

BURLINGTON COUNTY BOARD OF SOCIAL SERVICES

March 19, 2026, at 4:33 p.m.

MINUTES

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

PRESENT: Sarah Holley, Chairperson
Harriette Cohen, Vice Chairperson
Dee Bayles, Secretary/Treasurer
Pamela Hall-King, Citizen Member
Jaclyn Veasy, Citizen Member (via telephone/arrived at 4:37 p.m.)
Saima Bhutta, Citizen Member (via telephone)
Tyler Burrell, County Commissioner

EXCUSED: Michael Trainor, Citizen Member
Felicia Hopson, County Commissioner

STAFF: Lila Myers, Acting Deputy Director
Evan Crook, Esq., General Counsel
Natalia Hudson-Cheek, Paralegal Specialist

VISITORS: Nicole LeCates, David Mauro, Valerie Ingling
Zanna Taylor, Yolanda Nichols, At least 17 Visitors

PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT: (read by Lila Myers, Acting Deputy Director)

Adequate notice of this meeting has been provided in accordance with the Open Public Meetings Act by: (a) prominently posting the annual Notice of Meetings Resolution and maintaining such notice on a public bulletin board reserved for such or similar announcements: (b) submitting the Annual Notice of Meetings Resolution for publication in the Burlington County Times, the Board’s official newspaper, on February 1, 2026, and the Courier Post, the Board’s alternative official newspaper on February 4, 2026, within seven business days of the Board’s reorganization meeting of January 27, 2026; (c) filing the Annual Notice of Meetings Resolution with the Clerk of the County of Burlington; and (d) mailing the Annual Notice of Meetings Resolution to any persons who shall have prepaid to receive such notice.

ROLL CALL

VISITORS ANNOUNCED

2026 BOARD COMMITTEES:

Personnel: Sarah Holley, Harriette Cohen, Pamela Hall-King, Tyler Burrell, Alternate
Finance: Dee Bayles, Chair, Saima Bhutta, Harriette Cohen, Sarah Holley, Alternate
Labor Relations: Sarah Holley, Chair, Pamela Hall-King, Jaclyn Veasy, Harriette Cohen, Alternate
Legislative: Saima Bhutta, Chair, Tyler Burrell, Harriette Cohen, Pamela Hall-King, Alternate
Affirmative Action: Tyler Burrell, Chair, Jaclyn Veasy, Saima Bhutta, Pamela Hall-King, Alternate

MINUTES: Motion made by Harriette Cohen, duly seconded by Saima Bhutta, abstention by Tyler Burrell, motion carried to approve the open and executive minutes of February 19, 2026.

Table with 5 columns: Member Name, Y, Nay, Abstain, Absent. Rows for Cohen and Holley, both with a checkmark in the Y column.

Bayles	√			
Bhutta	√			
Hall-King	√			
Veasy	√			
Trainor				√
Burrell			√	
Hopson				√

CORRESPONDENCE: Read into record by Lila Myers, Acting Deputy Director.

- A. Thank you from a customer to Renata Sauer. Renata is a customer service aide in the customer service unit. Renata is not here, but I would like to thank her for her excellent customer service skills.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

- A. Sarah Holley, Chairperson, stated that the Personnel Committee held interviews for the Temporary Director’s position, but no decisions were made; more information will be forthcoming.
- B. David Mauro, Fiscal Officer, presented the Finance Committee Report and reviewed the 2026 Burlington County Board of Social Services’ (BCBSS) Budget. Dave requested the Board’s approval for the 2026 BCBSS Budget.

*Motion made by Harriette Cohen, duly seconded by Saima Bhutta, and unanimously carried to approve the Personnel and Finance Committees' reports.*

RESOLUTIONS:

- A. Resolution No.: 2026-12 Authorizing Professional Service Agreement with PKF O’Connor Davies, LLP to serve as Auditor.

*Motion made by Jaclyn Veasy, duly seconded by Pamela Hall-King, and unanimously carried to approve the Personnel and Finance Committees' reports.*

- B. Resolution No.: 2026-13 I. T. Closet Completion - Ground Level.

*Motion made by Dee Bayles, duly seconded by Saima Bhutta, and unanimously carried to approve.*

OTHER BUSINESS: (by Lila Myers, Acting Deputy Director).

- A. Agency Update  
Processing & Performance
  - Overall Progress: Agency processing is moving in the right direction. We remain current and timely with SNAP RECERTS and are actively addressing outstanding mail and case changes.
  - DFD Collaboration: The DFD Corrective Action Plan (CAP) team visited recently to review agency processes, analyze cases, and identify best practices.
  - Medicaid Performance: Redetermination completion rates for NJFC and ABD have improved significantly, rising to 91% from a low of 57% in February 2025.
  - Rankings: Our agency is currently ranked #1 in the state for NJFC intakes and #4 in the state for NJFC renewals.

- ABD Unit: While the Aged, Blind, and Disabled (ABD) unit has faced challenges, staffing improvements have resulted in better performance from the added staff.
  - System Transition: The transition from GA to CAPES is experiencing minor growing pains, but DFD has been responsive to our concerns.
- Staffing & Personnel**
- New Hires: (10) new HSS1 staff started on 3/23/2026; (8) provisional HSS1 staff hired August 2025.
  - Promotions: (4) HSS1 staff begin the promotional test period on 4/13/2026.
  - Leadership/Specialists: A new Social Work Supervisor was selected (effective 3/16/2026); (1) permanent Social Work Specialist hired (effective 2/16/2026); and (2) HSS3 staff started on 3/30/2026.
  - Upcoming: Clerical interviews are currently being planned.
  - Civil Service Updates: The working test period has been extended from 90 days to 120 days.
- Operational Security & Support**
- Overtime: To manage workload, overtime is available before and after hours (until 5:30 PM) and on Saturdays (limited to two Saturdays per month).
  - Security Incident: Following a failure of a panic button during an incident in the new interview area, County IT immediately tested and repaired all buttons. As a backup, our IT department installed a direct agency phone in the nearby Sheriff's booth.
- Budget & Advocacy**
- Proposed Funding: Governor Sherrill proposed a budget earmarking \$71 million to help counties manage increased costs from the Federal Reconciliation Bill. If confirmed, this funding would support the last quarter of 2026 and the first two quarters of 2027.
  - Outlook: As this is a proposal requiring legislative approval, we must continue to advocate for these funds to ensure future financial support.

**REQUISITION OF ESTIMATED FUNDS:**

Motion made, duly seconded, and unanimously carried to approve the reports for Assistance payments and approval of Assistance payments, initial grants and changes in grants, closings, denials, withdrawals, and dismissals. Also, approved receipts and disbursements for CSP, Administration, Unemployment, and Clearing Account. Also, approved payment of Administrative bills and ratified the administrative actions of the Director.

*TAB A: Motion made by Harriette Cohen, duly seconded by Pamela Hall-King, and unanimously carried to approve.*

*TAB B and C: Motion made by Harriette Cohen, duly seconded by Pamela Hall-King, and unanimously carried to approve.*

*TAB D: Motion made by Harriette Cohen, duly seconded by Pamela Hall-King, and unanimously carried to approve.*

<b>Member Name</b>	<b>Yay</b>	<b>Nay</b>	<b>Abstain</b>	<b>Absent</b>
Cohen	√			
Holley	√			
Bayles	√			
Bhutta	√			
Hall-King	√			
Veasy	√			
Trainor				√
Burrell	√			
Hopson				√

PERSONNEL:

- A. Separation of employment (retirement, 20 years), Lisa Holland, Social Work Supervisor, Range 21, \$85,433, effective April 1, 2026.
- B. Separation of employment, Mikea Harris, Keyboarding Clerk 1, Range 6, \$42,955, effective March 12, 2026.
- C. Separation of employment, Danielle Criswell, Human Services Specialist 1, Range 13, \$52,104, effective March 20, 2026.
- D. Separation of employment, Kathleen Sweeney, Human Services Specialist 1, Range 13, \$52,104, effective March 20, 2026.

Lila Myers, Acting Deputy Director, acknowledged the retirement of Lisa Holland, APS Supervisor, stating that Lisa was a professional, competent individual. I valued Lisa's hard work and I am jealous of her retirement time.

*Motion made by Pamela Hall-King, duly seconded by Tyler Burrell, and unanimously carried to approve Tabs A through D.*

- E. Authorize the Acting Deputy Director's action in the promotional appointment of Traci Green, Social Worker, Range 19, \$72,344 to Social Work Supervisor, Range 21, \$89,433, effective March 16, 2026, in accordance with the New Jersey Civil Service Commission procedures.
- F. Authorize the Acting Deputy Director's action in the promotional appointment of Deborah Byrne, Human Services Specialist 2, Range 17, \$61,976 to Human Services Specialist 3, Range 20, \$70,997, effective March 30, 2026, in accordance with the New Jersey Civil Service Commission procedures.

*Motion made by Pamela Hall-King, duly seconded by Tyler Burrell, and unanimously carried to approve Tabs E through F.*

- G. Authorize the Acting Deputy Director's action in the promotional appointment of Ufug Mammadova, Human Services Specialist 2, Range 17, \$65,976 to Human Services Specialist 3, Range 20, \$74,997, effective March 30, 2026, in accordance with the New Jersey Civil Service Commission procedures.

*Motion made by Harriette Cohen, duly seconded by Pamela Hall-King, and unanimously carried to approve Tab G.*

- H. Authorize the Acting Deputy Director's action in the status change of Shonta' Temple, Social Work Specialist from Provisional Appointment to Regular Appointment, Range 20, \$68,874, effective February 16, 2026, in accordance with the New Jersey Civil Service Commission procedures.

*Motion made by Harriette Cohen, duly seconded by Pamela Hall-King, and unanimously carried to approve Tab H.*

- I. Approve the Acting Deputy Director's action in the status change of the following Human Services Specialist 1s, from Provisional Appointment to Regular Appointment, Range 13, \$52,104, effective March 23, 2026, in accordance with the New Jersey Civil Service Commission procedures:

Nora Amador                      Alexis Bowling                      Chandra Williams                      Austin Willis

- J. Approve the Acting Deputy Director's action in the status change of the following Human Services Specialist 1s, from Provisional Appointment to Regular Appointment, Range 13, \$56,104, effective March 23, 2026, in accordance with the New Jersey Civil Service Commission procedures:

Lilian Chirino                      Sara Donald                      Evan McKinnon                      Lauren Ashley Rogers

*Motion made by Tyler Burrell, duly seconded by Pamela Hall-King, and unanimously carried to approve Tabs I and J.*

- K. Approve the Acting Deputy Director's action in the regular appointment of the following Human Services Specialist 1s, Range 13, \$52,104, effective March 23, 2026, in accordance with the New Jersey Civil Service Commission procedures:

Michelle Animwah                      Oghogho Ekenezar                      Courtney Long                      Dulba Omeragic  
Jaime Patty                      Julia Rivera                      Vanessa Saunders                      Jyoti Verma  
Caitlin Vickery                      Christina Vu

*Motion made by Pamela Hall-King, duly seconded by Tyler Burrell, and unanimously carried to approve Tab K.*

PUBLIC COMMENT: (commenced at 4:54 p.m.)

**Please raise your hand to be recognized by the Board Chairperson. Once recognized, introduce yourself. Be sure to address all comments to the Board Chairperson. Each public commenter will have four (4) minutes. Thank you for your cooperation.**

Megan Maroccia, Social Worker, EA Unit, stated that she was the worker who experienced the failed panic button and expressed concerns regarding the safety of all employees. Megan also discussed the security of the employee entrance stairway used to access the new client interviewing area from the third floor.

Nicole Lecates, Administration, Office Services, clarified the safety measures that the BCBSS and County discussed and implemented to ensure the employees' safety.

Helena Humphrey, HSS2, Unit D, stated that some employees have medical issues and they are not able to use the stairway.

Tonya Brown, HSS2, Unit F, expressed her concerns regarding the safety and security of the employee stairway.

Shawn Handy, a Sheriff Officer, stated that he has only been here for 30 days, but all the Sheriff Officers take notes and pass them up to their department.

Sarah Holly, Chairperson, thanked Officer Handy.

Nicole Lecates, Administration/Office Services, expressed empathy for employees' concerns and acknowledged the countless efforts made by the County, BCBSS IT, and Maintenance Departments' and their hard work that contributed to the new interviewing client area. Nicole further stated that employees should always be vigilant and aware of their surroundings, and she detailed the security measures implemented (barriers, resistant sheet rock, and panic buttons).

David Mauro, Fiscal Officer, stated that he understands both sides and suggested testing the panic buttons every day before every shift begins.

Lila Myers, Acting Deputy Director, stated that she also made that same suggestion.

Brian Devone, IT Supervisor, stated that when the panic button is activated, the signal does not go to the Sheriff; it goes directly to Public Safety.

Nicole Lecates, Administration/Office Services, stated that the antenna was working before, but it was relocated after the incident occurred.

Tyler Burrell, County Commissioner, stated that we need a procedure for testing.

Sarah Holly, Board Chairperson, thanked everyone for the comments.

**PUBLIC COMMENT CLOSED (concluded at 5:06 p.m.)**

**BOARD ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:**

Harriette Cohen, Vice Chairperson, wished everyone a happy social work month, then expressed her concerns for the barriers between the workers and clients and the sad times we live in. She thanked Nicole for the tour of the new reception and client interviewing areas and mentioned that there is a section for children.

**The following statement was read into the record prior to the Board's consideration of a Resolution to move into Executive Session.**

“According to Resolution No. 2026-14, the public is advised that the Board will re-enter into regular session at the conclusion of the executive session to wrap up the meeting and adjourn. Besides entertaining a motion to adjourn, the Board could also address any matters resulting from executive session discussions. Members of the public wishing to be present are welcome to wait while the executive session takes place.”

**EXECUTIVE SESSION:**

*Motion made by Commissioner Tyrell Burrell, duly seconded by Harriette Cohen, and unanimously carried to approve to enter Executive Session.*

The Board then convened an executive session at 5:09 p.m.

**OPEN SESSION:**

*Motion made to return to open session by Dee Bayles, duly seconded by Jaclyn Veasy, and unanimously carried at 5:37 p.m.*

Tyler Burrell, County Commissioner, rescinded his vote for the BCBSS 2026 Budget and recused himself, because the County approves the Budget.

*ADJOURNMENT: Motion made by Dee Bayles, duly seconded by Pamela Hall-King, and unanimously carried to adjourn the meeting at 5:40 p.m.*