

**WESTERN PRAIRIE HUMAN SERVICES BOARD MEETING**  
**December 1, 2023**

The meeting of the Joint Powers Board for Western Prairie Human Services was held December 1, 2023 at the Western Prairie Human Services Office in Elbow Lake.

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

Doyle Sperr  
Paul Gremmels  
Troy Johnson  
Ken Johnson  
Paul Gerde  
Bill LaValley  
Paul Wildman  
Dwight Walvatne

**OTHERS PRESENT**

Stacy Hennen, Director  
Kari Rude, Deputy Director/HR Director  
Chris Schmitz, Executive Assistant  
Justin Anderson  
Wendy Stoll

**MEMBERS ABSENT**

Gordy Wagner  
Larry Lindor

**A. Opening:**

- Chair Troy Johnson called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.
- The Pledge of Allegiance was said.
- Introduction on new staff:
  - a. Wendy Stoll, Social Service Child Protection
- 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
- Approval of the November 3, 2023 meeting minutes. After reviewing the minutes, Commissioner Wildman made a motion to approve the minutes, seconded by Commissioner Walvatne, MCU.
- A summary of the November 2023 bills was presented by the director. After discussion, Commissioner Sperr made a motion to approve the bill summaries, seconded by Commissioner Wildman, MCU.
  - a. The director reviewed November 2023 financial information. After questions, Commissioner Gremmels made a motion to approve the financial reports, seconded by Commissioner LaValley, MCU.

**B. CONTRACTS/AGREEMENTS**

**7. Some Place Safe**

The director reviewed the contract with Someplace safe for supervised visitation and parenting time. The supervised parent/child visitations is \$50.00 per hour there will be an additional \$25.00 per hour charge for staff time. An additional half hour of time will be charged per visit for parent arrival and departure waiting time. After reviewing the minutes, Commissioner Gremmels made a motion to approve the contract, seconded by Commissioner Wildman, MCU.

### **8. MOA Primewest MOA WCMCA**

The director presented an agreement between WPHS & Traverse County. Western Prairie Human Services received Prime West Community reinvestment dollars to do targeted recruitment of Homemakers and Chore Service Providers as well as to train all of our local providers of services to the people we serve. Training will be offered to all of our local providers as well with a reimbursement up to \$150.00 per full day of training per staff. Our goal is to train 200 people per year. Western Prairie Human Services will invest \$5,000.00 per year to West Central Minnesota Community Actions a one-time fee. After reviewing the minutes, Commissioner Walvatne made a motion to approve the contract, seconded by Commissioner Gerde, MCU.

### **9. CMMH Detox Contract**

The director presented a contract for detoxification services from Central Minnesota Mental Health Center. The contracted rate is \$1,000/day 2024 (non-contracted rate is \$1,200), which is up from \$600/day in 2023 and comparatively high among other programs, which have run in the \$500-\$720 range for non-medically managed detox programs. With no motion there will be no action and the contract was not approved.

### **10. Loffler**

The director presented a contract for Loffler equipment and services for the Elbow Lake office. The cost associated with this contract would be \$396.30 yearly. After reviewing the minutes, Commissioner Gerdes made a motion to approve the contract, seconded by Commissioner Gremmel, MCU.

### **11. Vikingland**

The director proposed a 2024 contract for Vikingland Community Support Program to provide Community Support Services to clients in Pope County. There are no changes in service terms or rates from the previous year. Expenditures for Vikingland were \$4,375.00 in 2021, \$8,125.00 in 2022, and \$1,650 to date in 2023. While significantly more expensive than other providers, factors involved in referrals include the option of staff availability. After reviewing the minutes, Commissioner Sperr made a motion to approve the contract, seconded by Commissioner LaValley, MCU.

### **12. Childcare Variance**

The director reviewed a variance request from a child care licenser. The request is to allow the provider to care for an additional child under age 2 for one month, from January 3, 2024 until February 3, 2024. The licenser meets all of our policy requirements and the request is within our policy as well. After reviewing the minutes, Commissioner Wildman made a motion to approve the contract, seconded by Commissioner Walvatne, MCU.

### **13. Reception Contract with Horizon Public Health**

The director presented a two-year contract with Horizon Public Health for front desk/reception services. The director reviewed the contract which outlined what we provide for them in terms of reception services this contract will be a two-year contract. After reviewing the minutes, Commissioner Gerdes made a motion to approve the contract, seconded by Commissioner LaValley, MCU.

## **C. OLD BUSINESS**

### **14. Out of Home Placement List**

The director reviewed the out of home placement list for October, 2023. The number of children in out of home placement increased from 24 to 25 with 6 in a trial home visit. The director reviewed the categories of cases and progress made with reunification or permanency of the children. The other sheet shows caseload numbers for all of our social workers.

### **15. Case Counts**

The director shared case count numbers. The child protection numbers are trending upwards, which is normal for this time of year. The children and adult mental health cases are increasing in small increments. This is an area the agency has statutory guidelines both on caseload numbers and the fact that they are entitlement services. Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) continue to receive applications, however lacks completion application process. General Assistance (GA) had an increase in approved applicants, this program is the singles case load to receive \$203 per month. Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP) had a slight decrease in applicants, however this may be good, as we have used some post eligibility funds to keep people stable and independent. Child Support has a slight decrease, as cases are closed with arrears management clean ups, we see slight decreases over the year.

### **16. Personnel/Hiring update**

The deputy director presented the personnel update for the month. Western Prairie Human Service has hired a Social Worker and Account Technician in the Elbow Lake office. The Glenwood office has one vacancy because one of the child protection social workers from Glenwood took the open licensing position. The deputy director discussed Western Prairie Human Service retention rate. Western Prairie Human Services retention rate from December 31, 2022, to current is 78%. We reviewed different

reasons for people leaving and about 10% of those who left moved on for another opportunity. We looked at what is out of our control and what is within our control. The Retention rate for the past 18 months is 75% with again about 10% being within our control. We would like to break this down by position and look more closely at where our gaps may be. Anecdotally it seems like we are replacing the same positions repeatedly. We will look at the numbers to see if that's the case and bring those numbers back.

**D. New Business:**

**17. Board Documents Electronic or Paper**

The director discussed an option for board members to receive documents via email or paper form for the 2024 year and going forward.

**18. Out of State Policy**

The director presented an Out of State Policy to provide employees with reimbursement for travel and necessary expenses incurred in connection with assigned official duties. After discussion, Commissioner Sperr made a motion to approve the request, seconded by Commissioner Gerde, MCU.

**19. Account Procedure Resolution**

Director discussed three accounting policies to include guidelines for a fund balance, collection and reporting county fiscal information and a procurement policy. After discussion, Commissioner LaValley made a motion to approve the policies, seconded by Commissioner Gremmels, MCU.

**20. Final Levy Request for 2024**

The director discussed the 2024 Levy request. Western Prairie Human Services was able to budget additional revenues and some expenses. Western Prairie Human Services have had a decrease since our preliminary levy was approved. Western Prairie Human Services levy increase has decreased by \$60,000, moving us from a 4.28% increase to a 2.45% increase. The final request would be \$2,067,632.12 for Pope County and \$1,292,735.88 for Grant County. After review, Commissioner Wildman made a motion to approve the final levy request to go to each county seconded by Commissioner Walvatne, MCU.

The proposed final budget was given to the board members in their packet, Upon review of that, Commissioner Sperr made a motion to approve the 2024 budget of \$9,099,720.00 with \$3,360,374 of the budget being levy dollars combined from Pope and Grant counties, seconded by Commissioner Gerdes, MCU

## **21. Depart of Child, Youth Families (DCYF)**

The director updated the board on the legislative platform being introduced in July 2024 by the Minnesota Association of County Social Services Administrators (MACSSA) and briefly went over where we are finding the largest issues to county human services agencies. Across the state all counties are struggling to serve the highest need people and we need both the state to look at their role as the safety net and their role as developer of a statewide continuum of care for people with mental health issues, children and adult.

## **22. Human Services Performance System Report**

The director reviewed the final report of the year from the Human Services Performance Management report. This report is based on child support measures that follow the Federal performance measures for the State. Western prairie did very well, passing all areas not only with improvement but also with no requirement for a program improvement plan. The director noted that with retirements and staff moving to other positions we have totally turned this department over in the past 3 plus years. The team has done amazingly well at learning this complex area and is doing better than both our region and the State in all areas.

## **23. Non-emergency medical transportation plan (NEMT)**

The director discussed the non-emergency medical transportation eligibility criteria, how fiscal codes the billing for reimbursements, and rules for cost effectiveness. After reviewing the minutes, Commissioner Sperr made a motion to approve the contract, seconded by Commissioner Gremmels, MCU.

## **24. Fiscal Host Questions**

The director and our agency attorney discussed questions we posed to our auditors, Clifton Larson Allen (CLA), regarding some issues that have recently come up in terms of controls and conflict of interest. Western Prairie Human Service as the Fiscal host and as the fiscal host we have a fiduciary responsibility to ensure that the spending of the grant is within audit boundaries and meets all auditing standards as well as meeting the grant requirements. The director, with the agency attorney's consultation, sent the questions we had to CLA for advice. The board reviewed and discussed the response from the auditor. The board understands that it isn't our role to determine how Region IV South spends the money but we do need to ensure appropriate controls. After discussion and at the recommendation of our attorney Commissioner LaValley made a motion instructing the director to draft a letter to the Executive Committee of Region IV South and each county administrator or attorney outlining the issues that need to be addressed and asking that they come back to us with policies or processes that address the auditors concerns regarding internal controls, approval of funds, and referrals of services, seconded by Commissioner Wildman, MCU

**25. Host Server Data Issues for Caseworks**

The director discussed the data breach regarding Caseworks in Clay County. Western Prairie Human Services received notice from Clay County that they had a data breach that included items hosted on the server. The agency attorney joined the discussion and answered questions about the steps moving forward.

**26. Emergency Assistance**

The director presented an Emergency Assistance policy. Western Prairie Human Services Emergency Assistance policy was set at 200% Federal Poverty Guidelines for a household of 2 that is \$3,307, gross monthly income. For a Household of 4 that is \$5,021 gross monthly income. Western Prairie Human Service is proposing to change the policy to 283% Federal Poverty Guidelines. That would be Gross monthly income for a Household of 2 would be \$4,650 and for a Household of 4 \$7,075. This aligns our policy with the income guidelines for Medical Assistance. After reviewing the minutes, Commissioner Gremmel made a motion to approve the contract, seconded by Commissioner Sperr, MCU.

Meeting adjourned- 11:31

**Report from Board Appointments:**

The meeting was adjourned by Chairman Troy Johnson at 11.31 am.

- A. Lakeland Mental Health Center..... K. Johnson/Gerde
- B. Horizon Community Health Board..... Sperr/Walvatne/Lindor/Wagner
- C. PrimeWest Health CBP ..... Wagner/K.Johnson/T. Johnson/Lindor
- D. West Central Communities Action, Inc. .... K.Johnson/Gremmels
- 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/Lindor
- I. Child and Youth Council..... Sperr/Wagner
- J. WPHS Personnel Committee..... Lindor/Wildman/Sperr/T. Johnson
- K. WPHS Executive Committee..... T. Johnson/Walvatne/Gremmels
- I. WPHS Finance Committee..... Gerde/Lindor/LaValley/K. Johnson
- M. WPHS Safety Committee..... Sperr/Wildman

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Board Chair

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Board Secretary