**WESTERN PRAIRIE HUMAN SERVICES BOARD MEETING**

**June 14, 2024**

The meeting of the Joint Powers Board for Western Prairie Human Services was held July 12, 2024 at the Western Prairie Human Services Office in Elbow Lake office.

**MEMBERS PRESENT OTHERS PRESENT MEMBERS ABSENT**

Doyle Sperr Stacy Hennen, Director Ken Johnson

Paul Gremmels Chris Schmitz, Executive Assistant Paul Wildman

Troy Johnson Crystal Zaviska, Financial Assistance Supervisor Larry Lindor

Gordy Wagner Tracy Bowman, Fiscal Manger

Paul Gerde Kayla Schmidt, Traverse County Commissioner

Bill LaValley Dwight Nelson, Traverse County Commissioner

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. Introductions of staff were presented.

4. The agenda was reviewed. Commissioner LaValley made a motion to approve the agenda as presented, seconded by Commissioner Gremmels, MCU

5. Approval of the May, 2024 meeting minutes. Commissioner Gerde made a motion to approve the minutes, seconded by Commissioner Wagner, MCU.

6. A summary of the April 16th 2024 bills was presented by the director. After discussion, Commissioner Walvatne made a motion to approve the bills, seconded by Commissioner LaValley MCU.

The fiscal supervisor reviewed May 2024 financial information. After questions, Commissioner Sperr made a motion to approve the financial reports, seconded by Commissioner Gerde, MCU.

**B. CONTRACTS/AGREEMENTS**

7. None

**C. OLD BUSINESS**

8. **Out of Home Placement List**

The director discussed the out-home placements for the month of April we have 22 children in placement which is what we had in March. 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.

9. **Case Counts**

The director discussed the current cases. March number were lower and we are now seeing an increase in April due to intakes being up. While cases went down slightly in Child Protection I would estimate they will go back up a little next month after we process through all the intakes and investigations of this month. Our Developmentally Disability case management is also up 11 in one month, which is a lot. Particularly since we are training a new staff in that area. It’s been helpful that we filled our supervisor position early, they have had additional time to do training this way. Our mental health caseloads are holding steady along with our adult protection intakes and caseloads, while up a little.

The Financial Assistance Supervisor discussed Child Support we will see more emancipations in the coming months and cases will slowly continue to decrease. Child Care Assistance Programs staff are working well to keep grasping the policy and system functions and are doing well getting this program three deep. Providers have a decrease from out of county providers dropping their registrations as no WPHS children are in their care. Provider Hub is still in development and was pushed out to go live 4/2025. This will allow the providers to register themselves in one hub, and DHS will take over managing the providers and WPHS supervisor will no longer need to cover that program.

Health Care Cases continue to adjust to correct eligibility criteria being met. There have been some tough conversations in the past year, helping residence who disenroll know their options. The team done a great job of taking the time to meet with residence in person who need the extra time and lay out all of their changes and explain what triggered each change for their case.

Cash and Food programs continue to keep the team busy ensuring there is equitable understanding in the implementation of policies and they truly want to do their best for WPHS and the residence of both Pope and Grant Counties. Students who receive reduced or free lunch at school will be eligible to receive EBT funds Starting July 2024.

10. **Personnel/Hiring Update**

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

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

11. **Traverse County Discussion**

The director discussed with the board members regarding Traverse County merge, separating, or continuing to contract with Western Prairie Human Service. The Executive Committee has been engaging in conversation with a committee from Traverse County regarding this decision. After discussion, Commissioners decided to extend the current contract past December 31, 2024 with a 2025 date to be determined. After discussion, Commissioner Walvatne made a motion to approve, seconded by Commissioner LaValley MCU

12. **Region IV Fiscal Host**

The director talked about the increase of the fiscal host fee. A documentation was sent to Region IV South notify them we were looking to increase our fiscal host fee from $70,000 to $95,118. Western Prairie Human Services noted that we have not increased our fee for 13 years, since we became the fiscal host.

13. **Childcare Variance**

The director discussed a Family Child Care Provider Eileen McMahon is requesting a variance that would allow a preschool-age child that currently attends her child care on a part-time basis to attend full-time during the summer months. This would put her attendance at 11 (one child over capacity limits) for three days every other week for three months, amounting to eighteen days total for the summer. The provider is in compliance with Western Prairie Human Services Licensing Variance Policy. After discussion, Commissioner Gerde made a motion to approve, seconded by Commissioner LaValley MCU.

14. **AFFPA Update**

The director discussed that the African American Family Preservation Act (AAFPA) passed through the senate and house and is expected to be signed by the Governor. The director went over the most recent update for commissioners from the Minnesota Association of County Social Services Administrators (MACSSA) and talked about how this would impact smaller counties and the State as a whole. The concerns range from financing to services to unintended permanency outcomes for the children we serve as it is currently written. The law is not slated to go into full effect until January 1, 2027 and there are a number of workgroups that will take place in hopes of addressing some of the concerns. The director noted that it would be her expectation that MACSSA and the Association of Minnesota Counties (AMC) will be updating their talking points now that the final bill is out and once that is done we can begin to assess costs. There is also a local impact study being done that will look at county cost, we hope to see the final results of that by November of this year. The director reminded the board that the only real budget year the legislature will have to fund the staffing and service needs that will come from what they passed is in this upcoming 2025 legislative session. The director encouraged the commissioners to talk to our local representatives about this.

15 **Summary 2022 Annual Report**

The director discussed with the board the Annual 2022 summary for our website. After discussion, Commissioner Wagner made a motion to approve, seconded by Commissioner Sperr MCU.

16. **Health Care Round Table**

The Financial Assistance Supervisor discussed the results of the last quarterly survey as the where the counties have spent their allocation of the $36.6 million given from legislature to complete the Health Care Unwind. Every county responded to the survey. 28.24% of the allocation have been used with 17.23% being for hiring and training of employees. 4.54% of it being used for Overtime pay. 35.57% of the money is earmarked for use and WPHS has earmarked all of our funds. WPHS received $112,974.00 to be used towards the unwinding project.

17.**Diversity Equity Inclusion**

The Financial Assistance Supervisor discussed that the staff at WPHS is implementing Policy First, Fraud Later was a project created when attending EWLI (Equity Works Leadership institute) training through the U of M with the clients we serve. The concept of EWLI is to create systemic changes, changes that include equity not just equality. The vision, was to have the change be a bubble up approach, via continuous conversations and positive impacts starting in WPHS and spreading to the region and so forth.

18.**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 11:34 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