

**Minutes of the Meeting  
of the  
Bergen County Board of Social Services  
July 6, 2023**

**PRESENT:** **Randi Duffie, Vice-Chairperson**  
**Susan Silverstein, Assistant Secretary Treasurer**  
**Diane DeCarlo, Esq., County Adjuster**  
**Yris Encarnacion, Board Member**  
**Alexandra Harwin, Esq., Board Member**  
**Junior Hernandez, Board Member**  
**John L. Schettino, Esq., General Counsel**  
**Scott Modery, Director**  
**Michele M. Darmochwal, Administrative Secretary**

**ABSENT:** **William E. Connelly, Jr., Chairperson**  
**Elaine K. Meyerson, Secretary Treasurer**  
**Tracy S. Zur, Bergen County Commissioner, Board Member**  
**Thomas J. Sullivan, Bergen County Commissioner, Board Member**

A regular meeting of the Bergen County Board of Social Services was held on July 6, 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 July 6, 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.

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 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	SECRETARY TREASURER		X
SUSAN SILVERSTEIN	ASSISTANT 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	

**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 Yris Encarnacion, 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			

There being no 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 Susan Silverstein, seconded by Junior Hernandez, 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			

**Adoption of Minutes:**

**(a) Open Session Minutes of June 6, 2023**

Vice-Chairwoman Randi Duffie requested a motion to adopt the Open Session minutes. A motion to adopt the Open Session minutes of June 6, 2023 was offered by Junior Hernandez, 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			

Geri Nestrowitz, Supervising Accountant, provided the Treasurer’s Report this afternoon.

**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 Yris Encarnacion, 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			

**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 May 2023 was 385 and April 2023 was 380 cases, and compared to one year ago it went up 126 cases, SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) caseload for May was 22,758 and April 2023 was 22,419 and compared to one year ago it went up by 548 cases, GA (General Assistance) caseload for May was 421 cases and April 2023 was 427 cases and compared to one year ago it went down by 63 cases. In regard to Medicaid, there were 61,043 individuals in May and in April 2023 there were 60,770 an increase of 273 individuals.

Burial stats are as follows: 20 inquires, 32 approved, and 1 denial. The agency paid out \$98,427.92 and recovered \$2,228.29.

In May 2023, the agency received 1,570 applications for cash and SNAP applications and 1,448 Medicaid applications for a total of 3,018. In April 2023, the agency received 1,452 applications for cash and SNAP applications and 1,186 Medicaid applications for a total of 2,638.

Our Emergency Assistance Unit assisted homeless individuals and families. Currently, we have 3 individuals/families in motels. We have 27 families in the HEARTS Program, 15 in the Emergency Shelter, and 12 in TANF/Bridge side. We have 5 families placed at the Center for Hope and Safety (DV shelter). We had 60 Emergency Assistance applications and 103 clients on Temporary Rental Assistance. We had 32 placements as referrals from 211. We have 249 active DDD cases. The Adult Protective Service (APS) Unit received 103 referrals and currently have 43 open cases.

**(b) Memoranda to the Board**

Scott Modery reported that recognizing the difficulties of the post Public Health Emergency expiration of waivers, in February 2023 we were notified by the State of NJ that we would receive \$227,902.45 of SNAP ARPA funding for the express purpose of SNAP activities. We have been using this funding for overtime to keep SNAP cases current. This month, we have been notified of additional money for the same purpose. All of this funding must be spent by September 30, 2023. On June 7, 2023 Maya Jacob and Vicky Tsakarakis hosted a resource table at the 2023 Bergen County Food Pantry Summit. On June 8, 2023 Yvonne Jordan, Allan Larobardier, Geraldine Nestrowitz, Andrew Davidowicz and Scott Modery met with Warren County Board of Social Services to discuss their transition to a mostly paperless process. While Warren County is much

smaller than Bergen, it provided some valuable insights into how we might be able to perform some testing, proof of concept, etc. Building on this, we are preparing to design and deploy this experiment in one unit shortly. On June 9, 2023 Geraldine Nestrowitz and Scott Modery attended the Budget Hearing at One Bergen County Plaza and they presented a summary of our agency's position as it relates to programs and workloads. In addition, they also provided some statistics on the County residents we serve. Scott Modery presented our budget request for 2023. He does not know what the final outcome will be but in all appearances the presentation was well received. After learning that Governor Murphy signed Executive Order 332, Scott Modery reached out to Deputy Chief of Staff Jared Lautz at the County to determine whether the County has any remaining COVID policies in place. Jared Lautz sent Scott Modery an email forwarded to all County staff on May 18, 2023 entitled "COVID Protocols and Policies Update". Scott Modery used that email as a template to fashion our email to staff to lift our COVID restrictions and policies. The email was sent on June 21, 2023 and that email was included with the Board packet.

On June 27, 2022, Scott Modery had a conversation with the Building Manager regarding the elevator condition and service. The Building Manager indicated that he received a quote for replacement and is seeking additional quotes on the project. From January to current, we have promoted 19 employees internally. Additionally, we have granted 16 employees the opportunity to go from part-time employment to full-time employment. Our count of part-time staff currently stands at 20 people or 8.47% of total staffing. This is down from a high of 14.41% or 33 staff within the past 3 years. While some part-time staff may continue to be beneficial in some areas, and some prefer to remain in part-time employment, we have made significant inroads into providing the opportunity for part time to full-time employment. The Department of Human Services has announced their plan to replace stolen Food & Cash assistance (SNAP) benefits for fraud victims. A flyer was included with the Board packet. The U.S. Congress passed a law in late December 2022 to replace SNAP benefits stolen via card skimming, card cloning, and other similar methods in response to increased reports of benefit theft. The law allows states to use federal funds to replace benefits stolen electronically between October 1, 2022 and September 30, 2024. Prior to this law, states had no authority to replace benefits that had been stolen from a SNAP household. CWA 1089 has contacted our Labor Attorney, and we are in the process of establishing dates to begin negotiations for the contract which ends December 31, 2023. Our 2022 audit has officially started on June 29, 2023.

### **Chairman's Report**

Vice-Chairwoman Randi Duffie asked that all Board Members please contact Michele Darmochwal, every month, to confirm their attendance so that she can ensure a quorum is met.

### **Committee Reports:**

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

Alexandra Harwin, Esq. reported from June 1 to June 30, 2023 the agency received Medicaid recoveries in the amount of \$2,676.86 and the year-to-date 2023 is \$39,603.46. No new cases were referred to the Prosecutor's office during the month of June.

(b) **Audit & Budget Committee**

No report.

(c) **Building & Grounds Committee**

No report.

(d) **Personnel Committee**

No report.

**OLD BUSINESS:**

None

**NEW BUSINESS:**

None

(a) **Next Board Meeting Date**

The next Board Meeting is scheduled to be held in person on **Thursday, August 3, 2023 at 4:30 p.m.**

**Action Items:**

**Resolutions**

- (a) 2023.7.06 (1) – Resolution Approving Additions, Elimination, and/or Changes to Positions within the Bergen County Board of Social Services
- (b) 2023.7.06 (2) – Resolution Authorizing the Advertisement of Employment for Multiple Openings
- (c) 2023.7.06 (3) – Resolution Authorizing the Hiring of One External Part-Time Clerk 1
- (d) 2023.7.06 (4) – Resolution Authorizing a Promotion for One Full-Time Human Services Specialist 2 to Full-Time Human Services Specialist 3
- (e) 2023.7.06 (5) – Resolution Authorizing a Promotion for One Full-Time Human Services Specialist 3 to Full-Time Human Services Specialist 4
- (f) 2023.7.06 (6) – Resolution Authorizing the Hiring of One External Provisional Full-Time Accountant
- (g) 2023.7.06 (7) – Resolution Authorizing a Change in Hours for One Internal Part-Time Human Services Aide to One Full-Time Human Services Aide
- (h) 2023.7.06 (8) – Resolution Approving 2<sup>nd</sup> Step Grievance Hearing Decision
- (i) 2023.7.06 (9) – Resolution Authorizing Application for Grant from the State of New Jersey Department of Community Affairs in Connection with the LIHEAP CWA Administration 2023 Program
- (j) 2023.7.06 (10) – Resolution Authorizing Application for Grant from the State of New Jersey Department of Community Affairs in Connection with the Universal Service Fund CWA Administration 2023 Program

(k) 2023.7.06 (11) – 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) – (j) was offered by Yris Encarnacion, seconded by Diane DeCarlo, Esq., 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 (k) 2023.7.06 (11).

**Adoption of Minutes:**

**Closed Session Minutes of June 6, 2023**

Vice Chairwoman Randi Duffie requested a motion to adopt the Closed Session minutes. A motion to adopt the Closed Session minutes of June 6, 2023 was offered by Yris Encarnacion, seconded by Junior Hernandez, and approved as follows:

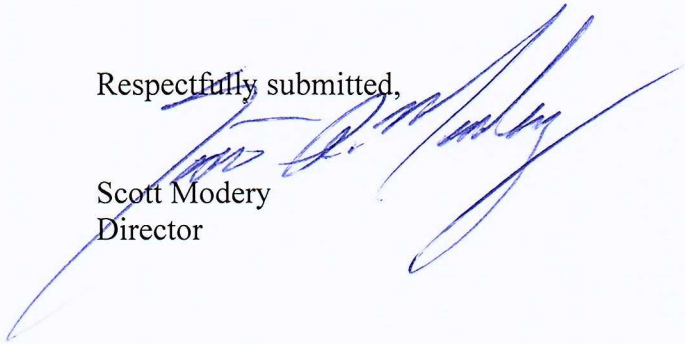
MEMBERS	TITLE	AYE	NAY	ABSTAIN	ABSENT
WILLIAM E. CONNELLY	CHAIRPERSON				X
RANDI DUFFIE	VICE CHAIRPERSON	X			
ELAINE K. MEYERSON	SECRETARY TREASURER				X
SUSAN SILVERSTEIN	ASST. SECRETARY TREASURER	X			
TRACY S. ZUR	BERGEN COUNTY COMMISSIONER				X
THOMAS J. SULLIVAN	BERGEN COUNTY COMMISSIONER				X
DIANE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

Vice Chairwoman Randi Duffie requested a motion to adjourn the meeting. With no further business to conclude, a motion to adjourn the meeting at approximately 4:55 p.m. 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			

Respectfully submitted,



Scott Modery  
Director