

**Commonwealth of Virginia
State Board of Social Services**

**Virginia Department of Social Services
5600 Cox Road
Glen Allen, VA 23060**

April 13, 2026

Attending: Don Carey (Chair), DeRonda Short (Vice Chair), Matthew Melvin (Secretary), Maria Benjamin, Les Ford, Coke Stewart, April Morefield, Mike Flynn, and Zach Clinton

Absent: Tony Whittingham and Mallory Addison

Also in Attendance: Duke Storen (Commissioner) and Ellen Fulmer (Assistant Attorney General)

Meeting called to order at 10:01am – Mr. Carey

Acknowledgement and Approval of Remote Participation by Board Members

The Chair announced that Coke Stewart, April Morefield, DeRonda Short and Les Ford requested to participate remotely. A physical quorum was not present and was not able to vote.

Comments from the Commissioner – Commissioner Storen provided an overview of current agency priorities

COMMENT PERIOD

Cheryl Simms – Ms. Simms commented on the guardianship of her grandson.

Dr. Kandis Lucas – Dr. Lucas commented on the failure of DSS system regarding the parent child safer program law act and its impact on Ms. Simms and the Antonetti family.

Gerardo Antonetti – Mr. Antonetti commented on the CPS matter with his son.

There were no comments from boards and directors.

Comment from the Virginia Community Action Partnership – Erik Johnston, Executive Director
Mr. Johnston thanked the Commissioner and the team at DSS for the amazing partnership with Community Action. He highlighted the earned income and child tax credits and the impacts of HR1. He shared that the Governor was in Culpeper to announce a groundbreaking of affordable housing development next to a Head Start center.

Comment from the Virginia League of Social Service Executives – Kimberly Ayers, Chair, Child and Family Services Committee, Wythe County DSS

Ms. Ayers recognized April as national Child Abuse Prevention month. She noted the ribbons and pinwheels throughout the communities. The pinwheels are a national symbol of the joyful and healthy

childhood all children deserve. She left pinwheels for the Board. She noted agencies continue to struggle with increasing CPS and foster care caseloads. She's excited to work with Commissioner Storen's objective to use AI and cutting-edge technology. She reminded everyone to wear blue during the month of April and wear the pinwheels.

ACTION ITEMS

A physical quorum was not present and the Board unable to vote on the action terms. However, staff presentations were made and there was informal discussion. The Board will vote on the actions at the June 2026 meeting.

1. February 2026 Meeting Minutes
2. 22VAC40-73, Standards for Licensed Assisted Living Facilities Final Regulation *Minimum Liability Insurance for Assisted Living Facilities*
3. Deviation Request from Lunenburg County DSS
4. Deviation Request from New Kent County DSS
5. Administrative/HR Manual for Local Departments of Social Services Chapter 5, Operations of the LDSS Chapter 8, Employee Records & Records Management
6. Appoint Nominating Committee for New Officers – Mr. Carey appointed Les Ford and DeRonda Short.

INFORMATION ITEMS

Contracting Oversight – Alex Kamberis and Michelle Skaggs provided updates on contracting oversight.

Fraud Management – Alex Kamberis provided an overview of fraud management. Ms. Short requested to receive the information by locality. Ms. Ford requested a breakdown of the fraud data between retailers and individuals.

STANDING ITEM

SNAP Payment Accuracy – Carl Ayers provided an update on SNAP payment accuracy.

BOARD BUSINESS

Chairman Cary noted the June 15 meeting will be held in Harrisonburg. As of that time, he had not gotten confirmations from some members that they will attend. He will reach out to them individually. Ms. Short confirmed she will attend in person.

Board Member Comments

Ms. Benjamin would like to hear a simple briefing on the outcome of the public comments received that day, at the next meeting.

Ms. Short was concerned that two minutes per public commenter was not adequate. She suggested adding a minute or two. Ms. Benjamin felt the time was adequate for the Board to get the point. Ms. Morefield would like to see more time added. The Chairman responded that two minutes is the general policy of the Board, and if the Board wants to increase that time, it will have to be by majority vote. He indicated it will be on the June meeting agenda for discussion.

Ms. Stewart asked that news worthy information from the agency be forwarded to the Board between meetings. Commissioner Storen noted the agency is vast, and having an idea of topics of interest would be helpful. He will be happy to look into it, and the agency is always happy to provide briefings as well.

Meeting adjourned at 12:17pm