

**8Minutes of the Meeting  
of the  
Bergen County Board of Social Services  
May 4, 2023**

**PRESENT:** William E. Connelly, Jr., Chairperson (Arrived Late)  
Randi Duffie, Vice-Chairperson  
Thomas J. Sullivan, Bergen County Commissioner, Board Member  
Diane DeCarlo, Esq., County Adjuster  
Alexandra Harwin, Esq., Board Member  
Susan Silverstein, Board Member  
John L. Schettino, Esq., General Counsel  
Scott Modery, Director  
Michele M. Darmochwal, Administrative Secretary

**ABSENT:** Elaine K. Meyerson, Assistant Secretary Treasurer  
Tracy S. Zur, Bergen County Commissioner, Board Member  
Yris Encarnacion, Board Member  
Junior Hernandez, Board Member

A regular meeting of the Bergen County Board of Social Services was held on May 4, 2023 at 4:30 p.m. in the 4th Floor Board Room of the Bergen County Board of Social Services, 218 Route 17 North, Rochelle Park, New Jersey.

**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 May 4, 2023 has been provided in the following manner:

1. By a prominent posting of the schedule of meetings for 2023, 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 January 17, 2023 and to the Herald News, which was published on January 17, 2023.

- 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 January 17, 2023.

A quorum being achieved, the Board met in Public Session.

**PUBLIC SESSION:**

In Chairman William E. Connelly’s absence, Vice Chairwoman Randi Duffie chaired the meeting.

**Flag Salute**

Vice Chairwoman Randi Duffie 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	
ELAINE K. MEYERSON	ASST. SECRETARY TREASURUER		X
TRACY S. ZUR	BERGEN COUNTY COMMISSIONER		X
THOMAS J. SULLIVAN	BERGEN COUNTY COMMISSIONER	X	
DIANE DECARLO, ESQ.	COUNTY ADJUSTER	X	
YRIS ENCARNACION	BOARD MEMBER		X
ALEXANDRA HARWIN	BOARD MEMBER	X	
SUSAN SILVERSTEIN	BOARD MEMBER	X	
JUNIOR HERNANDEZ	BOARD MEMBER		X

**Open Public Comment Period**

Vice Chairwoman Randi Duffie 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 Susan Silverstein, and approved as follows:

MEMBERS	TITLE	AYE	NAY	ABSTAIN	ABSENT
WILLIAM E. CONNELLY	CHAIRPERSON				X
RANDI DUFFIE	VICE CHAIRPERSON	X			
ELAINE K. MEYERSON	ASST. SECRETARY TREASURER				X
TRACY S. ZUR	BERGEN COUNTY COMMISSIONER				X
THOMAS J. SULLIVAN	BERGEN COUNTY COMMISSIONER	X			
DIANE DECARLO, ESQ.	COUNTY ADJUSTER	X			
YRIS ENCARNACION	BOARD MEMBER				X
ALEXANDRA HARWIN	BOARD MEMBER	X			
SUSAN SILVERSTEIN	BOARD MEMBER	X			
JUNIOR HERNANDEZ	BOARD MEMBER				X

**Christine Murphy – Township of Washington**

Christine Murphy, a BCBSS employee, reported that she was present at the meeting this afternoon because her car was stolen from the building’s parking lot. She discussed that the parking lot gate is still not working and has not been down since January. Over the last several weeks, the agency had to call the Fire Department to get one of her co-workers out of the elevator. Yesterday, one of her friends sat in the elevator for 30 minutes as they waited for the Fire Department. She mentioned that the air conditioning works one day and not the next. She expressed that she does not feel safe. She is hopeful that the Board could ask the necessary questions and help address these situations. She expects that when she leaves work at the end of the day her car is going to be in the parking lot. She mentioned that she should not be afraid to use an elevator or that she may be stuck in the elevator for 30 minutes and not be able to contact anyone. She should not be afraid her car is not going to be here. She mentioned that staff should have functional elevators and gates that work. She also mentioned that we should not have clients where employees are because it was someone who was in this building for that reason who stole her car. Ms. Murphy relayed that although her car was recovered it cost her \$365.00 out of her own pocket to get the car out of impound. She communicated that Scott Modery was great. He looked at the videos, and helped her but it should not have ever happened in the first place.

There being no further comments from the public, Vice Chairwoman Randi Duffie 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 Commissioner Thomas J. Sullivan, seconded by Susan Silverstein, and approved as follows:

MEMBERS	TITLE	AYE	NAY	ABSTAIN	ABSENT
WILLIAM E. CONNELLY	CHAIRPERSON				X
RANDI DUFFIE	VICE CHAIRPERSON	X			
ELAINE K. MEYERSON	ASST. SECRETARY TREASURER				X
TRACY S. ZUR	BERGEN COUNTY COMMISSIONER				X
THOMAS J. SULLIVAN	BERGEN COUNTY COMMISSIONER	X			
DIANE DECARLO, ESQ.	COUNTY ADJUSTER	X			
YRIS ENCARNACION	BOARD MEMBER				X
ALEXANDRA HARWIN	BOARD MEMBER	X			
SUSAN SILVERSTEIN	BOARD MEMBER	X			
JUNIOR HERNANDEZ	BOARD MEMBER				X

**Adoption of Minutes:**

**(a) Open Session Minutes of April 4, 2023**

Vice Chairwoman Randi Duffie requested a motion to adopt the Open Session minutes. A motion to adopt the Open Session minutes of April 4, 2023 was offered by Diane DeCarlo, Esq., seconded by Susan Silverstein, and approved as follows:

MEMBERS	TITLE	AYE	NAY	ABSTAIN	ABSENT
WILLIAM E. CONNELLY	CHAIRPERSON				X
RANDI DUFFIE	VICE CHAIRPERSON	X			
ELAINE K. MEYERSON	ASST. SECRETARY TREASURER				X

TRACY S. ZUR	BERGEN COUNTY COMMISSIONER				X
THOMAS J. SULLIVAN	BERGEN COUNTY COMMISSIONER	X			
DIANE DECARLO, ESQ.	COUNTY ADJUSTER	X			
YRIS ENCARNACION	BOARD MEMBER				X
ALEXANDRA HARWIN	BOARD MEMBER			X	
SUSAN SILVERSTEIN	BOARD MEMBER	X			
JUNIOR HERNANDEZ	BOARD MEMBER				X

Scott Modery informed the Board Members that Geri Nestrowitz, Supervising Accountant, is going to provide the Treasurer’s Report this afternoon.

For the record, Chairman William E. Connelly arrived at this point.

**Treasurer’s Report:**

**(a) Bills List and Schedule of Vouchers:**

Vice Chairwoman Randi Duffie requested a motion to approve the Bill’s List and Schedule of Vouchers. A motion to approve the Bill’s List and Schedule of Vouchers was offered by Alexandra Harwin, Esq., seconded by Commissioner Thomas J. Sullivan, and approved as follows:

MEMBERS	TITLE	AYE	NAY	ABSTAIN	ABSENT
WILLIAM E. CONNELLY	CHAIRPERSON	X			
RANDI DUFFIE	VICE CHAIRPERSON	X			
ELAINE K. MEYERSON	ASST. SECRETARY TREASURER				X
TRACY S. ZUR	BERGEN COUNTY COMMISSIONER				X
THOMAS J. SULLIVAN	BERGEN COUNTY COMMISSIONER	X			
DIANE DECARLO, ESQ.	COUNTY ADJUSTER	X			
YRIS ENCARNACION	BOARD MEMBER				X
ALEXANDRA HARWIN	BOARD MEMBER	X			
SUSAN SILVERSTEIN	BOARD MEMBER	X			
JUNIOR HERNANDEZ	BOARD MEMBER				X

At this point, Vice Chairwoman Randi Duffie turned over the gavel to Chairman William E. Connelly, and he chaired the remainder of the meeting.

**Administration Report:**

**(a) Monthly Reports – Statistical & Financial:**

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

Scott Modery reported that the TANF (Temporary Assistance to Needy Families) caseload for March 2023 was 384 and February 2023 was 384 cases, and compared to one year ago it went up 123 cases, SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) caseload for March was 22,758 and February 2023 was 22,397 and compared to one year ago it went up by 570 cases, GA (General Assistance) caseload for March was 425 cases and February 2023 was 410 cases and

compared to one year ago it went down by 31 cases. In regard to Medicaid, there were 60,293 individuals in March and in February 2023 there were 59,869 an increase of 424 individuals.

Burial stats are as follows: 19 inquires, 21 approved, and 3 denials. The agency paid out \$97,267.00 and recovered \$2,375.42.

In March 2023, the agency received 1,653 applications for cash and SNAP applications and 1,397 Medicaid applications for a total of 3,050. In February 2023, the agency received 1,725 applications for cash and SNAP applications and 1,300 Medicaid applications for a total of 3,025.

Our Emergency Assistance Unit assisted homeless individuals and families. Currently, we have 3 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 10 families placed at the Center for Hope and Safety (DV shelter). We had 53 Emergency Assistance applications and 106 clients on Temporary Rental Assistance. We had 19 placements as referrals from 211. We have 251 active DDD cases. The Adult Protective Service (APS) Unit received 94 referrals and currently have 40 open cases.

Alexandra Harwin, Esq. asked Scott Modery if he would walk the Board through what the numerical impact is on people returning to pre-pandemic levels including the magnitude of cuts of people's benefits.

Scott Modery explained that SNAP increased from \$23.00 to \$95.00. He also explained that there are different thresholds based on family size and income. Mr. Modery will get this information and forward it on to Alexandra Harwin, Esq.

**(b) Memoranda to the Board**

Scott Modery reported that we were represented by Adult Protective Services (APS) staff at the Spring Caregivers Conference on April 20, 2023. The event was held at One Bergen County Plaza and was attended by Home Health Aide Agencies, Bergen County Senior Services, and other senior specific entities. Scott Modery and Ritzy Moralez-Diaz, Senior Personnel Technician, met with the CWA Local 1089 President and a CWA Staff Representative for a Labor Management meeting on April 20, 2023. The meeting went well and there was a productive conversation. As per the wishes of the Board, Mr. Modery has been working diligently to reduce part-time staff over the past months. The main goal is to provide an opportunity to part-time staff internally if they desire a full-time position, while simultaneously opening opportunities from the outside in an attempt to create the most proficient, motivated, and highest producing staff. This provides the best services to the residents of Bergen County while maximizing the usage of taxpayer funds. The agency has less part-time staff today than we have in over three years. We have over 20% less than our peak number and are poised to continue a downward trend. On April 27, 2023 we were represented by our APS Department at the Bergen County Dementia Friendly Initiative at Two

Bergen County Plaza. Ritzzy Morales-Diaz organized and executed a Bring Your Child to Work Day and 67 children attended our workplace on April 27, 2023. This event was funded entirely by donations, which were collected through a Jeans Day sponsored by CWA Local 1089. Mr. Modery thanked the Board Members who generously donated, as well as, all the staff and parents who donated and volunteered. Mr. Modery discussed the building issues. He reported that the building HVAC has been particularly problematic over the past month. The 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> floors were not functioning properly and as a result the 5<sup>th</sup> floor reached temperatures around 90 degrees on two afternoons. After a difficult few weeks, the system has ultimately been fixed. Mr. Modery will forward a copy of the building lease to Alexandra Harwin, Esq. for her to read. Our latest struggles are with the elevators. Over the past several months we have operated with one or two (of three total) common elevator cars not functioning. One day recently there were no elevators at all. There have been several employees stuck who required extraction over these weeks. Mr. Modery has ongoing communications with both the Building Engineer and Building Management regarding this situation. Effective May 1, 2023 the agency switched dental carriers from Aetna to Delta Dental. Our two-year increase is 14%, which is very high but far less than the closest competitor who was proposing 19.3% for one year.

### **Chairman's Report**

Chairman William E. Connelly reported that there have been changes made to our Board. He indicated that Erin N. Delaney, Secretary Treasurer, is no longer a member of the Board. Elaine K. Meyerson, Assistant Secretary Treasurer, was made Secretary Treasurer and Susan Silverstein was made Assistant Secretary Treasurer.

In addition, Diane DeCarlo, County Adjuster, will replace the former County Adjuster John E. Ten Hoeve, Esq., and she will sit on the Building & Grounds Committee. Junior Hernandez will fill the vacancies on the Audit & Budget, Personnel, and Negotiations Committees.

### **Committee Reports:**

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

Alexandra Harwin, Esq. reported from April 1 to April 30, 2023 the agency received Medicaid recoveries in the amount of \$3,275.87 and the year-to-date 2023 is \$16,398.49. No new cases were referred to the Prosecutor's office during the month of April.

#### **(b) Audit & Budget Committee**

No report.

#### **(c) Building & Grounds Committee**

No report.

**(d) Personnel Committee**

Chairman William E. Connelly reported that he spoke with Elaine K. Meyerson who was not present at today's meeting. She indicated that she had nothing to report for the Personnel Committee this month.

**OLD BUSINESS:**

None

**NEW BUSINESS:**

None

**(a) Next Board Meeting Date**

The next Board Meeting is scheduled to be held in person on **Tuesday, June 6, 2023 at 4:30 p.m.**

**Action Items:**

**Resolutions**

- (a) 2023.5.04 (1) – Resolution Approving Additions, Elimination, and/or Changes to Positions within the Bergen County Board of Social Services
- (b) 2023.5.04 (2) – Resolution Authorizing the Advertisement of Employment for Multiple Openings
- (c) 2023.5.04 (3) – Resolution Authorizing a Change in Hours from One Internal Part-Time Human Services Aide to Full-Time Human Services Aide
- (d) 2023.5.04 (4) – Resolution Authorizing the Hiring of One External Full-Time Clerk 1
- (e) 2023.5.04 (5) – Resolution Authorizing the Hiring of One External Full-Time Clerk 1
- (f) 2023.5.04 (6) – Resolution Authorizing the Hiring of One External Full-Time Clerk 1
- (g) 2023.5.04 (7) – Resolution Authorizing the Hiring of One External Full-Time Clerk 1
- (h) 2023.5.04 (8) – Resolution Authorizing a Promotion for One Internal Full-Time Principal Employee Benefit Clerk to Provisional Full-Time Employee Benefits Specialist
- (i) 2023.5.04 (9) – Resolution Authorizing Rescinding Resolution 2023.4.04 (12) Authorizing the Hiring of One External Part-Time Clerk 1
- (j) 2023.5.04 (10) – Resolution Authorizing Rescinding Resolution 2023.4.04 (14) Authorizing the Hiring of One External Full-Time Clerk 1 Bilingual in Spanish
- (k) 2023.5.04 (11) – Resolution Authorizing the Advertisement and Offer of Employment for Five Internal or External Full-Time Human Services Aides
- (l) 2023.5.04 (12) – Resolution Authorizing a Change in Hours for Two Internal Part-Time Human Services Aides to Two Full-Time Human Services Aides
- (m) 2023.5.04 (13) – Resolution Authorizing a Change in Hours for One Internal Part-Time Clerk 1 to Full-Time Clerk 1
- (n) 2023.5.04 (14) – Resolution Authorizing the Advertisement and Offer of Employment for One External Part-Time Clerk 1

- (o) 2023.5.04 (15) – Resolution Approving Leasing Proposal with Leaf Capital Funding
- (p) 2023.5.04 (16) – Resolution Approving Transfer of General Assistance Cases from the Village of Ridgefield Park
- (q) 2023.5.04 (17) – 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) – (p) was offered by Alexandra Harwin, Esq., seconded by Susan Silverstein, and approved as follows:

MEMBERS	TITLE	AYE	NAY	ABSTAIN	ABSENT
WILLIAM E. CONNELLY	CHAIRPERSON	X			
RANDI DUFFIE	VICE CHAIRPERSON	X			
ELAINE K. MEYERSON	SECRETARY TREASURER				X
SUSAN SILVERSTEIN	ASST. SECRETARY TREASURER	X			
TRACY S. ZUR	BERGEN COUNTY COMMISSIONER				X
THOMAS J. SULLIVAN	BERGEN COUNTY COMMISSIONER	X			
DIANE DECARLO, ESQ.	COUNTY ADJUSTER	X			
YRIS ENCARNACION	BOARD MEMBER				X
ALEXANDRA HARWIN	BOARD MEMBER	X			
JUNIOR HERNANDEZ	BOARD MEMBER				X

The Board did not go into Closed Session; therefore, no action was taken in regard to Resolution 2023.5.04 (17).

**Adoption of Minutes:**

**Closed Session Minutes of April 4, 2023**

Chairman William E. Connelly requested a motion to adopt the Closed Session minutes. A motion to adopt the Closed Session minutes of April 4, 2023 was offered by Diane DeCarlo, Esq., seconded by Susan Silverstein, and approved as follows:

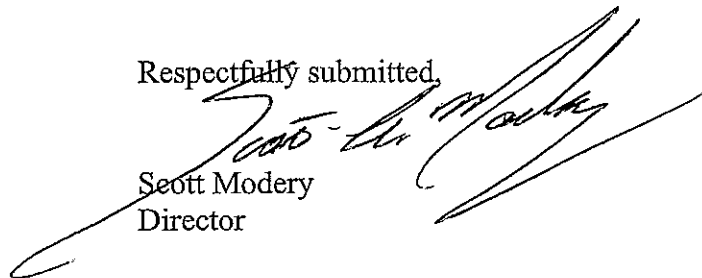
MEMBERS	TITLE	AYE	NAY	ABSTAIN	ABSENT
WILLIAM E. CONNELLY	CHAIRPERSON	X			
RANDI DUFFIE	VICE CHAIRPERSON	X			
ELAINE K. MEYERSON	SECRETARY TREASURER				X
SUSAN SILVERSTEIN	ASST. SECRETARY TREASURER	X			
TRACY S. ZUR	BERGEN COUNTY COMMISSIONER				X
THOMAS J. SULLIVAN	BERGEN COUNTY COMMISSIONER	X			
DIANE DECARLO, ESQ.	COUNTY ADJUSTER	X			
YRIS ENCARNACION	BOARD MEMBER				X
ALEXANDRA HARWIN	BOARD MEMBER			X	
JUNIOR HERNANDEZ	BOARD MEMBER				X

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 5:07 p.m. was offered by Vice Chairwoman Randi Duffie, seconded by Commissioner Thomas J. Sullivan, and approved as follows:



MEMBERS	TITLE	AYE	NAY	ABSTAIN	ABSENT
WILLIAM E. CONNELLY	CHAIRPERSON	X			
RANDI DUFFIE	VICE CHAIRPERSON	X			
ELAINE K. MEYERSON	SECRETARY TREASURER				X
SUSAN SILVERSTEIN	ASST. SECRETARY TREASURER	X			
TRACY S. ZUR	BERGEN COUNTY COMMISSIONER				X
THOMAS J. SULLIVAN	BERGEN COUNTY COMMISSIONER	X			
DIANE DECARLO, ESQ.	COUNTY ADJUSTER	X			
YRIS ENCARNACION	BOARD MEMBER				X
ALEXANDRA HARWIN	BOARD MEMBER	X			
JUNIOR HERNANDEZ	BOARD MEMBER				X

Respectfully submitted,



Scott Modery  
Director