

**Kent County Department of Social Services**  
**Advisory Board Meeting Minutes**  
**June 15, 2020**

**Present:** Kevin Karpowicz, Beverly Birkmire, Olythea Hunley, Shelly Neal-Edwards, Tracey Williams, Pastor Caitlan Gartland, Charlotte Potts, David May and Jen Cole

**Absent:** Bob Jacobs and William Washington

**Presentation:** Beverly Birkmire, Kent Goes Purple – Due to COVID-19 Kent is unable to celebrate in large gatherings or conduct fund raising for handouts. This year’s messages will be sent via social media, Chestertown Spy, WCTR and Kent News throughout the Month of September. The committee will also ask local businesses to light up their offices and store fronts purple. They are unable to complete partnership ideas until Kent County Public Schools announce their fall plans. If anyone has any questions about Kent Goes Purple feel free to contact Beverly.

**Chairperson’s Report:**

- Approval of minutes from May 18, 2020. Motion to approve minutes carried by unanimous vote.

➤ **Kent County CARES Foundation**

- Dr. Karpowicz submitted the logos chosen from the last meeting to his daughter. She has not been able to work on the website due to her full-time job. She will incorporate the suggestions for more color in the design
- Dr. Karpowicz presented a Letter to the Editor press release in reference to how MASSB will be helping the community during COVID-19. The press release was approved unanimously. Beverly suggested reaching out to the Chestertown Spy for a possible interview.
- Shelly states it has been 1 year since the agency has removed a child from their home and placed them into foster care.

➤ **Director’s Report :**

- **Divisional Performance Report –May** was reviewed by attending members. Child Support collections and arrears have increased due to tax returns and stimulus payments during COVID-19. FIA information will be different next month due to a new statewide processing program. The departments have seen an increase in applications for services. The state has waived face to face interviews and allowed for phone interviews and placed a moratorium until June 30<sup>th</sup> due to the State of Emergency.
- **KCDSS Reopening Plan** – LDSS in conjunction with DHS have developed a plan to begin reopening offices. Shelly shared how Kent County will gradually begin opening their offices in Chestertown along with Workplace Guidelines. This will include rotation of staff in the offices and teleworking, temperature checks, building screening questionnaire, practicing social distancing and much more. A staff member will be at the front desk and case workers will be seeing clients by appointment only. Case workers are able to visit children again utilizing creative meeting sites while continuing to practice social distancing.
- **Summer SNAP Update** – DHS and Kent County Government approved KCDSS’ application and are currently working on an agreement. 170 children in the Rock Hall area will receive benefits for June, July, August and December 2020
- **FY 2021 Board Presentation Plan-** 2021 agenda items – It was agreed upon to keep the same topics for the upcoming year.
- **Additional Topics**
  - LDSS has partnered with Mid Shore and For All Seasons to develop resources providing access to free and confidential support during COVID-19. Flyers were distributed to all of the local food banks.
  - Foster Parent Month was celebrated in May with many activities both virtual and socially distant. KCDSS foster parents of the year are Tom and Katie Johnson. An article was

featured on DHS and KCDSS Facebook pages. Kent County will also be getting approval for the 6<sup>th</sup> foster home in the county.

- Motion to Adjourn: With no additional business at hand, a motion to adjourn at 4:25 pm. Motion carried by unanimous vote.
- The next meeting will be held Monday, July 20, 2020 at 3:30pm via Google Meet.

Respectfully submitted,

Jen Cole

Executive Assistant