

HARFORD COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES
Citizen Advisory Board
Minutes of November 20, 2025
In Person

Members Present: Andrée Mountain, Debbie Button (Aide to Nolanda Robert), Angela Mangione, Kourtney Cluster, Jim Kuterbach

Members Absent: Cynthia Phillips ("C"), Christine Gerhardt, Dan Rusin

Staff Present: Cora Grishkot, Kristy Louvado

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m.

1. Approval of Minutes

- The minutes from October 23, 2025, meeting were reviewed.
- October 23, 2025, minutes were unanimously approved as presented upon the motion of Angela Mangione with a second from Kourtney Cluster.

2. Board Chair Report (Andrée Mountain)

- The MASSB foundation has welcomed several new members, including Dr. Mountain, who has assumed the role of treasurer.

3. Director's Report (Cora Grishkot)

- **SNAP**
 - SNAP benefits for the month of November have been issued.
 - Recipients will be receiving full benefits.
- **Homelessness Panel**
 - Cora was asked to sit on a panel with community partners to discuss the state of homelessness in Harford County.
 - The event was held at the Church of the Nazarene in Bel Air.
 - The event will be broadcast in December.
- **Community Partners**
 - We have initiated a partnership with the public library system and will have representatives at the Whiteford and Joppa branches once a month to assist with applications. We believe this collaboration will enhance accessibility for the community.
 - In addition to the libraries, we are currently in the planning stages of establishing a presence within Harford County Public Schools (HCPS) and possibly the new LASOS center that will be opening soon.
- **Food pantry**
 - Thanks to your generous support, we were able to prepare 50 bags of food and successfully stock the food pantry.
 - We also received generous donations of food items from our staff members.

- **Meeting with County Executive**
 - Cora and her team met with the County Executive and his team early this month to discuss the impacts of upcoming funding cuts to federal programs.
 - The candidates for upcoming board appointments will be reviewed in the next week.
- **Vacancies**
 - We currently have several vacancies due to voluntary separation and the retirement of an administrator after 34 years of dedicated state service.

4. General Discussion Topics

- **Status of Recruitment of New Board Members**
 - Noted above.
- **MASSB Foundation Board**
 - Noted above.

5. New Business

- **2026 Goals**
 - Motion unanimously passed at the previous meeting for the following:
 - Backpack giveaway August 2026
 - APS Sponsorship during the holidays
 - Re-decorating the children's playroom
 - Providing \$1000 to keep the food pantry stocked
 - Members discuss.
 - APS received funding that allowed the department to fulfill current needs of APS clients. At this time, the need would be for gift cards only.
 - A motion was presented by Kourtney not to sponsor Adult Protective Services (APS) clients this holiday season. Angela seconded the motion, and it was unanimously passed by the committee.
 - The committee will revisit the sponsorship in the future and investigate assisting APS clients with prescription costs.
 - Cora requested the board consider reallocating a portion of the funds that have been set aside for the food pantry to be used to cover the cost of prescriptions for APS clients as needed.
 - Cora recommended a new goal focused on assisting schools with supplies for students for "spirit days" or "house activities."
- **Fundraising Goals**
 - Kourtney completed a letter of solicitation to be sent to local businesses.
 - The matrix needs to be updated to determine the current priorities.
 - Angela is pursuing donations to assist with redecorating the playroom.
 - When the comprehensive plan has been drawn up for the playroom, the department will submit it for approval.

- Members suggest looking into scholastic or HCPS for book donations.
- Jim inquired about the needs of the older foster youth and ways the board can best support them.
- Kourtney noted the new non-profit Shifting Gears that assists older foster youth. She will arrange for them to attend a board meeting in the future to discuss their needs in depth.

6. Old Business

- **Handbook Update**
 - N/A
- **Mini-Golf Fundraiser**
 - Tabled

7. Committee Reports

- CQI
 - Committee met yesterday November 19th to determine the holiday office activities.
 - Members decided on several events for the month of December including decorating gingerbread houses, ugly sweaters, a cookie fundraiser, movies during lunch and trivia.
 - Committee will meet again in December to plan a chili/soup cookoff in January.
- Finance
 - Current balance is 8,021.24.
 - Jim will investigate the balance of food pantry funds after the recent purchase.
- Events and Fundraising
 - No Report
- Public Relations
 - No Report
- Board Administration
 - No Report
- Legislative
 - Kourtney submitted the legislative report including an executive order signed by President Trump to improve the foster care system and help young people successfully transition into adulthood.

8. Action Items

- Committee Assignments
- \$1000 Food pantry
- Adult Services Christmas Sponsorship

- Decorating children's playroom
- Backpack giveaway August 2026

9. Next Meetings

- The December meeting will be held on December 18th, 2025.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:29 pm.

The next meeting will be **Thursday, December 18th, 2025, at 2. S. Bond Street, Suite 300, Bel Air, MD 21014**

Respectfully submitted by: Kristy Louvado