

**Minutes of the Meeting
of the
Bergen County Board of Social Services
April 1, 2025**

PRESENT: William E. Connelly, Jr., Chairperson
Randi Duffie, Vice-Chairperson
Elaine K. Meyerson, Secretary Treasurer
Tracy S. Zur, B.C. Commissioner, Board Member (Arrived Late)
Thomas J. Sullivan, B.C. Commissioner, Board Member
Diane DeCarlo, Esq., County Adjuster
Yris Encarnacion, Board Member
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: Susan Silverstein, Assistant Secretary Treasurer

A regular meeting of the Bergen County Board of Social Services was scheduled for April 1, 2025 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 April 1, 2025 has been provided in the following manner:

1. By a prominent posting of the schedule of meetings for 2025, 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 20, 2025 and to the Herald News, which was published on January 20, 2025.

- 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 15, 2025.

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 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 1089

Ms. Murphy provided clarification regarding something that happened at last month's Board Meeting. She mentioned that in no way did she mean to disparage anybody's character in the room. She understands how some people may have taken what she said to heart personally. Her only goal for CWA 1089 is to work with every one of the Board Members and to be respectful as possible. If she offended anyone, she regrets that. She and CWA 1089 have the utmost respect for the Board, as well as the Director and Senior Personnel Technician for everything that they have done up until this point. She hopes to continue having a great working relationship. Over the last few weeks they have moved in the right direction and had conversations about certain policies that CWA 1089 had questions on and they have been fantastic about opening their doors to them and discussing those policies. In regard to the Customer Service Department, most of them were unfortunately unable to be at this afternoon's Board Meeting because some staff work until 4:45 p.m. and many of them have second jobs. She explained that the Customer Service Department is comprised of two different divisions for CWA 1089. One part of customer service is when you call and get someone on the phone that is part of our customer service. They have a very difficult job. They listen to our customers and sometimes they are placed on hold for quite a little bit of time. They have to answer very difficult questions to a lot of people who do not like their answers. They do a fantastic job with the resources that they have. The other group of customer service representatives that we have are the staff that sit at the window. They do face-to-face and represent CWA 1089 on Floor 2. They are the individuals who have to explain to clients when they don't like the answers when Floor 5 staff make decisions concerning their case. They have to explain or relay it to the customers and they are our front-line workers. She read their names into the record. She indicated that every month she is going to come to the Board Meeting and talk about each of the units and what they face. She mentioned that they have a tough job. She thanked the Board for their time.

Elaine K. Meyerson thanked the Customer Service Department for all their hard work.

There being no further 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

For the record, Commissioner Tracy S. Zur and Junior Hernandez, Ph.D., arrived at approximately 4:40 p.m.

Adoption of Minutes:

(a) Open Session Minutes of March 4, 2025

Chairman William E. Connelly requested a motion to adopt the Open Session minutes. A motion to adopt the Open Session minutes of March 4, 2025 was offered by Alexandra Harwin, Esq., 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			

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 Alexandra Harwin, Esq., 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 February 2025 was 281 and January 2025 was 278 and compared to one year ago it went down 76 cases. SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) caseload for February 2025 was 24,884 and January 2025 was 24,890 and compared to one year ago it went up by 1,387 cases. The GA (General Assistance) caseload for February 2025 was 559 cases and January 2025 was 548 and compared to one year ago it went up by 45 cases. In regard to Medicaid, there were 42,716 individuals in February 2025 and 42,986 individuals in January 2025 and compared to one year ago there is a decrease of 4,800 individuals.

Burial stats are as follows: 30 inquires, 36 approved, and 1 denial. The agency paid out \$108,666.00 and recovered \$1,650.41.

In February 2025, the agency received 1,344 applications for cash and SNAP applications and 1,615 Medicaid applications for a total of 2,959. In January 2025, the agency received 2,031 applications for cash and SNAP applications and 2,281 Medicaid applications for a total of 4,312. There is a decrease in application activity for February. February is typically a reduction in application activity. If it is historically accurate, the next month or two will show a rebound as we move into the spring and summer.

Our Emergency Assistance Unit assisted homeless individuals and families. Currently, we have 4 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 7 families placed at the Center for Hope and Safety (DV shelter). We had 54 Emergency Assistance applications and 90 clients on Temporary Rental Assistance. We had 28 placements as referrals from 211. We have 230 active DDD cases. The Adult Protective Service (APS) Unit received 107 referrals and currently has 28 open cases.

(b) Memoranda to the Board

Scott Modery reported that skimming, cloning, and stealing SNAP and other cash benefits off EBT cards continues to be a Statewide and Nationwide problem. Our ability to replace those benefits ended December 20, 2024. In an attempt to alleviate some of the theft, the Department of Family Development (DFD) has released an update to the MyNJHelps client portal. This update gives the client the ability to lock their EBT card either completely or for out-of-state purchases. We have posted the flyer in our lobbies. In addition, we are sending the flyer with both new and replacement EBT cards as well as redetermination documentation. We have also provided the documentation to the Bergen County Housing, Health, and Human Services Center, NJ 211, Bergen New Bridge Medical Center, Bergen Resource.net, Community Food Bank, the Bergen County Office of Food Security, as well as other partners and resources. Finally, anyone with a MyNJHelps account receives an email with these flyers via email. In addition, Senate Bill No. 2873 which was introduced in February, required DHS and DOH respectively to provide information on SNAP/WFNJ/WIC recipients regarding card skimming and cloning and similar fraudulent activities

and to replace stolen benefits.

In Mr. Modery's October Board memorandum, he reported that we sent our Adult Protective Services (APS) supervisor to the National Adult Protective Services Association ([Home - NAPSA \(napsa-now.org\)](http://Home-NAPSA(napsa-now.org))) conference in Albuquerque, New Mexico from September 16 to September 18, 2024. One of the documents that has been compiled based upon this conference is the New Jersey Division of Aging Services (DoAS) 2025 "[Best Practices Guide](#)". This guide contains a large amount of information about how APS should operate insofar as requirements and practices. Most items in the document are already practiced by our APS Department. However, more impressive is that there are many practices, which DoAS learned from Bergen County and subsequently added to the "[Best Practices Guide](#)".

Our Budget Hearing at the County will occur on April 7, 2025 at 9:00AM. We are always appreciative if any Board Members can attend to show support.

We are cooperating with DFD on an IRS Safeguard Inspection. The purpose of this inspection is to verify our processes and systems are compliant with requirements. While this is not the first time we have participated in this inspection, the IRS has created more strict policies recently. Many of these policies relate to computer systems and networking. There is a possibility that our systems may not pass some testing. Should that occur, we will have no recourse other than to budget for potentially costly upgrades in the near future. This has occurred in other counties.

Mr. Modery drafted a letter which communicates the Board's position on the proposals to cut funding mentioned at the last Board Meeting. Since that time, we have learned that in spite of the SSBG funding received by our agency being indicated as Federal, it is actually State level funding. DFD has confirmed this and noted that while nothing is guaranteed, at the moment, that particular funding is not in danger.

Chairman's Report

Chairman William E. Connelly reported that Michele Darmochwal distributed a letter by way of email from the Honorable County Executive James J. Tedesco III to the Board regarding the 2025 Financial Disclosure Statements. A copy was also placed in everyone's Board folder. The filing deadline is April 30, 2025.

Committee Reports:

(a) Welfare, Fraud, and Abuse Committee

Alexandra Harwin, Esq. reported from March 1 to March 31, 2025, the agency received Medicaid recoveries in the amount of \$1,332.22, of which BCBSS portion is \$336.06 and the year-to-date 2025 is \$3,812.70, of which BCBSS portion is \$953.17. No fraud referrals sent to the Prosecutor's office during the month of March.

(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 there is nothing to report this month.

OLD BUSINESS:

None

NEW BUSINESS:

Next Board Meeting Date

The next Board Meeting is scheduled to be held in person on **Tuesday, May 6, 2025 at 4:30 p.m.**

Action Items:

Resolutions:

- (a) 2025.4.01 (1) – Resolution Authorizing a Promotion for One Internal Full-Time Human Services Aide to Full-Time Human Services Specialist 1
- (b) 2025.4.01 (2) – Resolution Authorizing a Promotion for One Internal Full-Time Human Services Aide to Full-Time Human Services Specialist 1
- (c) 2025.4.01 (3) – Resolution Authorizing Application for Grant from the State of New Jersey Department of Community Affairs in Connection with the Universal Services Fund CWA Administration Program
- (d) 2025.4.01 (4) – Resolution Authorizing Application for Grant from the State of New Jersey Department of Community Affairs in Connection with the LIHEAP CWA Administration Program
- (e) 2025.4.01 (5) – Resolution Approving Leasing Proposal with Atlantic
- (f) 2025.4.01 (6) – Resolution Approving Business Associate Agreement with Bergen New Bridge Medical Center
- (g) 2025.4.01 (7) – 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) through (f) 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			

A motion to discuss and approve Resolution (g) 2025.4.01 (7) 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 Randi Duffie, 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 contracts, building issues, litigation, personnel, 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 5:07 p.m.

Adoption of Minutes:

Chairman William E. Connelly requested a motion to adopt the Closed Session minutes of March 4, 2025. A motion to adopt the Closed Session minutes of March 4, 2025 was offered by Yris Encarnacion, 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			

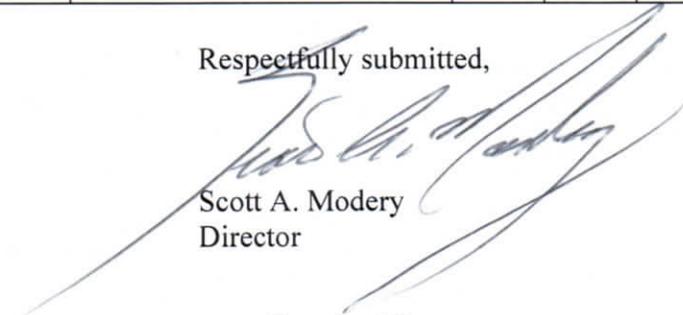
Chairman William E. Connelly requested a motion to approve a two-year contract with a 2.5% salary raise each year for In-house Counsel, Michael J. Sluka, Esq., with modifications. A motion to approve a two-year contract with a 2.5% salary raise each year for In-House Counsel was offered by Elaine K. Meyerson, 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			

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 5:08 p.m. was offered by Commissioner Tracy S. Zur, 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			

Respectfully submitted,


 Scott A. Modery
 Director