

Boards, Commissions, Councils and Committees Funded by the Board of Supervisors

AMHERST COUNTY SOCIAL SERVICES BOARD CHARTER

1. Purpose. Virginia has been confronting the issue of disadvantaged citizens from its beginning. Early efforts included an act in 1646 to establish a workhouse for the care and vocational training of poor children and a child welfare program established in 1661. The Virginia Public Assistance Act of 1938 required every political jurisdiction to have local departments of public welfare, offering relatively uniform services. This was the beginning of Virginia's present system of state supervised, locally administered Departments of Social Services. The current legal base for the Virginia and local Departments of Social Services is the Code of Virginia Section 63.2 which:

- Provides for a local board and local director;
- Defines specific duties of the state board and local boards of social services;
- Defines duties of the commissioner and local directors; and
- Sets out in state regulations the structure and administration of social services in Virginia.

The purpose of the Amherst County Social Services Board is to administer, with staff, in accordance with rules and regulations established by the State Board and in compliance with all other applicable state & federal laws, regulations and policies, the programs of financial assistance, income support and social services as required by law.

2. Goals. The mission of the Amherst County Department of Social Services is to offer timely, appropriate, quality services to individuals and families in order to promote self-sufficiency and to protect children and adults. The Amherst County Social Services Board's goals, powers and responsibilities include:

- Administration of programs in accordance with the state guidance and State Board regulations;
- Review of programmatic and personnel performance;
- Preparation and submission of an annual budget to state and local officials sufficient to carry out the operations of the department;
- Discretionary power over local funding from both public and private sources;
- Submission of agency reports to local officials at least annually;
- Employment of legal counsel in civil matters;
- Appointment of local department director; and
- Interest in all matters pertinent to local social services.

3. Membership. The Amherst County Social Services Board is an administrative board whose five (5) members are appointed by the Board of Supervisors. The Amherst County Social Services Board is made up of four (4) at-large seats and one (1) member of the Board of Supervisors. Citizen terms are four (4) years, and a member may serve no more than two consecutive four-year terms, except that any person appointed to fill a mid-term vacancy may be eligible for two additional successive four-year terms after the term of the vacancy has expired.

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4. **Meetings.** Regular meetings of the Amherst County Social Services Board are typically held monthly in the conference room of Amherst County Department of Social Services at 9:00 a.m. on the third Thursday of each month. The time and location of regular meetings may be modified by the local Social Services Board with proper public notice. Meetings may be canceled or special meetings called with proper public notice.

5. **Reports.** The Social Services Director shall routinely provide reports to the local Social Services Board, including the annual financial report and the annual local profile, both reports compiled and made available by the Virginia Department of Social Services. The Social Services Director shall also provide the local Social Services Board with an annual report of agency achievements. The Amherst County Social Services Board and/or the agency director will provide to the Board of Supervisors an annual agency report.

6. **Organization.** The Amherst County Social Services Board's Rules of Procedure are readopted or modified annually at the July organizational meeting. All offices for the coming year are likewise selected at this meeting.

- **CHAIRMAN** – The Chairman presides over the board meetings. He/she may at his/her discretion choose to appoint committee leaders for special tasks or assignments. The Chairman has signature authority for the local Social Services Board, but may choose to delegate this responsibility to the director, as he/she deems appropriate.
- **VICE CHAIRMAN** – The Vice Chairman serves in the Chairman's role whenever the Chairman is unavailable.
- **SECRETARY** – The local Social Services Director shall be the administrator of the local Department of Social Services and shall serve as Secretary to the Board. As Secretary, the Director is responsible for drafting agendas and distribution of the agenda packets to the Board members, and for production of the minutes of the meeting. The Secretary shall maintain permanent records of the minutes and be prepared to provide signed copies as testament of their accuracy. The Secretary shall cause notice to be given of all meetings of the local Social Services Board as required by law.

7. **Amherst County Governmental Support.** In addition to the Social Services Director, as listed above, the Amherst County Social Services Board receives staff support from the County's Finance Department, Purchasing Department, and Treasurer's Office. The County's Human Resources Department and Information Technology Department provide limited support as these functions are primarily provided by the Virginia Department of Social Services.

8. **Authority.** The Amherst County Social Services Board is a separate entity with the legal right to contract, issue decisions and/or otherwise run its own affairs, while keeping the Board of Supervisors apprised of activities which may have a significant impact on the County or its interests, especially its budget. The Amherst County Social Services Board may represent the County on matters related to

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human services and public welfare to other local Departments of Social Services as well as state, federal, non-profit or commercial organizations without coordination with the County Administrator.

9. **Official Acts.** Three (3) members of the five-member board will constitute a quorum. Acts of the Amherst County Social Services Board shall be performed by majority vote of members present and recorded in the official minutes. The Chairman of the local Social Services Board, as an individual, may speak for the body, while exercising care not to overstep the bounds of consensus within the local Social Services Board.

10. **Virginia Freedom of Information Act.** The Amherst County Social Services Board is a “public body” under the Virginia Freedom of Information Act. It is the responsibility of the Chairman, with assistance from the Secretary and the County or agency attorney(s), to ensure compliance with all facets of this law.

11. **State and Local Government Conflict of Interest Act.** Citizen members of the Amherst County Social Services Board are not required to file an annual Financial Disclosure Statement. The member from the Board of Supervisors is not required to file an annual Financial Disclosure Statement beyond what he/she must file in his/her capacity as a member of the Board of Supervisors.