**WESTERN PRAIRIE HUMAN SERVICES BOARD MEETING**

**April 5, 2024**

The meeting of the Joint Powers Board for Western Prairie Human Services was held April 5, 2024 at the Western Prairie Human Services Office in Elbow Lake office.

**MEMBERS PRESENT OTHERS PRESENT MEMBERS ABSENT**

Doyle Sperr Stacy Hennen, Director

Paul Gremmels Kari Rude, Deputy Director/HR Director

Troy Johnson Chris Schmitz, Executive Assistant

Ken Johnson Tracy Bowman, Fiscal Supervisor

Paul Gerde Kayla Schmidt, Traverse County Commissioner

Paul Wildman Dwight Nelson, Traverse County Commissioner

Larry Lindor

Dwight Walvatne

Bill LaValley

Gordy Wagner

Dwight Walvatne

**A. Opening:**

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

2. The Pledge of Allegiance was said.

3. The agenda was reviewed. With no additions to the agenda Commissioner Gerde made a motion to approve the agenda as presented, seconded by Commissioner LaValley, MCU

4. Approval of the Mach 1, 2024 meeting minutes. After reviewing the minutes, Commissioner Lindor made a motion to approve the minutes, seconded by Commissioner Wildman, MCU.

5. A summary of the February 2024 bills was presented by the fiscal supervisor. After discussion, Commissioner Wildman made a motion to approve the bills, seconded by Commissioner Sperr MCU.

6. **2022 Audit**

The fiscal supervisor along with the auditors reviewed the 2022 audit report. Western Prairie Human Services 2022 audit was issued March 20, 2024 with an unmodified opinion. The auditors have gone over the report with the finance committee, and overall, we are pleased.

**B. CONTRACTS/AGREEMENTS**

7. **LMHC School Based Mental Health Professional**

The director discussed the Lakeland Mental Health Center (LMHC) contract for a School Based Mental Health Professional (SBMC) from 12 months to 7 months. WPHS has a staff who is a licensed mental health professional who has been providing school based mental health professional services to the Grant County schools for several years under a contract between LMHC and WPHS and previously LMHC and GCSS. The staff has given us and LMHC their intent to retire at the end of July, 2024. The director is asking to modifying our contract to go through July 2024 instead of December 2024. After review and discussion, Commissioner Gremmels made a motion to approve the contract, seconded by Commissioner Wagner, MCU

**C. OLD BUSINESS**

8. **Out of Home Placement List**

The director discussed for the month of February we have 24 children in placement versus 19 in January. Based on our numbers and how busy we were in January and February this is, unfortunately, no unexpected. Western Prairie Human Services has 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. A transfer of custody can take almost as long as an adoption. We are high in placements because we are high in cases. 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 our child protection intakes have gone done, which is good since the rate was unsustainable for us. We went from an all-time high of 105 to a more normal rate of 67. Our open cases continue to be high though, only down 5 from 82 to 77. Our child foster care licenses went up, which is normal with higher placements if we are placing with relatives and doing emergency relative licenses and our children’s mental health continues to have a slow increase upwards. Child Support continues to clean up cases as you see the decrease of 8 cases. This is because as the team learns deeper policy understanding, we are learning that we can close certain cases that have no activity on them and are below $500 with arears balances only, in addition, some cases are closing due to emancipations.

Child Care Assistance remains stable, adding the applications denied to this spreadsheet represent the work the workers are doing but the application is being denied for over income or lack of mandatory verifications.

MNCARE increased as a result of 19 cases being over income for MA. MA cases leaving 58 cases that went to Tax Credit or UQHP (private insurance) due to income or closures.

MAXIS Cases have started processing Asset tests in March; however, DHS reports are blank, thanks to our detailed orientated LTC workers bring that to the supervisor’s attention, DHS has acknowledged they are wrong and are looking into why. New application and add a program application are incr4eased again, this is representative of the pressure the team is feeling but are diligently working through it while training.

10. **Personnel/Hiring Update**

The deputy director discussed that the agency has a few openings. Currently we have two Social Worker position open in our Child Protection unit which we are currently interviewing. We have the following open one account technician, one supervisor in our child protection unit and a visitation aide position open. Western Prairie Human services has hired one Eligibility Worker, one Social Worker in our Disabilities unit, one Social Worker in our Child Protection unit along with one visitation aide.

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

11. **DHS Legislative Bills**

The director discussed the upcoming legislative bills. The director has concerns regarding some of the bills and how it will impact our staff and the communities we serve. The first deadlines were March 22nd so anything not heard by then will need to move on to the next biennium. The Minnesota Association of County Social Services Administrators (MACSSA) and the Association of Minnesota Counties (AMC) have been very busy this year in the human services.

12. **Half Day Training**

The director discussed a half day of training and closing both offices. The staff at Western Prairie Human Services have stated that team building between the two buildings and within departments is one of the things they want to focus on. Last year the ½ day closure was very well received. This year we would like to do it again and do training that is centered more around team building and understanding different learning styles. The director is asking the board to approve a half day of training. After review and discussion, Commissioner LaValley made a motion to approve, seconded by Commissioner Lindor. MCU

13. **Region IV South Resolution**

The director discussed that Western Prairie Human Services is the fiscal host for Region IV-E South. After the 2023 audit was complete, the auditor recommends a formal document to be provided by Western Prairie Human Services Board of Commissioners that acknowledges and approves that there are periods of time in the calendar year where that account may be below zero and require the use of Western Prairie Human Services funds to temporarily cover the negative balance. Western Prairie Human Services will not charge interest for those periods of time since they are generally brief and out of the control of the agencies involved. After review and discussion, Commissioner Lindor made a motion to approve, seconded by Commissioner Walvatne. MCU

15. **Investment Policy**

The fiscal supervisor discussed an investment policy. The policy would promote acquisition of safe investments by providing structure to the treasury function and to establish guideline for daily cash management that meets the financial needs of Western Prairie Human Services. After review and discussion, Commissioner Wildman made a motion to approve, seconded by Commissioner LaValley. MCU

17. **Fiscal Host Charge for 2025**

The fiscal supervisor discussed the Fiscal Host Fees. Western Prairie Human Services would like to increase the fee with Region IV-E South. The original fiscal host fee was set at $70,878.92 in 2013 and has not been increased since. We have reviewed this with the finance committee and are proposing increasing it to $95,118 in 2025. Upon review Commissioner LaValley made the motion to include a COAL adjustment annually. After review, Commissioner Lindor made a motion to approve, seconded by Commissioner Wildman, MCU.

18. **David Drown**

The deputy director gave an update regarding the job descriptions with David Drown. The agency is currently on schedule to complete the job descriptions. Within a month David Drown will give an update of completed job descriptions.

19. **Wage Adjustment**

After review, Commissioner Wildman made a motion to approve, seconded by Commissioner Gerde, MCU.

**Report from Board Appointments:**

The meeting was adjourned by Chairman Troy Johnson at 11:13 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