

The Cleveland County Consolidated Human Services Board met on Tuesday, April 14, 2026, at 6:00 p.m. at the LeGrand Center.

Board members present: Sara Karner, Kale Meade, Robert Miller, Marty Hamrick, Christina Alexander, Nancy Cline, Paula Canipe, Allison Gragg, Danny Blanton, Mary Accor, Suzanne Hensley, Rick Dixon, and Deb Hardin

Staff present: DeShay Oliver, Tiffany Hansen, Andrea Power, Rebecca Johnson, Sherry Vess, Leslie McSwain, Nathan McNeilly, Barbe Bartlett, Anne Short

County Attorney present: Logan Roberts

Extended Foster Care Program Participants present: Shawnette Adams, Kayla DiBruno, Destiny Dawkins, and Kathryn Soto

CALL TO ORDER/WELCOME:

Chair Sara Karner called the meeting to order at 6:01 pm and welcomed everyone.

CITIZEN RECOGNITION:

No citizens were recognized.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA FOR APRIL 14, 2026, CONSOLIDATED HUMAN SERVICES BOARD MEETING:

Chair Karner presented the proposed agenda for the April 14, 2026, Consolidated Human Services Board meeting for consideration of adoption.

Motion: A motion was made by Deb Hardin with a second by Robert Miller to adopt the agenda for April 14, 2026, Consolidated Human Services Board meeting as prepared. The motion carried unanimously.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES FOR MARCH 10, 2026, CONSOLIDATED HUMAN SERVICES BOARD MEETING:

Chair Karner presented March 10, 2026, Consolidated Human Services Board Meeting Minutes for consideration of approval.

Motion: A motion was made by Marty Hamrick with a second by Robert Miller to approve March 10, 2026, Consolidated Human Services Board Meeting Minutes. The motion carried unanimously.

EXTENDED FOSTER CARE PROGRAM PRESENTATION:

Chair Karner introduced Rebecca Johnson with the Extended Foster Care Program Presentation. Rebecca began by recognizing this great program that is offered through DSS for foster children that have aged out of their foster care homes. Rebecca introduced Barbe Bartlett to explain more about the program. Barbe began the program by explaining that the VPA (Voluntary Placement Agreement) is an agreement between DSS and young adults who were in foster care and have now aged out to continue services with a goal of assisting with shelter, employment, education, and employment. Young adults who were in foster care upon their 18th birthday may continue to receive foster care benefits and services up to 21 years of age as long as one of the following criteria is met on an ongoing basis:

- Enrolled and regularly attending secondary education (high school) or a program leading to an equivalent credential.
- Enrolled and regularly attending an institution that provides post-secondary or vocational education.
- Regularly participating in a program or activity designed to promote or remove barriers to employment.
- Regularly employed for a least 80 hours per month; or incapable of completing the education or employment requirements due to a medical condition or disability.
- The young adult must have been in foster care upon his/her 18th birthday, be 18 years of age, but not yet 21 years of age, enter into a Voluntary Placement Agreement with a county child welfare agency and agree to abide by the provisions of the agreement and agree to reside in an approved placement.
- Young adults who initially choose to opt out of foster care upon attaining 18 years of age may choose to receive foster care 18 to 21 services at a later date as long as they have not reached their 21st birthday, and they meet at least one of the program eligibility requirements.
- Young adults receiving foster care 18 to 21 services may reside in a licensed foster care home or facility, a college or university dormitory, or in a semi-supervised independent living setting such as an apartment or host home. Semi-supervised independent living settings must be approved by the director of the County child welfare office.
- Placement in the home of the biological or adoptive caretakers or the removal home may be considered if a diligent assessment is completed to ensure the safety and well-being of the young adult. Young adults do not have to reside in a licensed placement.

Barbe was able to have four of her program participants with her at this meeting. The participants included Shawnette Adams, Kayla DiBruno, Destiny Dawkins, and Kathryn Soto. Each person spoke about how the program has helped them with education, housing, employment and transportation. Each participant has a different story, but they all expressed how appreciative they are to have been afforded this help and are using the assistance provided to their fullest potential. Mr. Miller expressed appreciation to Barbe for her passion in helping these young individuals with getting a start in life.

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH PROGRAM PRESENTATION:

Chair Karner introduced Nathan McNeilly with the Environmental Health Program Presentation. Nathan thanked everyone for allowing him to present on behalf of the Environment Health Program. Environmental Health is State mandated program that General Statute requires Local Health Departments to provide these services. Registered Environmental Health Specialists are employed by the County but are authorized State agents. To become a Registered Environment Health Specialist, you must have a 4-year Bachelor of Science degree with a minimum of 30 semester hours of science in either chemistry, physics, biology, or geology, or a combination thereof. You must complete State Centralized Intern Training and pass the Registered Environmental Health Specialist exam which includes an oral interview, written essay exam, and NEHA. All REHS staff members must complete 15 credit hours of continuing education per year. Areas of Authorizations for Environmental Health include On-site Wastewater, Food, Lodging & Institutions, Private Wells, Public Swimming Pools, Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention, Tattoos, and Child-Care & School Sanitation. The on-site wastewater team evaluates properties for the suitability of onsite wastewater systems, and they design and permit on-site wastewater systems for residential, commercial, or business use. They also conduct final inspections during the installation of the on-site systems, investigate complaints, and conduct existing system inspections for building additions. The private drinking water protection well program evaluates property for well locations, inspects the construction of new and repair work on wells, inspects the abandonment of existing wells, and collects water samples. Our Food, Lodging and Institutions team does routine inspections, permitting, planning reviews and investigates foodborne outbreaks. Our public swimming pools also have periodic inspections, are permitted annually and have a planning review. Tattoo artists in the County will need to be permitted and receive periodic inspections. The Child-Care and School Sanitation team make routine unannounced inspections of licensed child-care facilities and schools. We also conduct environmental investigations to identify lead poisoning hazards to children 6 years old or less and pregnant women with elevated blood lead levels. Sources of lead poisoning can come from lead-based paint, toys, water pipes, spices, and traditional medicines. Nathan explained that if you would like to look at the scores and inspection reports for facilities and restaurants across the County that you can go to the Health Department website and the link to those reports will be under the Environmental Health section on our site. Nathan also reviewed statistics on total applications received, applications for improvement permits, on-site wastewater activity, private wells activity, number of Food & Lodging facilities and the activity for food and lodging. Nathan did ask if anyone had any questions. Allison asked how Environmental Health is involved with new housing developments being constructed. Nathan said zoning determines if those developments are on municipal water or wells which determines the need for Environmental Health for water. Environmental Health is present before any clearing of the land takes place to collect soil samples, and we will also be present for final inspections. Mary asked if individuals that serve food for free to the public need a permit. Nathan explained that only individuals that sell food for profit will need a permit.

CCHD BUDGET AMENDMENTS:

ITEM NUMBER ONE:

The North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services, Reproductive Health Branch, has allocated an additional \$3,237 to support Family Planning Services in Local Health Departments. We request permission to budget this amount in the Family Planning (539) Department to support existing program services.

ITEM NUMBER TWO:

The North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services, Maternal Health Branch, has allocated an additional \$1,080 to support Maternal Health Services in Local Health Departments. We request permission to budget this amount in the Maternal Health (538) Department to support existing program services.

Motion: A motion to recommend the proposed CCHD budget amendments to the Board of Commissioners was made by Robert Miller and a second was made by Allison Gragg. The motion carried unanimously.

DSS BUDGET AMENDMENTS:

ITEM NUMBER ONE:

Partners has allocated \$4,000 to be utilized for travel expenses for Cleveland County DSS staff. These travel expenses shall be limited to mandatory visitations for DSS involved children and adolescents who are placed in treatment facilities outside of North Carolina. Eligible expenses include, but are not limited to, travel, airfare, hotels, meals, and parking. We request permission to budget this amount in Social Work (504) Department.

Motion: A motion to recommend the proposed DSS budget amendments to the Board of Commissioners was made by Robert Miller and a second was made by Allison Gragg. The motion carried unanimously.

MISCELLANEOUS:

Chair Karner asked if there was any additional business to discuss. Tiffany Hansen shared that our CFPT (Child Fatality Prevention Team) is recruiting for an additional team member. She asked everyone to give some thought on interest in being part of that team, and we will address this again at our next meeting in May. The CFPT team meets quarterly at noon at the Cleveland County Health & Social Services Building.

ADJOURN: 7:04 PM

There being no further business, Chair Karner called for a motion to adjourn.

Motion: Deb Hardin moved, with a second by Robert Miller, that the Cleveland County Consolidated Human Services Board meeting be adjourned. The motion carried unanimously.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED,

Tiffany Hansen, Secretary
Cleveland County Consolidated Human Services Agency