

**COUNTY OF OSWEGO  
CHILD PROTECTION ADVISORY COUNCIL (CPAC)**

December 1, 2022 – 9:00 AM  
CiTi, Stern Building, Room 133  
Mexico, NY

**PRESENT:**

Liz McLean, Vice Chair  
Anne Marie Muller  
Dr. Dennis Mullaney  
Mary Margaret Pekow  
Nicole Nicholson  
Patrick Dewine

**EX-OFFICIO/GUESTS:**

Stacy Alvord, DSS  
Diane Godfrey, DSS  
Brian Chetney, Youth Bureau  
Sara Finley, DSS  
Emily Watson, Liberty Resources  
Hon. Roy Reehil, Legislature  
Heather Smith, Intern at Catholic Charities  
Marti Babcock, DSS

**EXCUSED:**

Geri Geitner  
Amy Leotta  
Brian Coleman  
Christy Parker  
Diane Cooper-Currier  
Eric Bresee  
Heather DelConte  
James Brooker  
Karla Barnes  
Lorie Burger  
Maggie Olon  
Mary Chirello  
Roseann Bayne  
Melissa Parkhurst  
Tanya VanOrnum  
Tory DeCaire

**MEDIA:**

None Present

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Vice Chair of the Council Liz McLean called the meeting to order at 9:00 A.M.

**1. Review and Approval of Minutes from 10/6/22 CPAC meeting**

- Motion to approve minutes – No discussion or corrections to the minutes – approved unanimously

**2. Update on Child Welfare/DSS Staffing – Marti Babcock**

- Staff count/vacancy chart was shared by Deputy Commissioner Babcock
- 36 current vacancies in the Caseworker title
  - o A few Caseworkers who have resigned are remaining on part time to assist with the workload
- 7 individuals have signed up for the next Caseworker civil service exam
  - o Test is given quarterly; fewer and fewer candidates are signing up for the exam

- NYS civil service is looking into an experience-based exam rather than standard civil service testing for Caseworker title; no official date has been shared as to when this may happen
- Senior Caseworkers are assisting with field work to cover bases and maintain the caseload
  - With the need for Seniors to work in the field, training and support to new Caseworkers has reduced
- HR/DSS have reached out to 10 candidates who signed up to take the civil service exam but did not show up; 3 have responded
- DSS will look into Dragon Speak software to assist with faster case note documentation

### **3. CPS Data – Sara Finley**

- Per NYS OCFS data:
  - 51% of Caseworkers in Oswego County are carrying more than the benchmark 15 cases
  - 55% of Child Protective Investigations are overdue
  - Only 36% of safety assessments are being completed timely
  - 276 reports received in the month of October; Caseworkers are receiving 5-6 new reports per week in addition to their high caseloads
- Oversight of START (Sobriety Treatment and Recovery Team) and reconnecting with contract agencies for regular meetings will resume. During the pandemic and staffing crisis these meetings have not been regularly scheduled
- Performance Improvement Plan recommendations by NYS OCFS:
  - 100 cases initially reviewed earlier this year and an additional 20 cases are being reviewed monthly by OCFS reviewers across the State
    - No safety concerns/issues have been cited on any reviews to date

### **4. START Program – Stacy Alvord**

- START is on the clearing house as a supported evidence-based program
- Oswego County is the first in NYS to have a START team
  - Despite the staffing crisis, DSS continues to push ahead with program and service improvements
- START focuses on families with children 0-5 who are most vulnerable to harm and at the age where bonding and attachment/development are critical

### **5. Bonadio Review – Stacy Alvord**

- Bonadio Review of DSS is ongoing, this has been a heavy lift for DSS
- DSS has provided all information and documentation as requested by Bonadio
- DSS has been and continues to be transparent with the Legislature, Bonadio, and CPAC regarding the state of the department and will work through Bonadio recommendations when they are made available

### **6. CPAC Moving Forward**

- CPAC will work with DSS staff regarding the use of “working titles” to better define their work and roles
- Fostering Futures plan started by DSS lost traction during the pandemic, need to revisit
- Safety Science and community child protection – suggestions by Chair Geri Geitner to be explored further at future meetings
- Noted as happening in the community:
  - Circle of Security partnership with SUNY Oswego to focus on children 0-5
  - Two ARPA funds projects to be focused on childcare
  - LIFT task force will be getting off the ground again

### **Adjournment:**

Meeting adjourned at 10:50 A.M.  
2023 Meetings: 3/2, 6/1, 9/7, and 12/7 – locations TBA