**WESTERN PRAIRIE HUMAN SERVICES BOARD MEETING**

**May 3, 2024**

The meeting of the Joint Powers Board for Western Prairie Human Services was held May 3, 2024 at the Western Prairie Human Services Office in Glenwood office.

**MEMBERS PRESENT OTHERS PRESENT MEMBERS ABSENT**

Doyle Sperr Stacy Hennen, Director Gordy Wagner

Paul Gremmels Chris Schmitz, Executive Assistant Larry Lindor

Troy Johnson Crystal Zaviska, Financial Assistance Supervisor

Ken Johnson Tracy Bowman, Fiscal Manger

Paul Gerde Kayla Schmidt, Traverse County Commissioner

Paul Wildman Dwight Nelson, Traverse County Commissioner

Dwight Walvatne

Bill LaValley

**A. Opening:**

1. Chair Troy Johnson called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

2. The Pledge of Allegiance was said.

3. Introductions of staff were presented.

4. The agenda was reviewed. There are two additional items add to the agenda that need further approval. See items 13 A and 15 A. Commissioner Wildman made a motion to approve the agenda as presented, seconded by Commissioner LaValley, MCU

5. Approval of the April 5, 2024 meeting minutes. Commissioner Gerde would like May 5 minutes to read amended minutes since there was a change. After reviewing the minutes, Commissioner Gerde a motion to approve the amended minutes, seconded by Commissioner Sperr, MCU.

6. A summary of the April 2024 bills was presented by the director. After discussion, Commissioner Walvatne made a motion to approve the bills, seconded by Commissioner LaValley MCU.

**B. CONTRACTS/AGREEMENTS**

7. None

**C. OLD BUSINESS**

8. **Out of Home Placement List**

The director discussed the out of home placements for the month of March. We have 22 children in placement versus 24 in February. We have two kids in 18-21 placement, both age 19. We have four kids in waivered care, 2 of whom will turn 18 in the next 2-3 months and will move into the adult system. Unfortunately, the cases we do have in placement are quite significant, with high needs and significant reasons for placement.

9. **Case Counts**

The director discussed the current cases. Our child protection intakes are down substantially for March, which is pretty normal for the time of year. We currently have 70 open cases which is still high considering of our 10 staff in that area we have 2 new staff and 2 vacant positions, so those cases are spread between 6 people while they train. Our mental health caseload continues to go up. We have had 5 this year in children’s mental health (CMH) with 3 more intakes and up 2 in adults with 6 intakes. In January of 2023 we had 90 CMH cases and we now have 102. In 2024 we now have 90 adult mental health case management cases compared to 75 last year. We absorbed 23 cases in that unit without additional staff, we did re-allocate our previous CD person to do some CMH but otherwise we have not added staff to that unit in several years. Our disabilities, licensing, and adult protection are all remaining steady right now.

The Financial Assistance Supervisor discussed the Child Support received more referrals as there are cases adjusting in Healthcare with the unwind. Child Care Assistance added 2 more cases, in addition, there were 2 applications denied in March this represents the work the workers are doing but the application is being denied for over income or lack of mandatory verifications. MNCARE decreased 1 case. MA cases decreased 18 cases that either went to Tax Credit or UQHP (private insurance) due to income or closures. MAXIS Cases have started processing Asset tests in March; DHS has corrected our reports list and it currently is working. WPHS has a decrease of 12 cases in March as a result of implementing unwind procedures. New applications and add a program application are in a more manageable number. These cases are cases that didn’t comply on their first round of recertification, and require double the work to reopen them as a result of the documentations being turned in within the following month it was due.

10. **Personnel/Hiring Update**

The director discussed the hiring of new staff and the current openings. We currently have two openings in the Glenwood office in the Child Protection Unit. WPHS continues to fill open positions.

**D.** **New Business:**

11. **Region IV E Follow Up Letter**

The director presented the board with the letter she sent after last month’s meeting, at the board’s direction, to the Executive Board asking them again to address the auditing issues we were made aware of. The director indicated that while it is not solved there was the discovery of a current policy in place for conflicts of interest and “moonlighting”. Western Prairie’s attorney has been working with Region IV South’s attorney on the language as it is quite prescriptive and would not allow the current arrangement to continue. The board expressed concern for our compliance with auditing standards and a desire to ensure that we meet our auditing standards. They directed the director to contact our auditor with the policy and proposed addendum and see if that will address the audit issues they brought up. If they do not they asked that we have the auditors speak directly with the Governing Board or Executive Board about this.

12. **AAFPA**

The director discussed the board concerns WPHS has with the upcoming legislative bills. The African American Family Preservation Act was in the Senate Omnibus bill in some modified version but then was moved back to a standalone bill in its original version and is in a standalone bill in the house and the two are likely to be a part of conference committee where decisions have to be made about if this should be passed, what version should be passed, what is the timeline, and what requirements are in it. While counties agree that the disparities that exist within our system for African American children need to be addressed, we have concerns with some particular areas of the bill. The director wanted to ensure that the commissioners were aware of what would be coming in the next few years and what it may mean for us.

13. **Sauer Family Foundation Resource Center Grant**

The director discussed the Family Resource Center (FRC) grant. This grant is a preventative service that is in the exploration phase for several counties and in the implementation phase for counties such as Polk and Scott and others are nearing that stage. Sauer Family Foundation offers three levels of grants and we have been in conversation with them to apply for the first phase and possibly the second phase as well. The first phase is an exploratory phase to determine what an FRC could look like for each of our counties or communities. There are consultants throughout the state that have been trained in completing community assessments to look at the viability and the needs After review and discussion, Commissioner Walvatne made a motion to approve, seconded by Commissioner LaValley. MCU

14. **Proclamation for Childcare Providers**

The director discussed that May is childcare appreciation month. A thank you to the providers will be posted in each county’s primary newspaper. The agency requested a proclamation to declare May 10, 2024 Provider Appreciation Day for the 36 child care providers within the Western Prairie Human Services area. The providers serve approximately 390 children and their families. Commissioner Gremmels made a motion to approve the proclamation to our providers, seconded by Commissioner Johnson, MCU.

15. **Human Services Performance Management Report**

The director discussed the annual management report for 2023. SNAP and Cash Assistance applications within 30 days, the staff reached a goal of 93% of the state is 82.8%. Processing an expedited SNAP within 1 business day is 55%. WPHS met that with 61.6%, the State is 35.9%. Vulnerable adults reported as maltreated with initial disposition for response made within 5 working days WPHS was at 98.4% the State is at 95.7%. Overall the staff at Western Prairie Human Services continue to strive with helping the community and clients.

15. a **Child Support Grant**

The Financial Assistance Supervisor and Director spoke about a letter of support we want the board to approve regarding a grant the Child Support Division of the Department of Human Services is applying for that we would like to be a part of. This grant would allow us to utilize employment services to assist our child support non-custodial parents in seeking employment so they could better meet their child support obligations and further enrich themselves. Commissioner Wildman made a motion to approve the letter of support, seconded by Commissioner Sperr, MCU.

16.**Child Welfare Human Service Leadership Award**

The staff and commissioners of Western Prairie Human Services celebrated the director Stacy Hennen for receiving the Child Welfare Human Service Leadership Award for 2024. This award recognizes Minnesota leaders for their outstanding statewide contributions to child welfare practice.

**Report from Board Appointments:**

The meeting was adjourned by Chairman Troy Johnson at 10:46 a.m.

A. Lakeland Mental Health Center………………. K. Johnson/Gerde

B. Horizon Community Health Board……………. Sperr/Walvatne/Lindor/Wagner

C. Prime West Health CBP……………………………... Wagner/K Johnson/T. Johnson/Lindor

D. West Central Communities Action, Inc. ………... K Johnson/Lindor

E. Agency on Aging…………………………………… Lindor/LaValley

F. Child Protection Pre-Placement………………. T. Johnson/Gremmels

G. Rainbow Rider ……………………………………… LaValley/Walvatne/Gerde/

H. R4S Governing and Executive Board…………… K. Johnson/Wildman

I. Child and Youth Council……………………………. Sperr/Wagner

J. WPHS Personnel Committee……………………… Lindor/Wildman/Sperr/T. Johnson

K. WPHS Executive Committee………………………. T. Johnson/Walvatne/Gremmels

l. WPHS Finance Committee………………………... Gerde/Lindor/LaValley/K. Johnson

M. WPHS Safety Committee…………………………………... Sperr/Wildman

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Board Chair Board Secretary