watch our American labor force go through the transformative period as we tune into the news reports that inflation, stagnant wages, and unappreciated employees across the nation we cannot help but insist that the terms of our next contract reflect our commitment to this agency. Specifically, when it comes to our yearly raises and lowering the 10<sup>th</sup> step from 25 to 20 years. We are long overdue for a raise that matches the cost of living in this great but very expensive county, which we reside. We the undersigned strongly urge that you consider our sacrifices throughout this pandemic and our year in year out dedication for the work we do for our community as you sit at the negotiation table and deliberate the future of our workforce and indeed our agency. In solidarity, CWA 1089 members.”

**Dolores Phillips, President of CWA Local 1089**

Dolores Phillips read a short excerpt from a speech from Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., made in 1968 when he was in Memphis, Tennessee supporting striking sanitation workers and it reads, “Our needs are identical with labor’s needs: Decent wages, fair working conditions, livable housing, old-age security, conditions in which families can grow, have education for their children, and respect in the community”. Dolores Phillips commented that is what the wishes of CWA Local 1089 are.

**Bryant Earl – BCBSS Employee**

Bryant Earl commented that it is very disheartening and concerning the level of appreciation that it seems that the workers of the BCBSS are receiving. He mentioned that we have all been working during trying times from COVID being one of them and now the flooding. Somehow, we still have been able to strive and work hard and have Bergen County as one of the counties that is still a shining example in the State of New Jersey. He asked the Board to consider what level of appreciation they do have for the staff and commented is it just words or is it just action.

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 Erin N. Delaney, seconded by Alexandra Harwin, Esq., 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 August 3, 2021**

Chairman William E. Connelly requested a motion to adopt the Open Session minutes. A motion to adopt the Open Session minutes of August 3, 2021 was offered by Yris Encarnacion, seconded by Randi Duffie, and approved as follows:

**Treasurer's Report:**

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) 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 Randi Duffie, seconded by Yris Encarnacion, 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 Randi Duffie, seconded by Yris Encarnacion, 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

Matthew Wielkotz from Wielkotz & Company, LLC who conducted the 2020 audit was present. Mr. Wielkotz thanked Adina Yacoub, Scott Modery, Geraldine Nestrowitz and the rest of the team for making it a delightful place for him and his staff to work. He reported that he had no comments or recommendations and was pleased that there were no compliance issues.

**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 227 to 222 and is down by 5 cases from last month and compared to one year ago it went down by 43 cases, SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) caseload increased from 22,833 to 22,858 and is up by 25 cases from last month and compared to one year ago it went up by 3,809 cases, GA (General Assistance) caseload decreased from 420 to 396 and is down by 24 cases and compared to one year ago it went down by 151 cases, and Medicaid individuals decreased from 36,047 to 35,703 and is down by 344 individuals.

In August, the agency received a total of 1,392 cash and SNAP applications compared to July we received 1,103 new applications. In August, we received 1,151 Medicaid applications compared to July when we received 1,123 new Medicaid applications. The total for August was 2,543 new applications compared to July which was 2,326. In August, we processed 2,613 new applications compared to July when we processed 2,736 new applications. In August, we processed 8,220 actions compared to July when we processed 8,585 actions. We continue to remain timely

with our processing of TANF, GA, SNAP, and Medicaid applications. We are first in the State with our Medicaid renewals for the last several months.

In the month of August, our Emergency Assistance Unit assisted homeless individuals and families. Currently, we have 28 individuals/families in motels. We have 17 families in the HEARTS Program, 10 in the Emergency Shelter, and 7 in TANF/Bridge side. We have 7 families placed at the Center for Hope and Safety (DV shelter). We had 60 Emergency Assistance applications and 125 clients on Temporary Rental Assistance cases. We had 13 placements as referrals from 211. We have 254 active DDD cases. The Adult Protective Service (APS) Unit received 98 referrals and currently have 40 open cases.

**(b) Memoranda to the Board**

Adina Yacoub reported that the following actions were initiated or occurred in August 2021. She was pleased to report that for the last three months the Bergen County Board of Social Services ranked first in our Medicaid renewal timeliness statewide. For ABD clients we mailed 3,712 SNAP applications and 598 were returned; about 16%. Out of 598 returned: 408 were approved, 179 were denied, and 11 are pending. For the FamilyCare clients, we mailed out 1,783 SNAP applications and so far, 220 were returned of which 88 approved, 98 denied, and 34 still pending. This initiative thus far provided 5,495 households an opportunity to apply and so far 496 families are approved and receiving SNAP benefits. Maximum SNAP benefits have been extended to September. 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 August 2021 we had 18 inquiries, 27 approved cases, and 2 denied cases. We paid out \$65,452 in assistance and recovered \$7,951 from those who had PNA (personal needs allowance accounts). We currently have 204 employees who are fully vaccinated, which is 89% of our total staff. In order to open to the public, we need staff that deals with the clients to be fully vaccinated and therefore, they have been advised to do so. We are working with the County, as well as, other partners to offer housing for those displaced due to Storm Ida. We had several meetings with our partners and our HEARTS team did an amazing job screening and placing several families. Adina Yacoub arranged and met with someone from DFD (Division of Family Development) along with representatives from the Community Food Bank of NJ to see how can we assist SNAP applicants become eligible for the program. She plans to use the Bergen Volunteer Center folks, as well as, CFBNJ to assist us in following up with the clients and bringing down our denial rate for SNAP applications.

**Chairman's Report**

In regard to the platform for next month's Board Meeting, Chairman William E. Connelly discussed whether the Board Members wanted to meet in person or by way of Webex. The Board agreed to meet virtually by way of Webex on Tuesday, October 5, 2021 at 4:30 p.m.

**Committee Reports:**

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

Yris Encarnacion reported from August 1 to August 31, 2021 the agency received Medicaid recoveries in the amount of \$13,643.44 and the year-to-date 2021 is \$309,053.52. No new cases were referred to the Prosecutor's office during the month of August.

**(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, October 5, 2021 at 4:30 p.m.** by way of **Webex.**

**Action Items:**

**Resolutions:**

- (a) 2021.9.09 (1) – Resolution Approving Additions, Elimination, and/or Changes to Positions within the Bergen County Board of Social Services
- (b) 2021.9.09 (2) – Resolution Authorizing the Advertisement of Employment for Multiple Openings
- (c) 2021.9.09. (3) – Resolution Authorizing a Promotion for One Full-Time Human Services Specialist 4 to Provisional Full-Time Assistant Administrative Supervisor of Income Maintenance
- (d) 2021.9.09 (4) – Resolution Authorizing a Change in Hours from Part Time to Full Time for One Clerk 1
- (e) 2021.9.09 (5) – Resolution Authorizing a Change in Hours from Part Time to Full Time for One Clerk 1
- (f) 2021.9.09 (6) – Resolution Authorizing a Change in Hours from Part Time to Full Time for One Clerk 1
- (g) 2021.9.09 (7) – Resolution Authorizing the Hiring of One External Part-Time Clerk 1
- (h) 2021.9.09 (8) – Resolution Authorizing a Promotion for One Full-Time Human Services Specialist 2 to Provisional Full-Time Human Services Specialist 3
- (i) 2021.9.09 (9)– Resolution Authorizing a Promotion for One Full-Time Human Services Specialist 2 to Provisional Full-Time Human Services Specialist 3
- (j) 2021.9.09 (10)– Resolution Authorizing a Promotion for One Full-Time Human Services Specialist 3 to Provisional Full-Time Human Services Specialist 4
- (k) 2021.9.09 (11)– Resolution Authorizing a Promotion for One Full-Time Human Services Specialist 1

- (l)2021.9.09 (12)– Resolution Authorizing a Promotion for One Full-Time Human Services Specialist 1
- (m)2021.9.09 (13)– Resolution Authorizing a Promotion for One Full-Time Human Services Specialist 1
- (n) 2021.9.09 (14)– Resolution Authorizing a Promotion for One Full-Time Human Services Specialist 1
- (o) 2021.9.09 (15)– 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) – (n) 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	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 (o) 2021.9.09 (15) 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 Randi Duffie, seconded by Alexandra Harwin, Esq., 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 5:01 p.m.

**CLOSED SESSION:**

The Board went into Closed Session to discuss closed session minutes, personnel, 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 5:38 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 5:38 p.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

Respectfully submitted,



Adina Yacoub  
Director