

**Minutes of the Meeting  
of the  
Bergen County Board of Social Services  
May 6, 2025**

**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 (Arrived Late)  
Thomas J. Sullivan, B.C. Commissioner, Board Member  
Diane DeCarlo, Esq., County Adjuster  
Junior Hernandez, Ph.D., Board Member (Arrived Late)  
John L. Schettino, Esq., General Counsel  
Scott A. Modery, Director  
Michele M. Darmochwal, Administrative Secretary

**ABSENT:** Yris Encarnacion, Board Member  
Alexandra Harwin, Esq., Board Member

A regular meeting of the Bergen County Board of Social Services was scheduled and held on May 6, 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 May 6, 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.

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 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 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

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 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

### **Adoption of Minutes:**

#### **(a) Open Session Minutes of April 1, 2025**

Chairman William E. Connelly requested a motion to adopt the Open Session minutes. A motion to adopt the Open Session minutes of April 1, 2025 was offered by Diane DeCarlo, Esq., 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

For the record, Junior Hernandez, Ph.D., arrived at approximately 4:32 p.m.

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

For the record, Commissioner Tracy S. Zur, arrived at approximately 4:41 p.m.

### **Treasurer's Report:**

#### **(a) Bills List and Schedule of Vouchers:**

Chairman William E. Connelly requested a motion to approve the Bills List and Schedule of Vouchers. A motion to approve the Bills List and Schedule of Vouchers was offered by Randi

Duffie, 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 March 2025 was 275 and February 2025 was 281 and compared to one year ago it went down 80 cases. SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) caseload for March 2025 was 25,008 and February 2025 was 24,884 and compared to one year ago it went up by 1,140 cases. The GA (General Assistance) caseload for March 2025 was 557 and February 2025 was 559 cases and compared to one year ago it went up by 29 cases. In regard to Medicaid, there were 42,972 individuals in March 2025 and 42,716 individuals in February 2025 and compared to one year ago there is a decrease of 3,816 individuals.

Burial stats are as follows: 30 inquiries, 34 approved, and 1 denial. The agency paid out \$77,397.00 and recovered \$684.62.

In March 2025, the agency received 1,491 applications for cash and SNAP applications and 1,884 Medicaid applications for a total of 3,375. 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.

Our Emergency Assistance Unit assisted homeless individuals and families. Currently, we have 8 individuals/families in motels. We have 23 families in the HEARTS Program, 13 in the Emergency Shelter, and 10 in TANF/Bridge side. We have 4 families placed at the Center for Hope and Safety (DV shelter). We had 70 Emergency Assistance applications and 101 clients on Temporary Rental Assistance. We had 37 placements as referrals from 211. We have 230 active DDD cases. The Adult Protective Service (APS) Unit received 89 referrals and currently has 35 open cases.

#### **(b) Memoranda to the Board**

Scott Modery reported that on April 2, 2025 our Adult Protective Services (APS)

Supervisor attended a free event held at the Division of Senior Services at Bergen New Bridge Medical Center. As part of the "Dementia Friendly Initiative" the goal is to educate and inform health care professionals about the challenges people face when diagnosed with dementia. The event featured two retired physicians who are living well with dementia as educators and advocates.

On April 10, 2025 Sarah Furman and Ann Ryan attended the "Caregivers Conference" at One Bergen County Plaza. The conference is a learning experience about services and support for those who provide care for a loved one or neighbor. An interesting study released by the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) related to SNAP benefits found that an estimated 88% of eligible people nationwide received SNAP benefits in FY 2022. For the same period, New Jersey performed above the average at 91%. Additionally for comparison, in FY 2020 the percentage of all eligible persons nationwide was 81%, and in January 1994 the nationwide percentage was 71%. The full study can be found at: <https://fns-prod.azureedge.us/research/snap/participation-rates-2022>. In spite of the need for Geraldine Nestrowitz and Scott Modery to deliver less than optimal news, our Budget Hearing at the County on April 7<sup>th</sup> went well. They noted, among other things, that health benefits, pension, and building lease costs were major drivers of our 4.88% requested increase. Additionally, on April 24<sup>th</sup> we received a budget approval from the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs, Division of Local Government Services, that the Division of Family Development and the Medicaid portions of our 2025 budget were approved. On April 24<sup>th</sup>, Mr. Modery attended the first meeting of the newly formed Office of Food Security Advisory Board. As per the newly formed Board's bylaws, *"The purpose of the Food Security Advisory Committee is to support and further the mission of the Bergen County Office of Food Security, and address important issues facing food insecure residents of Bergen County and the organizations in the community that support them"*. While many members of the Board are serving the community in the capacity of food banks and their support systems, Mr. Modery hoped that his presence could provide some support or insight for community members who visit this agency for SNAP or other services.

On April 24<sup>th</sup> we received our final Workfirst New Jersey Management Evaluation report from the NJ Department of Human Services Division of Family Development Office of Program Compliance. The "Findings" section noted *"The reviewers found no errors in eligibility determinations, no payment errors, and no documentation errors. This was a positive review"*. The Executive Summary also noted in part *"The results of the review show that Bergen County CSSA does an excellent job in administering the programs within the program rules. During the tour DFD staff was impressed by the county's organization, their processes for processing and monitoring the processing cases, and their ability to adapt to changes and challenges all while keeping timeliness deadlines"*. The review was in all ways very positive and speaks to the diligence of BCBSS staff. The entire Management Evaluation review can be found at: [Bergen WFNJ-ME FFY25 Management Evaluation Report.pdf](#). On April 30<sup>th</sup> numerous agency employees did a "clap out" on the final day of

Katica Mustac. Ms. Mustac was hired in 1986 and is leaving with 39 years of service to BCBSS. The video is posted here: [Katica Mustac Clap out.](#)

In regard to the BCBSS budget, there continues to be persistent uncertainty about BCBSS funding moving forward. At Mr. Modery's May 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting with DFD and DMAHS both entities reported difficulties in obtaining any meaningful information from the Reconciliation Bill in Congress. Some items on the table currently are:

- Medicaid: Major cuts for Federal matching dollars, tightening of eligibility, addition of work requirements, and more frequent redeterminations.
- SNAP: Cost sharing (State/County) for administrative funding dollars, cost sharing (State/County) for benefits, and eliminating broad based categorical eligibility.

### **Chairman's Report**

No report.

### **Committee Reports:**

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

Randi Duffie reported from April 1 to April 30, 2025, the agency received Medicaid recoveries in the amount of \$4,516.06, of which BCBSS portion is \$1,129.02 and the year-to-date 2025 is \$8,328.76, of which BCBSS portion is \$2,082.19. No fraud referrals sent 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 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, June 3, 2025 at 4:30 p.m.**

**Action Items:****Resolutions:**

- (a) 2025.5.06 (1) – Resolution Authorizing an Offer of Employment for One Internal or External Provisional Full-Time Investigator Bilingual in Spanish
- (b) 2025.5.06 (2) – Resolution Authorizing a Change in Hours for One Internal Part-Time Clerk 1 to Full-Time Clerk 1
- (c) 2025.5.06 (3) – Resolution Authorizing the Advertisement and Offer of Employment for Two External Part-Time Clerks 1
- (d) 2025.5.06 (4) – Resolution Authorizing the Advertisement and Offer of Employment for One External Full-Time Clerk 1
- (e) 2025.5.06 (5) – Resolution Approving Renewal with Delta Dental
- (f) 2025.5.06 (6) – 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 (e) on the agenda was offered by Commissioner Tracy S. Zur, 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 (f) 2025.5.06 (6) 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 Elaine K. Meyerson, 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			X
ALEXANDRA HARWIN, ESQ.	BOARD MEMBER				X
JUNIOR HERNANDEZ, Ph.D.	BOARD MEMBER	X			

The Board went into Closed Session at 4:57 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 5:24 p.m.

Chairman William E. Connelly requested a motion to approve a two-year contract with a 2.5% salary raise each year for the Senior Personnel Technician, Ritzy Moralez-Diaz. A motion to approve a two-year contract with a 2.5% salary raise each year moving the evaluation and anniversary dates from July to April 1 for the Senior Personnel Technician 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			

**Adoption of Minutes:**

Chairman William E. Connelly requested a motion to adopt the Closed Session minutes of April 1, 2025. A motion to adopt the Closed Session minutes of April 1, 2025 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

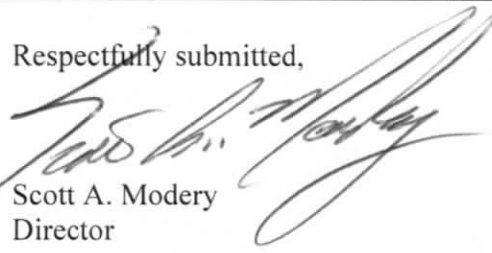


JUNIOR HERNANDEZ, Ph.D.	BOARD MEMBER	X			
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Chairman William E. Connelly requested a motion to adjourn the meeting. With no further business to conclude, a motion to adjourn the meeting at approximately 5:25 p.m. was offered by Randi Duffie, seconded 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			

Respectfully submitted,

  
 Scott A. Modery  
 Director