

**Minutes of the Meeting  
of the  
Bergen County Board of Social Services  
December 3, 2024**

**PRESENT:** William E. Connelly, Jr., Chairperson (Arrived Late)  
Elaine K. Meyerson, Secretary Treasurer  
Susan Silverstein, Assistant Secretary Treasurer  
Thomas J. Sullivan, B.C. Commissioner, Board Member  
Diane DeCarlo, Esq., County Adjuster  
Alexandra Harwin, Esq., Board Member  
Junior Hernandez, Ph.D., Board Member (Arrived Late)  
John L. Schettino, Esq., General Counsel  
Scott A. Modery, Director  
Michele M. Darmochwal, Administrative Secretary

**ABSENT:** Randi Duffie, Vice-Chairperson  
Tracy S. Zur, B.C. Commissioner, Board Member  
Yris Encarnacion, Board Member

A regular meeting of the Bergen County Board of Social Services was scheduled for December 3, 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 December 3, 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:**

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, ESQ.	BOARD MEMBER	X	
JUNIOR HERNANDEZ, Ph.D.	BOARD MEMBER		X

**Open Public Comment Period**

Elaine K. Meyerson 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 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

Christine Murphy, - President of CWA Local 1089 – Ms. Murphy indicated that it is with a heavy heart that she has accepted the President of CWA Local 1089 position at this time. Their By-Laws state that the Vice President moves up to President if the President is no longer able to do this job. As of today, she announced that she has appointed Andrew Mohan as Vice President of CWA Local 1089 until such time that they can hold an election. She wanted to publicly introduce herself to the Board. Ms. Murphy is looking forward to a good working relationship and continuing the work that Dolores Phillips did. She mentioned that this is Dolores’ presidency, and she is going to try and withhold all of her beliefs and the contract that she worked so hard to put through.

Elaine K. Meyerson thanked Ms. Murphy for stepping up and the Board wished her good luck in her new position.

There being no further comments from the public, Elaine K. Meyerson 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 Thomas J. Sullivan, seconded by Alexandra Harwin, 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

For the record, Junior Hernandez, Ph.D., arrived at approximately 4:35 p.m.

### **Adoption of Minutes:**

#### **(a) Open Session Minutes of November 7, 2024**

Elaine K. Meyerson requested a motion to adopt the Open Session minutes. A motion to adopt the Open Session minutes of November 7, 2024 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

ALEXANDRA HARWIN, ESQ.	BOARD MEMBER			X	
JUNIOR HERNANDEZ, Ph.D.	BOARD MEMBER	X			

For the record, Chairman William E. Connelly arrived at this point.

Elaine K. Meyerson turned over the gavel to Chairman William E. Connelly who chaired the remainder of the meeting.

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 Thomas J. Sullivan, 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			

**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 October 2024 was 295 and September 2024 was 307 and compared to one year ago it went down 66 cases. SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) caseload for October 2024 was 24,886 and September 2024 was 24,384 and compared to one year ago it went up by 1,463 cases. The GA (General Assistance) caseload for October 2024 was 551 and September 2024 was 552 and compared to one year ago it went up by 84 cases. In regard to Medicaid, there were 43,022 individuals in October and 42,472 individuals in September 2024 an increase of 550 individuals.

Burial stats are as follows: 45 inquires, 28 approved, and 0 denials. The agency paid out \$101,141.00 and recovered \$3,293.08.

In September 2024, the agency received 1,822 applications for cash and SNAP applications and 2,182 Medicaid applications for a total of 4,056. In September 2024, the agency received 1,822 applications for cash and SNAP applications and 2,096 Medicaid applications for a total of 3,918.

Our Emergency Assistance Unit assisted homeless individuals and families. Currently, we have 8 individuals/families in motels. We have 22 families in the HEARTS Program, 12 in the Emergency Shelter, and 10 in TANF/Bridge side. We have 10 families placed at the Center for Hope and Safety (DV shelter). We had 59 Emergency Assistance applications and 95 clients on Temporary Rental Assistance. We had 15 placements as referrals from 211. We have 234 active DDD cases. The Adult Protective Service (APS) Unit received 124 referrals and currently has 36 open cases.

**(b) Memoranda to the Board**

Scott Modery reported that as mentioned in his November Board memo, we are planning to take a full Board photo at the January 14, 2025 Board Meeting. Adopt-a-Family is in full swing. To date, we have 17 families from the HEARTS shelter adopted. We have successfully connected once again with the Closter PBA toy drive for December 19<sup>th</sup>. We plan on matching these gifts to our past HEARTS residents with children of appropriate age. After most of the year and countless hours of preparation, our IT team will be moving our email services off of our on premise server and into the Microsoft 365 cloud. This months long project required so much time to ensure security and to preserve all existing emails. If all goes according to plan, the end user will notice little difference in their interface other than improved speed. November was our worst month on record for stolen/skimmed benefits at approximately 635 reported cases. It is important to note that our ability to replace stolen benefits expires on December 20, 2024. Additionally, the volume of replacements necessary is quickly beginning to outpace our staff time to replace them. This quantity of replacements requires about 318 man-hours (over 45 days of work) to replace the benefits. This removes staff from other crucial time sensitive duties and is quickly becoming unsustainable. In a moral booster event – staff were permitted to dress up for Halloween on October 30<sup>th</sup>. At afternoon break a contest was held to choose two winners. Ritzy Morales-Diaz from our Personnel Department and Sarah Furman from our Division of Developmental Disabilities Department attended a free “Mental Health First Aid” class on November 14<sup>th</sup>. This course was offered by the County and teaches how to identify, understand, and respond to signs of mental health and substance abuse challenges. On November 25<sup>th</sup>, Geraldine Nestrowitz and Mr. Modery met with the County CFO to discuss our preliminary 2025 budget request. As mentioned in a previous Board memo, our health benefit increases have driven our budget request up significantly. This factor alone is primarily responsible for most of our increase. It also is something which we are unable to control.

**Chairman’s Report**

Chairman William E. Connelly wished everyone a very Happy & Healthy Holiday season.

**Committee Reports:**

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

Alexandra Harwin, Esq. reported from November 1 to November 30, 2024 the agency received Medicaid recoveries in the amount of \$1,282.22 and the year-to-date 2024 is \$57,721.02. No fraud referrals sent to the Prosecutor's office during the month of November.

**(b) Audit & Budget Committee**

No report.

**(c) Building & Grounds Committee**

A discussion will be held in Closed Session.

**(d) Personnel Committee**

The Personnel Committee met this month and reviewed the personnel requests prior to this afternoon's Board Meeting.

**OLD BUSINESS:**

None

**NEW BUSINESS:**

**Next Board Meeting Date**

The next Board Meeting is scheduled to be held in person on **Tuesday, January 14, 2025 at 4:30 p.m.**

**Action Items:**

**Resolutions:**

- (a) 2024.12.03 (1) – Resolution Approving Extending Affiliation Agreement with Holy Name Medical Center
- (b) 2024.12.03 (2) – Resolution Approving Extending Affiliation Agreement with Englewood Hospital
- (c) 2024.12.03 (3) – Resolution Approving Extending Affiliation Agreement with Hackensack University Medical Center
- (d) 2024.12.03 (4) – Resolution Approving Extending Affiliation Agreement with Bergen New Bridge Medical Center
- (e) 2024.12.03 (5) – Resolution Adopting a Fair and Open Process for Retention of Professionals and Consultants for the Calendar Year 2025
- (f) 2024.12.03 (6) – Resolution Authorizing the Hiring of One External Full-Time Clerk 1
- (g) 2024.12.03 (7)- Resolution Authorizing the Hiring of One External Full-Time Clerk 1
- (h) 2024.12.03 (8) – Resolution Authorizing a Promotion for One Internal Full-Time Assistant Administrative Supervisor of Income Maintenance to Full-Time Administrative Supervisor of Income Maintenance
- (i) 2024.12.03 (9) – Resolution Authorizing the Advertisement and Offer of Employment for One External Part-Time Clerk 1 Bilingual in Spanish

- (j) 2024.12.03 (10) – Resolution Authorizing the Advertisement and Offer of Employment for One External Full-Time Records Support Technician I
- (k) 2024.12.03 (11) – Resolution Authorizing the Advertisement and Offer of Employment for Two Internal or External Full-Time Human Services Aides
- (l) 2024.12.03 (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 approve Resolutions (a) through (d) on the agenda was offered by Commissioner Thomas J. Sullivan, 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			

A motion to approve Resolutions (e) through (j) on the agenda was offered by Susan Silverstein, 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			

A motion to discuss and approve Resolution (k) 2024.12.03 (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 Alexandra Harwin, Esq., 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			

The Board went into Closed Session at 5:10 p.m.

**CLOSED SESSION:**

The Board went into Closed Session to discuss personnel, building issues, litigation, 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 15 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 6:25 p.m.

For the record, Alexandra Harwin, Esq. left during Closed Session and was no longer present for the meeting.

**Adoption of Minutes:**

Chairman William E. Connelly requested a motion to adopt the Closed Session minutes. A motion to approve the Closed Session minutes of November 7, 2024 was offered by Junior Hernandez, Ph.D., 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			

A motion to approve Confidential Employees Salary Increase for 2024 was offered by Commissioner Thomas J. Sullivan, 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			

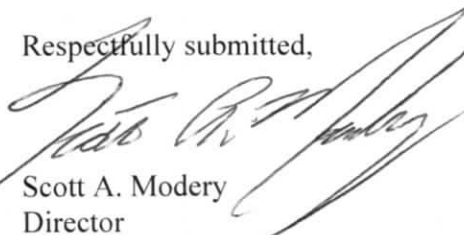
A motion to approve Confidential Employees Salary Increase for 2025 was offered by Commissioner Thomas J. Sullivan, seconded by Elaine K. Meyerson, and approved as follows:

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			

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 6:30 p.m. was offered by Commissioner Thomas J. Sullivan, seconded by Junior Hernandez, Ph.D., 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 A. Modery  
Director