

WESTERN PRAIRIE HUMAN SERVICES BOARD MEETING
March 3, 2023

The meeting of the Joint Powers Board for Western Prairie Human Services was held March 3, 2023 at the Western Prairie Human Services Office in Glenwood

MEMBERS PRESENT

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

OTHERS PRESENT

Tracy Bowman, Fiscal Manager
Kari Rude, Deputy Director, HR
Crystal Zaviska, Financial Assistance Supervisor
Kayla Schmidt, Traverse County Commissioner
Dwight Nelson, Traverse County Commissioner
Phyllis Reller, Social Services Supervisor

MEMBERS ABSENT

A. OPENING:

1. Chair Troy Johnson called the meeting to order at 9:00am
2. The Pledge of Allegiance was said
3. Introduction of Christine Schmitz, Glenwood, MN Account Technician
4. The agenda was reviewed and the deputy director requested an addition to include the County based EA policy, #18. Commissioner Sperr made a motion to approve the amended agenda and Commissioner Gerde seconded MCU
5. Approval of the February 3, 2023 meeting: Done at the April meeting
6. A summary of bills was presented by the fiscal manager.
 - a. The fiscal manager reviewed the February 16, 2023 and March 3, 2023 check batches. After questions Commissioner Wildman made a motion to approve the bill summaries, seconded by Commissioner Gerde, MCU.
 - b. The fiscal manager reviewed January 2023 fund totals, breaking the information down by object range and department. The fiscal manager presented the budget compared to actual expenses. The areas of “services and charges” and “leases and equipment” show the Agency is over budget due to one-time expenses and items paid for annually. Commissioner Walvatne made a motion to approve the financial reports, seconded by Commissioner LaValley, MCU.

B. CONTRACTS

7. None

C. OLD BUSINESS

8. Out of Home Placement List:

The deputy director reviewed the agency’s out of home placement list. She noted we have 32 kids in placement this month, which is higher than the recent past. The deputy director reviewed the categories and progress made in each category. We have three 18-21 placements, one youth will age out of care in March, and four waived placements. We have eight kids that we are in the process of permanency, two children will achieve permanency in March. We are still working towards reunification with the remainder of kids. There was discussion of trends in out-home-placement cases and the work counties, department of human services, and MACSSA is doing surrounding new THC laws, pertaining to child protection guidelines and casework.

9. Case Counts:

The deputy director reviewed the case counts for social services and the financial assistance supervisor reviewed the case counts for child support, MNSure, and MAXIS.

10. Personnel/Hiring Updates

The deputy director updated the board on the one hire since last month. At this time, we have no vacancies. We have one approved leave of absence right now. The deputy director discussed the agency methods used in advertising for open positions including local newspapers, Indeed, the agency website, the agency Facebook site, and at times, collaboration with local colleges.

D. NEW BUSINESS:

11. Food Support Changes

The financial assistance supervisor updated the board regarding E-SNAP coming to an end in March. In April, all recipients will return to the regular amounts. This will have a negative impact on client’s, the local businesses, and communities. It is also anticipated there will be additional pressure on local food shelves and resources. There was discussion regarding available food resources in the local communities. Commissioner LaValley recommended Ruby’s Pantry attend the next meeting to give an overview of the program. The deputy director will contact Ruby’s Pantry and ask for a short presentation at the next scheduled meeting.

12. **Medical Assistance Unwind**

The financial assistance supervisor provided information to the board about Medical Assistance Unwind. The new renewal packets are 36 pages. In the past, applicant information remained in the document and individuals would make the needed changes. The new packet is blank and difficult to fill out. Agencies only have the month of March to prepare. The legislature has multiple proposals regarding the unwind. One of the proposals includes allowing ABD enrollees to maintain coverage for one year, while reducing their assets. There may be additional funding to assist with the process. The financial supervisor discussed possible options on utilizing the funding. The supervisor answered questions about the Medical Assistance Unwind and potential funding to the agency.

The financial assistance supervisor indicated there are new child support guidelines that are aimed at improving parity between parents and making it easier for them to support their families. The previous guidelines were based on economic data from 20 year ago. The new guidelines use up-to-date economic data on the costs of raising a child. The changes will likely have the most effect on families with lower incomes and families that include either parent child, but not a child both parents had together. The supervisor provided the board with example scenarios.

13. **Adult Services Presentation**

The adult services supervisor presented an overview of program areas and responsibilities. This included the senior coordinator, care giver consulting, disability services, licensing, MnCHOICES, adult protective services, and guardianships.

14. **Cell Phone Policy**

The deputy director presented an agency cell phone use policy, as the agency is in the process of updating policies surrounding data storage and retention. The deputy director answered questions from the board. Commissioner Lindor made a motion to approve the cell phone policy, seconded by Commissioner LaValley, MCU.

15. **Video Recording Policy**

The deputy director presented a policy that prohibits the use of video or audio recording or photography within and outside the premises of Western Prairie Human Services by the general public, unless approved by the agency director through an application process. This policy is being requested in order to protect client privacy, enhance confidentiality, and maintain security. The deputy director answered questions from the board. Notifications to the public will be placed at the entrance of both sites. Commissioner Wagner made a motion to approve the policy, seconded by Commissioner LaValley, MCU.

16. **Juneteenth Holiday**

The deputy director gave an update, as the Minnesota legislature passed a law that marks Juneteenth a holiday, which becomes effective August 1, 2023. The executive committee and agency attorney both recommend that agency begin to observe the holiday in June of 2023. There was discussion surrounding the specific union contract language. Commissioner Wildman made a motion to approve observing Juneteenth in 2023, seconded by Commissioner K. Johnson, MCU.

17. **Half day training request**

The deputy director requested the agency close for a half day this spring so all employees can attend training on data privacy and retention, as well as teambuilding. The agency would provide an agenda and the date to the board once the details are finalized. The board discussed the advantages and disadvantages to the public and employees. Commissioner Lindor made a motion to approve the request, seconded by Commissioner Sperr, MC 9-1.

18. **County Based Emergency Assistance Policy**

The financial assistance supervisor discussed current eligibility guidelines and indicated wanting to establish a policy to increase the number of eligible applicants. This program provides assistance to families for short-term, non-recurring shelter and utility needs in retaining secure and affordable housing. The supervisor discussed the specific changes in the policy and answered questions from the board. Commissioner Sperr made a motion to approve the policy, seconded by Commissioner Wildman, MCU.

Report from Board Appointments:

- A. Lakeland Mental Health Center.....K. Johnson/Gerde
- B. Horizon Community Health Board.....Sperr/Walvatne/Lindor/Wagner
- C. PrimeWest Health County Based Purchasing..... Wagner/Lindor/K. Johnson/T. Johnson
- D. West Central Community Action INC..... K. Johnson/Gerde
- E. Agency on Aging..... Lindor/LaValley
- F. Child Protection Pre-Placement..... T. Johnson/Gremmels
- G. Rainbow Rider..... Gerde/Wagner
- H. R4S Governing and Executive Board..... K. Johnson/Lindor

The meeting was adjourned by Chairman Troy Johnson at 11:38 am

Board Chair

Board Secretary