

**Minutes of the Meeting
of the
Bergen County Board of Social Services
May 7, 2024**

PRESENT: William E. Connelly, Jr., Chairperson
Randi Duffie, Vice-Chairperson
Elaine K. Meyerson, Secretary Treasurer
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: Alexandra Harwin, Esq., Board Member

A regular meeting of the Bergen County Board of Social Services was scheduled for May 7, 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 May 7, 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.

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 Commissioner Tracy S. Zur, 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, 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 Elaine K. Meyerson, 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			

Adoption of Minutes:

(a) Open Session Minutes of April 2, 2024

Chairman William E. Connelly requested a motion to adopt the Open Session minutes. A motion to adopt the Open Session minutes of April 2, 2024 was offered by Commissioner Tacy 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			

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 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, 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 March 2024 was 355 and February 2024 was 357 and compared to one year ago it went down 27 cases. SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) caseload for March 2024 was 23,868 and February 2024 was 23,497 and compared to one year ago it went up by 1,110 cases. GA (General Assistance) caseload for March 2024 was 528 and February 2024 was 514 and compared to one year ago it went up by 103 cases. In regard to Medicaid, there were 46,788 individuals in March 2024 and in February 2024 there were 47,516 individuals a decrease of 728 individuals.

Burial stats are as follows: 23 inquires, 26 approved, and 2 denials. The agency paid out \$103,430.00 and recovered \$0.00.

In March 2024, the agency received 1,618 applications for cash and SNAP applications and 2,048 Medicaid applications for a total of 3,666. In February 2024, the agency received 1,644 applications for cash and SNAP applications and 2,064 Medicaid applications for a total of 3,708.

Our Emergency Assistance Unit assisted homeless individuals and families. Currently, we have 4 individuals/families in motels. We have 19 families in the HEARTS Program, 10 in the Emergency Shelter, and 9 in TANF/Bridge side. We have 12 families placed at the Center for Hope and Safety (DV shelter). We had 49 Emergency Assistance applications and 86 clients on Temporary Rental Assistance. We had 29 placements as referrals from 211. We have 240 active DDD cases. The Adult Protective Service (APS) Unit received 94 referrals and currently have 34 open cases.

(b) Memoranda to the Board

Scott Modery reported that Michael Biggar and Sarah Fuhrman, as representatives of Adult Protective Services, SNAP, and ABD Medicaid attended the Annual Spring Caregivers Conference on Thursday, April 11, 2024. Subsequently, we received a thank you from Bergen County Department of Human Services (DHS) Division of Senior Services. On Friday April 12, 2024, CWA 1089 sponsored a jeans day and raised \$670 to support “*Bring your Child to Work Day*” held on April 25th. There is a resolution on this evening’s agenda for the transfer of Rutherford

General Assistance to the Bergen County Board of Social Services (BCBSS). This transfer will complete all 70 municipalities in Bergen County to the BCBSS. On Tuesday, April 30, 2024 Sonia Aufiero and Scott Modery attended the “Public Hearing on the Needs of Older Adults in Bergen County”. NJ Department of Family Development has expanded features of the online portal “MYNJHelps” (<https://mynjhelps.gov>). This State managed portal allows residents to apply for SNAP, TANF, and General Assistance online. This expansion of capabilities allows new and existing applicants additional abilities such as seeing case status, benefit amount, certification dates, certification period, members in their household, and notices. While not completely seamless in its application process, this portal also provides connections to the NJ Family Care application portal. On Thursday, April 25, 2024 Ritzy Moralez-Diaz organized “Bring your Child to Work” day. We had a very large turnout of 73 children ranging from 5 to 17 years old. Different activities were organized for different age groups, but all children got to spend some time with their parent at their workstation. The day ended with pizza for everyone. Sheri Watson, Geraldine Nestrowitz, and Scott Modery met with our Qualifying Purchasing Agent, Gerald Reiner, on April 30, 2024. Mr. Reiner requested a quick meeting to touch base and talk about any upcoming purchases that he should be aware of. They discussed some plans for the upcoming year and beyond. There were some questions asked at the Board Meeting held on April 2nd regarding SNAP denials. We have begun a formal monthly reporting of denial reasons beginning with May 2024. A chart was distributed with the Board packet that showed combined March and April denial reasons. Overwhelmingly cases are denied due to required information not being provided. We continue to research statistics on reapplication counts.

Chairman’s Report

Chairman William E. Connelly thanked everyone for their well wishes while he was out. He thanked Scott Modery for staying in touch with regular phone calls. He also thanked Michele Darmochwal for making back-and-forth trips to get Board paperwork signed while he was out.

Committee Reports:

(a) Welfare, Fraud, and Abuse Committee

Randi Duffie reported from April 1 to April 30, 2024 the agency received Medicaid recoveries in the amount of \$34,482.22 and the year-to-date 2024 is \$39,260.66. 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

A discussion will be held in Closed Session.

(d) Personnel Committee

Elaine K. Meyerson reported that the Personnel Committee met and discussed the May personnel requests at their monthly meeting.

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 4, 2024 at 4:30 p.m.**

Action Items:

Resolutions:

- (a) 2024.5.07 (1) – Resolution Approving Additions, Elimination, and/or Changes to Positions within the Bergen County Board of Social Services
- (b) 2024.5.07 (2) – Resolution Authorizing the Advertisement of Employment for Multiple Openings
- (c) 2024.5.07 (3) – Resolution Authorizing a Promotion for One Internal Full-Time Human Services Aide Bilingual in Spanish
- (d) 2024.5.07 (4) – Resolution Authorizing an Offer of Employment for Two (2) Internal Full-Time Human Services Specialists I
- (e) 2024.5.07 (5) – Resolution Approving Employment Policy for Confidential Employees
- (f) 2024.5.07 (6) – Resolution Approving Transfer of Public Assistance Program from the Borough of Hillsdale
- (g) 2024.5.07 (7) – Resolution Approving Transfer of Public Assistance Program from the Borough of Rutherford
- (h) 2024.5.07 (8) – Resolution Rescinding Equitable for Deferred Compensation Plan
- (i) 2024.5.07 (9) – Resolution Approving Equitable for a Deferred Compensation Plan
- (j) 2024.5.07 (10) – Resolution Authorizing Application for Grant from the State of N.J. Department of Community Affairs in connection with the LIHEAP CWA Administration Program
- (k) 2024.5.07 (11) – Resolution Authorizing Application for Grant from the State of N.J. Department of Community Affairs in connection with the Universal Service Fund CWA Administration Program
- (l) 2024.5.07 (12) – 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 table Resolution (e) on the agenda was offered by Elaine K. Meyerson, 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			

A motion to approve Resolutions (a) through (d) and (f) through (k) on the agenda was offered by Yris Encarnacion, 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			

A motion to discuss and approve Resolution (l) 2024.5.07 (12) 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 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				Z
JUNIOR HERNANDEZ, Ph.D.	BOARD MEMBER	X			

The Board went into Closed Session at 5:00 p.m.

CLOSED SESSION:

The Board went into Closed Session to discuss personnel, building issues, negotiations, and Closed Session minutes. 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 5:35 p.m.

A motion to approve the Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with CWA Local 1031 was offered by Commissioner Thomas J. Sullivan, 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			

Adoption of Minutes:

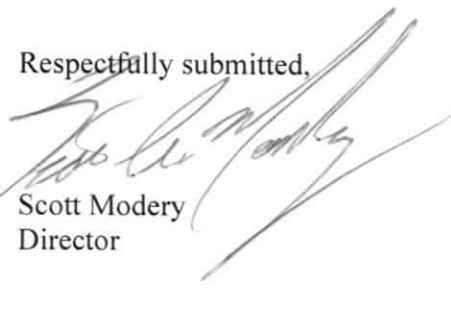
A motion to approve the Closed Session minutes of April 2, 2024 was offered by Commissioner Thomas J. Sullivan, seconded by Randi Duffie, and approved as follows:

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 5:36 p.m. was offered by Commissioner Thomas J. Sullivan, 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			

Respectfully submitted,



Scott Modery
Director