

**Minutes of the Meeting  
of the  
Bergen County Board of Social Services  
February 6, 2024**

**PRESENT:** William E. Connelly, Jr., Chairperson  
Randi Duffie, Vice-Chairperson  
Susan Silverstein, Assistant Secretary Treasurer  
Tracy S. Zur, B.C. Commissioner, Board Member  
Thomas J. Sullivan, Bergen County Commissioner, Board Member  
Diane DeCarlo, Esq., County Adjuster  
Yris Encarnacion, Board Member  
Junior Hernandez, Ph.D., Board Member  
John L. Schettino, Esq., General Counsel  
Scott Modery, Director  
Michele M. Darmochwal, Administrative Secretary

**ABSENT:** Elaine K. Meyerson, Secretary Treasurer  
Alexandra Harwin, Esq., Board Member

A regular meeting of the Bergen County Board of Social Services was scheduled for February 6, 2024 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 February 6, 2024 has been provided in the following manner:

1. By a prominent posting of the schedule of meetings for 2024, 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 24, 2024 and to the Herald News, which was published on January 24, 2024.

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 19, 2024.

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.

**Oath of Office**

John L. Schettino, Esq. administered the Oath of Office to Commissioner Thomas J. Sullivan.

For the record, Commissioner Tracy S. Zur arrived at this time.

**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, ESQ.	BOARD MEMBER		X
JUNIOR HERNANDEZ, Ph.D.	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 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, ESQ.	BOARD MEMBER				X
JUNIOR HERNANDEZ, Ph.D.	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 Randi Duffie, 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, ESQ.	BOARD MEMBER				X
JUNIOR HERNANDEZ, Ph.D.	BOARD MEMBER	X			

**Fraud/Claims Department Overview**

Ryan Barone, Supervisor of the Claims and Fraud Departments, provided a Fraud/Claims Department overview. He discussed the referral process, tools used, outcomes, aftermath, incentives for discovering fraud, and the claim threshold.

Commissioner Tracy S. Zur reported that the Bergen County Prosecutor reviewed the claim threshold with his team and they are changing the amount from \$75,000 to \$10,000.

**Adoption of Minutes:**

**(a) Open Session Minutes of January 18, 2024**

Chairman William E. Connelly requested a motion to adopt the Open Session minutes. A motion to adopt the Open Session minutes of January 18, 2024 was offered by Diane DeCarlo, 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, ESQ.	BOARD MEMBER				X
JUNIOR HERNANDEZ, Ph.D.	BOARD MEMBER	X			

Geraldine Nestrowitz, Supervising Accountant, was present. She reported on the Bill's List and Schedule of Vouchers.

**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 Randi Duffie, 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, ESQ.	BOARD MEMBER				X
JUNIOR HERNANDEZ, Ph.D.	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 December 2023 was 337 and November 2023 was 351 cases, and compared to one year ago it went down 34 cases. SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) caseload for December 2023 was 23,236 and November 2023 was 23,378 and compared to one year ago it went up by 1,402 cases. GA (General Assistance) caseload for December 2023 was 481 and November 2023 was 491 cases and compared to one year ago it went up by 77 cases. In regard to Medicaid, there were 49,796 individuals in December 2023 and in November 2023 there were 50,423 individuals a decrease of 627 individuals.

Burial stats are as follows: 27 inquires, 29 approved, and 0 denials. The agency paid out \$52,542.00 and recovered \$626.84.

In December 2023, the agency received 1,492 applications for cash and SNAP applications and 2,135 Medicaid applications for a total of 3,627. In November 2023, the agency received 1,580 applications for cash and SNAP applications and 2,146 Medicaid applications for a total of 3,726.

Our Emergency Assistance Unit assisted homeless individuals and families. Currently, we have 1 individual/family in motels. We have 24 families in the HEARTS Program, 12 in the

Emergency Shelter, and 12 in TANF/Bridge side. We have 10 families placed at the Center for Hope and Safety (DV shelter). We had 48 Emergency Assistance applications and 88 clients on Temporary Rental Assistance. We had 40 placements as referrals from 211. We have 242 active DDD cases. The Adult Protective Service (APS) Unit received 93 referrals and currently have 34 open cases.

**(b) Memoranda to the Board**

Scott Modery reported that Ryan Barone, Supervisor of the Claims and Fraud Departments, will be making a presentation this evening on the processes of these departments. Mr. Barone has been a BCBSS employee for over 24 years and has supervised the Claims and Fraud Departments since 2019. The agency had a Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) E&T (Employment and Training) review conducted by FNS on 1/31/2024. This placed additional pressure on our staff because it occurred in tandem with an ongoing M&E (Monitoring and Evaluation) review. However, we were told that Bergen County was specifically selected by the Division of Family Development (DFD) to be the one county FNS reviewed because of our solid reputation for process and procedure. Our cooperation in this review helps DFD maintain their reputation and thus promotes a positive relationship. In 2023 we promoted 27 employees. Additionally, we have reduced the number of part-time staff which stood at 33 in December 2022 and is 19 today. It is important to remember that of the remaining 19 employees, not all are interested in full-time employment. Dolores Phillips, Eglantina Mataj and Janice Reid attended the "Project Homeless Connect" event on Wednesday 1/24/2024. BCBSS purchased 196 pairs of socks to distribute at the event. Additionally, CWA 1089 raised \$670 through a jean's day event. The agency raised an additional \$600 by raffling a Personal Day. In all, our employees donated a total of \$1,270. On 1/26/2024 Maya Jacob attended the Greater Bergen Community Action's Head Start Community Resource Awareness Event for enrolled families with children up to age 5. Ms. Jacob hosted a table and did a short presentation for what BCBSS has to offer. We provided rub on tattoos and lollipops for distribution to the children. Scott Modery provided a link below to Greater Bergen Community Action:

[https://www.gbcaheadstart.org/?gclid=Cj0KCCQiAzoeuBhDqARIsAMdH14FYE3WFvPG9kZC8Q6oGHIP1kSg8ZaP6P0S96NvOF0WcOBdbI7OAOalaAsrjEALw\\_wcB](https://www.gbcaheadstart.org/?gclid=Cj0KCCQiAzoeuBhDqARIsAMdH14FYE3WFvPG9kZC8Q6oGHIP1kSg8ZaP6P0S96NvOF0WcOBdbI7OAOalaAsrjEALw_wcB)

The 2024 Board Members plaque has arrived and is hanging in the Board Room. We forwarded our draft *budget* to the State of NJ for review on 1/31/2024. A meeting with the Board Audit and Budget Committee will be held on 2/7/2024 to discuss our proposed 2024 budget. On 2/1/24, Sonia Aufiero was a presenter for Adult Protective Services (APS) at a Paramus Rotary Club event.

### **Chairman's Report**

Chairman William E. Connelly reported that the Board will be approving Aegis, our Security Guard Services company, by way of resolution for the third year at this afternoon's meeting.

### **Committee Reports:**

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

Randi Duffie reported from January 1 to January 31, 2024 the agency received Medicaid recoveries in the amount of \$1,548.16 and the year-to-date 2024 is \$1,548.16. No new cases were referred to the Prosecutor's office during the month of January.

#### **(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 **Tuesday, March 5, 2024** at 4:30 p.m.

### **Action Items:**

#### **Resolutions**

- (a) 2024.2.06 (1) – Resolution Approving Additions, Elimination, and/or Changes to Positions within the Bergen County Board of Social Services
- (b) 2024.2.06 (2) – Resolution Authorizing the Advertisement of Employment for Multiple Openings
- (c) 2024.2.06 (3) – Resolution Authorizing Amending Resolution 2024.1.18 (14) Authorizing a Change in Employment for Two Internal Part-Time Human Services Aides, Full-Time Clerks 1, Full-Time Records Support Technicians 1, Full-Time Mail Clerks, Full-Time Data Entry Operators or Full-Time Keyboarding Clerks 1 to Two Full-Time Human Services Aides

- (d)2024.2.06 (4) – Resolution Authorizing a Promotion for One Internal Full-Time Human Services Aide
- (e)2024.2.06 (5) Resolution Authorizing a Change in Hours from One Internal Part-Time Records Support Technician 1 to Full-Time Records Support Technician 1
- (f)2024.2.06 (6) – Resolution Authorizing a Change in Hours for Two Internal Part-Time Human Services Aides to Two Full-Time Human Services Aides
- (g)2024.2.06 (7) – Resolution Approving Third Year Option to Renew with Aegis Security
- (h)2024.2.06 (8) – 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

A motion to approve Resolutions (a) - (g) on the agenda 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			
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, ESQ.	BOARD MEMBER				X
JUNIOR HERNANDEZ, Ph.D.	BOARD MEMBER	X			

The Board did not have any Closed Session items to discuss; therefore, no action was taken on Resolution 2024.2.06 (8). The Board did not go into Closed Session.

**Adoption of Minutes:**

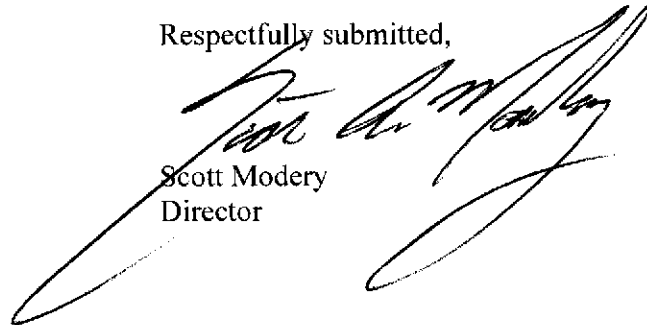
A motion to approve the Closed Session minutes of January 18, 2024 was offered by Commissioner Tracy S. Zur, seconded by Randi Duffie, and approved as follows:

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, ESQ.	BOARD MEMBER				X
JUNIOR HERNANDEZ, Ph.D.	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 5:00 p.m. was offered by Commissioner Thomas J. Sullivan, 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, ESQ.	BOARD MEMBER				X
JUNIOR HERNANDEZ, Ph.D.	BOARD MEMBER	X			

Respectfully submitted,



Scott Modery  
Director