

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

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

**ABSENT:** Randi Duffie, Vice-Chairperson  
Thomas J. Sullivan, Bergen County Commissioner, Board Member  
Junior Hernandez, Ph.D., Board Member

A regular meeting of the Bergen County Board of Social Services was scheduled for August 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 August 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.

**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 Susan Silverstein, 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

**Adoption of Minutes:**

**(a) Open Session Minutes of July 2, 2024**

Chairman William E. Connelly requested a motion to adopt the Open Session minutes. A motion to adopt the Open Session minutes of July 2, 2024 was offered by Diane DeCarlo, 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, ESQ.	BOARD MEMBER				X
JUNIOR HERNANDEZ, Ph.D.	BOARD MEMBER				X

For the record, Alexandra Harwin, Esq. arrived at approximately 4:35 p.m.

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 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, 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 June 2024 was 310 and May 2024 was 314 and compared to one year ago it went down 59 cases. SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) caseload for June 2024 was 24,057 and May 2024 was 23,810 and compared to one year ago it went up by 1,364 cases. GA (General Assistance) caseload for June 2024 was 539 and May 2024 was 542 and compared to one year ago it went up by 137 cases. In regard to Medicaid, there were 42,465 individuals in June and 44,259 individuals in May 2024 a decrease of 1,794 individuals.

Burial stats are as follows: 17 inquires, 31 approved, and 0 denials. The agency paid out \$99,444.00 and recovered \$3,431.70.

In June 2024, the agency received 1,623 applications for cash and SNAP applications and 1,881 Medicaid applications for a total of 3,504. In May 2024, the agency received 1,668 applications for cash and SNAP applications and 1,916 Medicaid applications for a total of 3,584.

Our Emergency Assistance Unit assisted homeless individuals and families. Currently, we have 4 individuals/families in motels. We have 23 families in the HEARTS Program, 11 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 44 Emergency Assistance applications and 90 clients on Temporary Rental Assistance. We had 25 placements as referrals from 211. We have 238 active DDD cases. The Adult Protective Service (APS) Unit received 91 referrals and currently have 29 open cases.

**(b) Memoranda to the Board**

Scott Modery reported that we were affected by the 7/19/2024 worldwide CrowdStrike/Microsoft issue. All servers and multiple PC’s were down on the morning of 7/19/2024. Thanks to our IT team’s swift and efficient reaction, the entire agency was up and

functioning 100% in approximately two hours. Passaic County Social Services staff visited on 7/12/2024 and 7/17/2024 to learn about our Workfirst NJ procedures, and sanctioning processes. The agency audit is officially completed. While we do not yet have a draft copy, the auditor has signaled that there are no material issues for 2023. They have further indicated that they are interested in attending the September Board meeting to discuss the final report with the Board. A signed copy of the CWA 1031 contract was delivered to me during the month of July. The contract will receive its final signature by the Board Chairman and will officially finalize the negotiation process for this union. An MOA currently exists for CWA 1089, and we are hopeful there will be agreement on this document soon. In May 2023 we structured our Administrative bank account with overnight “sweep” investments to take advantage of high interest rates which hover in the 5%+ range. Through July 2024 this has earned us \$59,459.79 in interest. This money helps to offset the County share of our budget. On 7/31/2024 Marilyn Gadomski retired from Bergen County Board of Social Services with 40 years and 3 ½ months of service and with over 23 years as a Social Worker. Employees gathered in the Board Room on July 30, 2024 to celebrate her retirement and wish her well. At the end of her last day on July 31, 2024 dozens of employees lined up for a “clap-out” as a reverent send off. Video of her “clap-out” was shared with the Board Members. Mr. Modery was recently advised that Statewide, New Jersey has an approximate 35% error rate for SNAP and is facing financial sanction. These errors could be anything from incorrect calculations to missing documentation in the case record. Mr. Modery proudly announced that thus far this fiscal year (how the State tracks error rates) Bergen has a 0% error rate. Over the past several months there have been roof leaks in various locations. Several weeks ago a significant leak occurred which was related to a clogged HVAC condensate drain. Sometime later employees were expressing concern over air quality. In response, Mr. Modery convinced the building owner to conduct an air quality test. Early this week preliminary results were delivered, which showed no contamination or degraded air quality.

In addition, Mr. Modery reported that fraudulent use of benefits is very high across the state. It is not continuing to go up in Bergen, but there seems to be more counties that are reporting that it is happening and there are some counties where it is going up. From April through July we had 37, 196, 137, and 123 cases of reported skimming, some sort of data breach, of benefits that were replaced because we were permitted to replace them.

### **Chairman’s Report**

No report.

## **Committee Reports:**

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

Alexandra Harwin, Esq. reported from July 1 to July 31 the agency received Medicaid recoveries in the amount of \$1,431.32 and the year-to-date 2024 is \$46,557.52. No fraud referrals sent to the Prosecutor's office during the month of July.

### **(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 did not meet this month but reviewed the personnel requests.

## **OLD BUSINESS:**

None

## **NEW BUSINESS:**

None

### **(a) Next Board Meeting Date**

The next Board Meeting is scheduled to be held in person on **Tuesday, September 3, 2024 at 4:30 p.m.**

## **Action Items:**

### **Resolutions:**

- (a) 2024.8.06 (1) – Resolution Authorizing a Promotion for One Internal Full-Time Human Services Aide to Full-Time Human Services Specialist 1
- (b) 2024.8.06 (2) – Resolution Authorizing a Promotion for One Internal Full-Time Human Services Aide to Full-Time Human Services Specialist 1
- (c) 2024.8.06 (3) – Resolution Authorizing a Promotion for One Internal Full-Time Human Services Aide Bilingual in Spanish
- (d) 2024.8.06 (4) – Resolution Authorizing a Change in Hours from One Internal Part-Time Clerk 1 Bilingual in Spanish to Full-Time Clerk 1 Bilingual in Spanish
- (e) 2024.8.06 (5) – Resolution Authorizing the Hiring of One External Part-Time Clerk 1 Bilingual in Spanish
- (f) 2024.8.06 (6) – Resolution Approving License Upgrade for Microsoft 365
- (g) 2024.8.06 (7) – Resolution Approving Revised ByLaws
- (h) 2024.8.06 (8) – Resolution Approving 60 Month Lease with Pitney Bowes

- (i) 2024.8.06 (9) – 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) through (h) on the agenda was offered by Elaine K. Meyerson, 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 (i) 2024.8.06 (9) 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 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

The Board went into Closed Session at 4:55 p.m.

**CLOSED SESSION:**

The Board went into Closed Session to discuss building issues 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 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. 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 5:25 p.m.

**Adoption of Minutes:**

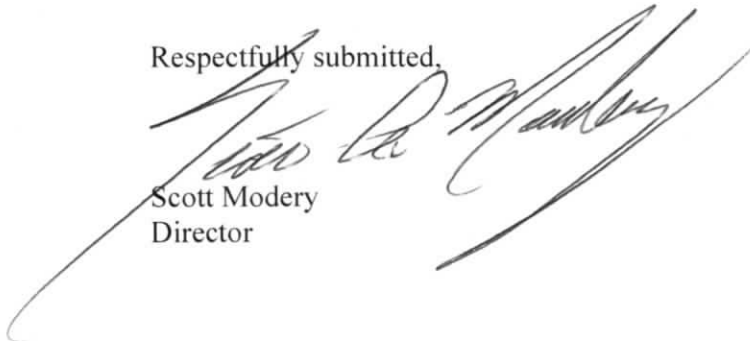
A motion to approve the Closed Session minutes of July 2, 2024 was offered by Yris Encarnacion, seconded by Commissioner Tracy S. Zur, and approved as follows:

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

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 5:25 p.m. was offered by Commissioner Tracy S. Zur, seconded by Elaine K. Meyerson, 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