

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

**PRESENT:** William E. Connelly, Jr., Chairperson (Arrived Late)  
Randi Duffie, Vice-Chairperson (Arrived Late)  
Elaine K. Meyerson, Secretary Treasurer  
Susan Silverstein, Assistant Secretary Treasurer  
Tracy S. Zur, Bergen County Commissioner, Board Member  
Diane DeCarlo, Esq., County Adjuster  
Yris Encarnacion, Board Member (Arrived Late)  
Alexandra Harwin, Esq., Board Member  
Junior Hernandez, Board Member  
John L. Schettino, Esq., General Counsel  
Scott Modery, Director  
Michele M. Darmochwal, Administrative Secretary

**ABSENT:** Thomas J. Sullivan, Bergen County Commissioner, Board Member

A regular meeting of the Bergen County Board of Social Services was held on June 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 June 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, Elaine K. Meyerson chaired the meeting.

**Flag Salute**

Elaine K. Meyerson 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	

**Oath of Office**

Commissioner Tracy S. Zur administered the Oath of Office to Junior Hernandez.

For the record, William E. Connelly and Yris Encarnacion arrived at approximately 4:40 p.m.

At this point, Elaine K. Meyerson turned over the gavel to Chairman William E. Connelly, and he chaired the remainder of the meeting.

**Roll Call**

A second 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**

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 Commissioner Tracy S. Zur, 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, 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 Commissioner Tracy S. Zur, 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			

For the record, Vice Chairwoman Randi Duffie arrived at approximately 4:41 p.m.

**Workforce Development Board Presentation**

Tammy Molinelli, Executive Director, from the Workforce Development Board (WDB) introduced herself to the Board. She discussed that the WDB and the Bergen County Board of Social Services (BCBSS) have shared customers. Her job as Executive Director is to oversee the public workforce system and all the folks that come to the TANF/SNAP/GA programs that come through their agency. She thanked Scott Modery for his attendance on the Workforce Development

Board. She indicated that they completed their four-year strategic workforce plan. Clients that come through the Board of Social Services are referred to the Bergen County Job Center whether they are TANF/SNAP/GA clients and there are some very interesting things that they recognized in the local planning progress that she thought was really important to share. There are some significant trends in workforce and their job is to be able to provide people with support systems, training, and everything they need to be self-sufficient in the workplace. They are seeing a tremendous rise in folks 55 and older and seniors that want to continue to work. They are also seeing a significant rise in mental health issues and substance abuse. She indicated that we are going to be seeing folks that are older in both our agencies. Enid Monzon who is a LSW and works as a TANF Counselor at the Bergen County Job Center walked the Board through the steps when a TANF customer comes to see her.

Tammy Molinelli indicated that they have a local strategic four-year plan that they write with the County Executive. She offered to send that to Scott Modery and the Board to read. She indicated that it will go up for public comment hopefully, next week and will be out on the street for 30 days. She would like the Board's thoughts and feedback.

Commissioner Tracy S. Zur asked Tammy Molinelli what she is seeing is the biggest challenge in the hand-off process.

Tammy Molinelli indicated now that COVID is over the re-tooling of staff in all of our agencies. When people come to them, the regulations currently allow that anyone who is deemed to be work ready walks through their door and when individuals come for services sometimes they do not always self-disclose. They might have a substance abuse issue or mental health challenges. She thinks what we really need to do in this hand off and in this relationship is stay connected and stay communicated. The best thing moving forward is continue our relationship with open dialogue so that if someone comes in for services with them and they cannot speak English, how can we work together to get them into English as a second language program. The gap between those who have high literacy skills and those who don't that gap is growing as well. People come to the Job Center with challenges and barriers that may not have been readily seen at the BCBSS.

Commissioner Tracy S. Zur asked Tammy Molinelli if they have ESL at the Bergen County Job Center.

Tammy Molinelli indicated that they do. They fund Title II programs that work one-on-one with individuals who need English as a second language skill. They offer English as a second language and literacy services at the Job Center for those who have low literacy skills. They have a free online learning system of training programs through Metrix Learning so anyone in the County can go online and get really good quality free training. The menu for training is really robust. She encouraged the Board to share this information with all community members. Anyone can go to **[bergenjobcenter.com](http://bergenjobcenter.com)**. When you go on their website, you will see SkillUp Bergen just click the button and the entire menu of free online training is available there. She encouraged anyone at every

agency to share this information.

Scott Modery indicated that we are going to look at getting a hook through our website.

### **Step 2 Grievance Hearing**

Bryant Earl, Secretary Treasurer of CWA Local 1089, was in attendance to present a class action grievance on behalf of all the members of CWA Local 1089. It was noted that the grievant's wish was to have this grievance hearing in Open Session.

Mr. Earl indicated that they believe that nobody should be working out of their title. They submitted evidence that their contract states we as an agency follow Civil Service and NJAC 4A:3-34 says that no person should be working outside of the code but they have a lot of members that are working below their title and above their title. They believe that is a violation of Civil Service and a violation of their contract. They have members that are working below their title and members working above their title. They believe there are other ways to go about it instead of unilaterally having people work outside of their title.

John L. Schettino, Esq. asked Bryant Earl if staff are working outside of their title on a permanent basis or a temporary basis.

Bryant Earl indicated that they have not been given any information and don't know if it is permanent or temporary.

John L. Schettino, Esq. asked Bryant Earl if he had an example of how long someone worked out of title.

Bryant Earl indicated maybe a year.

Alexandra Harwin, Esq. asked Bryant Earl if he could explain from his perspective what is causing this problem where they have so many people working above or below their title.

Bryant Earl explained that he believes because there is a hiring need in the agency there is a need for people to essentially work outside of their title but they do not know the process regarding who is picked to work out of their title. It is just essentially there is a need and this is the person we pick until when.

Scott Modery explained the agency's side and addressed the comments made by CWA Local 1089. His understanding is that the grievance was brought based on a specific situation that occurred in which there were certain staff of varying titles that were asked by way of email to temporarily assist with the interview windows on Floor 2. In the email, which was presented at the Step 1 grievance, the email stated that it was due to staffing issues and we were in the process of onboarding employees and until the employees were onboarded people were temporarily assigned

for half a day once every two weeks to cover a window on Floor 2. The individuals met at the Step 1 grievance hearing and the grievance was presented and then there was an adjournment because at the time it was not clear what the grievance was regarding. By the time CWA Local 1089 and the agency agreed to meet for the second time the situation no longer existed because it was temporary all along. To the larger issue based upon what Scott Modery has seen here there wasn't anything presented to demonstrate that people are working out of title. There were a lot of exhibits of different titles demonstrating different responsibilities and duties and a lot of Civil Service descriptions and there was a lot of cross over within those. There was not any specific examples of person A, B, or C not working within their title specifications because of 1, 2, and 3. It was just a very general statement.

Scott Modery discussed in this scenario the person is not appointed or employed under a different title. They were asked to work and it was a temporary assignment and that is what the decision by the Hearing Officer addressed.

John L. Schettino, Esq. announced that the deliberation will be in Closed Session, and CWA Local 1089 will be informed of the Board's decision at the next Board Meeting.

**Adoption of Minutes:**

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

Chairman William E. Connelly requested a motion to adopt the Open Session minutes. A motion to adopt the Open Session minutes of May 4, 2023 was offered by Susan Silverstein, 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		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:**

Chairman William E. Connelly 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 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			
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 April 2023 was 380 and March 2023 was 384 cases, and compared to one year ago it went up 121 cases, SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) caseload for April was 22,419 and March 2023 was 22,758 and compared to one year ago it went up by 310 cases, GA (General Assistance) caseload for April was 427 cases and March 2023 was 425 cases and compared to one year ago it went down by 41 cases. In regard to Medicaid, there were 60,770 individuals in April and in March 2023 there were 60,293 an increase of 477 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 April 2023, the agency received 1,452 applications for cash and SNAP applications and 1,186 Medicaid applications for a total of 2,638. 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.

Our Emergency Assistance Unit assisted homeless individuals and families. Currently, we have 5 individuals/families in motels. We have 20 families in the HEARTS Program, 12 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 had 76 Emergency Assistance applications and 102 clients on Temporary Rental Assistance. We had 31 placements as referrals from 211. We have 249 active DDD cases. The Adult Protective Service (APS) Unit received 102 referrals and currently have 39 open cases.

**(b) Memoranda to the Board**

Scott Modery reported that we are watching S-2603, which is proposed legislation that would authorize a public body to remotely conduct a meeting and public business, vote on all matters, and receive public comment. This would potentially provide flexibility to conduct Board Meetings remotely if so desired. During the month of May we implemented an “account sweep”

service offered by Wells Fargo. This service “sweeps” funds out of our Administrative Account for overnight investment and pays a significant interest rate. We had this service 20 years ago when interest rates were higher, but we stopped the service when rates fell. The restart of this service will allow us to take advantage of the recently elevated interest rates. We have a Budget Hearing scheduled for June 9, 2023 at 9:30 a.m. in Hackensack at which time we will be presenting our budget and requests for 2023. Scott Modery was notified that the Division of Family Development, Division of Medical Assistance and Health Services, and Child Support approved our 2023 budget and our final approval is pending with Department of Community Affairs. On Thursday, May 18, 2023 our Adult Protective Service (APS) Administrator and Supervisor attended the public hearing on the needs of older adults in Bergen County. On Sunday, May 21, 2023 we were represented by staff at the Bergen County Stand Down, which provides supplies and other services to assist our local veterans in combating homelessness. On Saturday, June 3, 2023 we were represented by APS staff at the Bergen County Elder Abuse Awareness Walk. In regard to the building, we continue to have ongoing elevator issues. Scott Modery had conversations with the building manager, and he has acknowledged that the units are an issue. Scott Modery and the building manager called the elevator vendor together and while on the phone he requested the vendor send a proposal for replacement of the elevator cars and mechanicals. Scott Modery requested that the building manager provide him with regular updates on the progress going forward so that he can inform the Board and employees. We have ongoing voluntary overtime to keep SNAP cases current. This overtime is funded through a grant provided to each county specifically for this purpose. The grant money will be exhausted within a month or so. However, we have been unofficially notified that some additional grant money may be provided in the near future.

### **Chairman’s Report**

Chairman William E. Connelly asked Scott Modery what the landlord’s response was regarding some of the building issues.

Scott Modery indicated that the air conditioning has been repaired, and it is functional. There are still some problem areas but there have always been some problem areas so it is just something that we have to stay on top of. The elevators continue to be an issue. Today, we had one out of three elevators working. The landlord agrees that the elevators are completely outdated and they cannot get parts anymore. The parts that they are getting are after market and the after-market parts are not working properly. The landlord asked for a quote to replace the elevators. This would be a capital improvement to the building. Scott Modery indicated that through a chain of emails, he asked the building manager to produce an elevator safety inspection certificate, but he has not yet received anything.

### **Committee Reports:**

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

Alexandra Harwin, Esq. reported from May 1 to May 31, 2023 the agency received Medicaid recoveries in the amount of \$20,528.11 and the year-to-date 2023 is \$36,926.60. No new cases were referred to the Prosecutor’s office during the month of May.



(b) **Audit & Budget Committee**

Scott Modery reported that he has a Budget Hearing with the County at 9:30 a.m. on Friday, June 9, 2023.

(c) **Building & Grounds Committee**

A discussion ensued regarding this item previously.

(d) **Personnel Committee**

Elaine K. Meyerson reported that there is no report 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 **Thursday, July 6, 2023 at 4:30 p.m.**

**Action Items:**

**Resolutions**

- (a) 2023.6.06 (1) – Resolution Approving Additions, Elimination, and/or Changes to Positions within the Bergen County Board of Social Services
- (b) 2023.6.06 (2) – Resolution Authorizing the Advertisement of Employment for Multiple Openings
- (c) 2023.6.06 (3) – Resolution Authorizing a Promotion for One Internal Full-Time Human Services Aide
- (d) 2023.6.06 (4) – Resolution Authorizing a Promotion for One Internal Full-Time Human Services Aide
- (e) 2023.6.06 (5) – Resolution Authorizing a Promotion for One Internal Full-Time Human Services Aide
- (f) 2023.6.06 (6) – Resolution Authorizing a Promotion for One Internal Full-Time Human Services Aide
- (g) 2023.6.06 (7) – Resolution Authorizing a Change in Hours from One Internal Part-Time Human Services Aide to Full-Time Human Services Aide
- (h) 2023.6.06 (8) – Resolution Authorizing a Change in Hours from One Internal Part-Time Clerk 1 to Full-Time Clerk 1
- (i) 2023.6.06 (9) – Resolution Authorizing the Advertisement and Offer of Employment for Three External Part-Time Clerks 1
- (j) 2023.6.06 (10) – Resolution the Advertisement and Offer of Employment for One External Full-Time Clerk 1 Bilingual in Spanish

- (k) 2023.6.06 (11) – Resolution Authorizing an Offer of Employment for One Internal Full-Time Human Services Specialist 3
- (l) 2023.6.06 (12) – Resolution Authorizing an Offer of Employment for One Internal Full-Time Human Services Specialist 4
- (m) 2023.6.06 (13) – 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) – (l) was offered by Yris Encarnacion, 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			
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			

A motion to discuss and approve Resolution (m) 2023.6.06 (13) 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 and to go into Closed Session 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			
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 went into Closed Session at approximately 5:30 p.m.

**CLOSED SESSION:**

The Board went into Closed Session to discuss personnel matters. 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 20 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.

**OPEN SESSION:**

**Adoption of Minutes:**

There were no Closed Session Minutes of May 4, 2023.

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 5:35 p.m. 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			
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