

WESTERN PRAIRIE HUMAN SERVICES BOARD MEETING
September 8, 2023

The meeting of the Joint Powers Board for Western Prairie Human Services was held September 8, 2023 at the Western Prairie Human Services Office in Glenwood.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Bill LaValley
Paul Gremmels
Troy Johnson
Ken Johnson
Paul Gerde
Gordy Wagner
Larry Lindor
Paul Wildman
Dwight Walvatne

OTHERS PRESENT

Stacy Hennen, Director
Kari Rude, Deputy Director/HR Director
Tracy Bowman, Fiscal Manager
Dwight Nelson, Traverse County Commissioner
Carrie Orr, Case Aide
Phyllis Reller, Social Services Supervisor
Katie Ennen, Lead Social Worker
Amber Ramey, Lead Social Worker

MEMBERS ABSENT

Doyle Sperr

A. Opening:

1. Chair Troy Johnson called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m.
2. The Pledge of Allegiance was said.
 - The financial assistance III supervisor introduced Carrie Orr, a new case aide located at the Glenwood location.
3. The agenda was reviewed. A union contract MOU was added to contracts/agreements. Commissioner Lindor made a motion to approve the amended agenda. The motion was seconded by Commissioner LaValley, MCU.
4. Approval of the August 4, 2023 meeting minutes. After reviewing the minutes, Commissioner Wildman made a motion to approve the minutes, seconded by Commissioner Gerde, MCU.
5. A summary of the August 2023 bills was presented by the director. After discussion, Commissioner Walvatne made a motion to approve the bill summaries, seconded by Commissioner Gremmels, MCU.
 - a. The fiscal manager reviewed July 2023 financial information. After questions, Commissioner Lindor made a motion to approve the financial reports, seconded by Commissioner LaValley, MCU.

B. CONTRACTS/AGREEMENTS

6. David Drown and Associates Contract

The director presented the previously approved David Drown Associates contract Human to provide a full classification and compensation study with no job description writing and support services paid per hour. The contract approval is contingent upon the Teamsters union agreeing to the implementation of study prior to it being completed. Commissioner Lindor made a motion to approve the contract. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Wildman, MCU.

7. School Transportation Agreement, Herman/Norcross

The director stated statute requires schools to enter into a contract with their local social services agency to address transportation for foster kids. Some of their funding is based on them getting a transportation agreement with us. In general it says that we will work it out and agree on transportation. If the student still lives within the district or has an IEP the school will provide transportation. If the child moves to a different district the two entities will work together to arrange transportation. This has been our standard operating procedure. Commissioner Walvatne made a motion to approve the agreement. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Wagner, MCU.

8. School Transportation Agreement, Glacial Hills

The director stated statute requires schools to enter into a contract with their local social services agency to address transportation for foster kids. Some of their funding is based on them getting a transportation agreement with us. In general it says that we will work it out and agree on transportation. If the student still lives within the district or has an IEP the school will provide transportation. If the child moves to a different district the two entities will work together to arrange transportation. This has been our standard operating procedure. Commissioner Gremmels made a motion to approve the agreement. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Gerde MCU.

9. Safe Assure Proposal and Contract

The deputy director/human resources director presented a proposal from the safety committee and personnel committee to move forward to contract with Safe Assure for

one year to provide required training for all employees. The training includes on-site and on-line training. Commissioner Wildman made a motion to approve the contract. The motion was seconded by Commissioner LaValley, MCU.

10. Teamsters Union MOU

The director presented a MOU from Teamsters to reflect new legislation. Commissioner Wildman made a motion was made to table the MOU until next month after the agency attorney has adequate time to review it. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Lindor, MCU.

C. OLD BUSINESS

10. Out of Home Placement List:

The director reviewed the out-of-home placement list. There are currently 27 children in out-of-home placement, which is a decrease from 32 children last month. The director reviewed the categories of cases and progress made with reunification or permanency of the children.

11. Case Counts:

The director reviewed the case counts for social services. The number of cases are lower than average, which is typical for this time of year. This has allowed additional time for case maintenance and allowed new child protection staff to complete training and provide mandatory reporter training in the schools. The agency is looking at ways to support families with school attendance concerns by increasing the support to families through a voluntary response. The financial assistance supervisor gave an update in the eligibility/child support unit. Child Support cases have decreased from emancipations, and cases being paid in full. Child Care assistance is steady, we are seeing many applications, but not much follow through on verifications. Those cases are not represented in the case counts. Providers remain around the same. Health care continues to be busy and DHS is making additional changes. The Cash and SNAP programs continue to be steady with opening and closing cases per their normal policies. The director spoke about the multiple changes DHS has made to the renewal process, which has caused additional work or the need to redo work for counties. This is causing some overtime hours for the agency in order to continue to serve the community. The overtime is paid through the medical assistance unwind money.

12. Personnel/Hiring Updates:

The deputy director/human resources director provided a personnel update. The agency is in interview process for the executive assistant and office support specialist position. An accounting technician position has been advertised and there is an open child protection position in the Elbow Lake office. The agency currently has one employee on an approved leave. The agency will be working on an employee retention report and bring it back to the board of commissioners. Exit interviews are offered to employees who leave WPHS.

13. 2024 Preliminary Levy Approval

The director presented information on the 2024 levy. The main increases seen this year were salary, which includes steps and COLA (\$322,405) and the estimated health insurance costs (\$48,795). An executive assistant position was added in the 2024 budget. The agency is continuing to replace outdated technology. Overall the levy, in 2023 and our prelim levy for 2024 keep us in that 38% range for the percent of the budget that is levy. The bulk of our agency is funded by federal reimbursements, billing for the services our staff perform, and federal and state grants. About \$250,000 of it is our contract with Traverse and our fiscal host fee charged to Region IV South. Our proposed preliminary budget is \$8,959,720. That is an increase to the overall budget of \$344,618. The preliminary levy request is an increase of \$140,387. Based on the formula that would be an increase of \$86,380.12 for Pope County and \$54,006.88 for Grant. We will continue to assess all areas before the final levy is due with the hopes of decreasing our increase. Commissioner Gerde made a motion to approve the preliminary levy. The motion was seconded by Commissioner LaValley. After discussion the MCU.

D. New Business:

14. Federal Tax Information (FIT) Policy Update

The financial supervisor shared the Glenwood County Inspection Report for Federal Tax Information (FTI) was returned for 2023 and the agency has three additional items to add to our internal policies. These policies are due by 12/1/23. The agency will be adding sections to include addressing emails, faxes and telecommuting in order to be in compliance with the FTI. There is no procedural difference on how the agency

handles these items, but this is needed to be added to the FTI policies for compliance. The agency attorney has reviewed and approved the document. Commissioner Wildman made a motion to approve the agreement. The motion was seconded by Commissioner K. Johnson, MCU.

15. WPHS Goals

The director spoke about the strategic planning process, which included seeking feedback from the employees and management team. The director shared the goals the agency intends to work towards for the next few years, beginning immediately. There are some HR items such as the safety committee and insurance committee that have been completed. The agency is working on the PrimeWest grant for chore services and working to plan for a supervisor retirement. There may be potential to add a position for the CADI waiver. The director continues to provide a monthly director meeting and weekly email for additional communication. The document is intended to be a working document, subject to change as we learn from our experiences and changes. With the legalization of cannabis the child maltreatment screening guidelines have changed. There are some concerns with the guidelines provided by the Department of Human Services, which are currently being addressed. The agency will be partnering with public health for preventative work so children have less access to cannabis.

16. 2021 Child Maltreatment Report

The director provided information on the 2021 state child maltreatment report. A broad overview of statistics of child maltreatment reports and victims. There was discussion surrounding the child maltreatment guidelines and screening process. The state allows counties to use past child maltreatment reports in screening the report. The majority of reporters are mandated reporters. The director covered information regarding family assessments, investigations, and facility investigations. Family daycares are subject to facility investigations regardless if the incident occurred during business hours. Family foster care are subject to a facility investigation from the time of application to become a foster home.

17. Human Services Performance Management Report

The director indicated the agency has received the second report of the year for the Human Services Performance Management System. There are four measures in this report, three child protection reports and one income maintenance measure. WPHS met all but one of the measures, one we met last year but have had considerable trouble with over the last couple of years in Pope County in particular. Measure 1 is repeat maltreatment within 12 months and that is the one that we didn't meet. We missed the measure by 0.9%. The purpose of the measure is to ensure that we are working with kids. The barrier in meeting the measure is often children make additional report when they start to feel safe, which results in an addition response. This measure needs to be overhauled to meet the intent. The second measure is if kids in placement achieve permanency within 12 months. The measure is 40.5% and we met it at 44%. One potential problem with this measure is that it counts all kids, so it counts kids who are being adopted, kids who are in 18-21 placements, and kids who are in placement for their own disability, which causes problems since they do not achieve permanency in 12 months. While we did meet this measure, it is increasingly difficult to make it for any county that is smaller. Measure 3 is placement with relatives. The measurement requires 35.7% and we are at 61.3%. The fourth measurement is self-sufficiency, based on our employment services success. The measurement is based solely on agency information. WPHS met with measure with a significant margin but it appears we are not doing as well this year, so have been talking to the contracted entity about this.

18. Lardy Childcare Variance Request

The director presented a variance request from a licensor who is in good standing and been licensed since 2017. The provider is requesting to have a toddler in place of a preschool age child. The provider will have 11-12 children in her care during the variance. This variance would only be used on days there is no school. After review, Commissioner Lindor made a motion to approve the variance, seconded by Commissioner Wagner, MCU.

19. Mix Childcare Variance Request

The director provided information on a variance request from a licensor who is in good standing and been licensed since 2018. The provider is requesting to have a toddler in place of a preschool aged child. The variance length requested is one month. After

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

20. Adult Services Update

The social services supervisor presented information regarding businesses struggling to find people to deliver services, especially providers who serve people with disabilities. Four local group homes have closed. In an effort to work with community partners, the supervisor and lead workers met with all of our providers who provide services to community members on the DD Waiver. The supervisor indicated agencies are having difficulty recruiting due to low wages, there is limited training, and workers are getting burned out due to the amount of overtime worked. The agencies are trying to retain employees by check-ins with human resources, bonuses, and employee appreciation activities. The agency has considered a proposal to extend the training portion of the Prime West Community Reinvestment Grant in order to partner with the local agencies.

21. MFIP Biennial Plan

The director stated the 2024-2025 County and Tribal nation MFIP Biennial Service Agreement is up for renewal. WPHS went from \$161,983 in 2023 to \$127,995 for 2024-2025. When contacting the DHS, it was explained that our decrease was a result of our percentage of cases decreasing. The agency's caseloads have remained consistent, however the rest of the state has had increases. Thus reducing the percentage of our funding. The financial supervisor indicated CEP requested an increase of funds. The funds based upon the overall percentage was offered and accepted. The plan needs to be posted for thirty days. Commissioner LaValley made a motion to approve the plan, seconded by Commissioner Gremmels, MCU.

Report from Board Appointments:

Child and Youth Council alternate for WPHS will be Gordy Wagner.

The meeting was adjourned by Chairman Troy Johnson at 3:22 pm

- | | |
|---|------------------------------------|
| 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 |
| L. WPHS Finance Committee..... | Gerde/Lindor/LaValley/K. Johnson |
| M. WPHS Safety Committee..... | Sperr/Wildman |

Board Chair

Board Secretary