

WESTERN PRAIRIE HUMAN SERVICES BOARD MEETING
April 7, 2023

The meeting of the Joint Powers Board for Western Prairie Human Services was held April 7, 2023 at the Western Prairie Human Services Office in Elbow Lake

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

MEMBERS ABSENT

None

A. OPENING:

1. Chair Troy Johnson called the meeting to order at 9:00am
2. The Pledge of Allegiance was said
3. Introduction of Katie Kubisch. Katie is the office support in the Elbow Lake location.
4. The agenda was reviewed and the director requested an addition to the personnel update #12. The director wants to incorporate the personnel committee's recommendation into the report. Commissioner Gerde made a motion to approve the amended agenda by Commissioner Wildman, MCU
5. Approval of the February 3, 2023 meeting and the March 3rd meeting minutes. The director indicated that we did not capture who approved the agenda or the minutes last month. We can approve the minutes this month but if they know who approved the agenda we can amend the minutes to state that. The board noted that Commissioner Wildman had moved the agenda, seconded by Commissioner Sperr and carried unanimously. Commissioner Gerde noted that the meeting location needs to be updated on the minutes. After reviewing the minutes, Commissioner LaValley made a motion to approve the February and March minutes, seconded by Commissioner Lindor MCU
6. A summary of bills was presented by the fiscal manager.
 - a. The fiscal manager reviewed the March 16, 2023 and March 31, 2023(paid on April 7th) check batches. After questions Commissioner Wildman made a motion to approve the bill summaries, seconded by Commissioner Sperr, MCU.
 - b. The fiscal manager reviewed February 2023 Financial Information. The fiscal manager presented the reports and explained them to the commissioners. We are 18% through the year and right on target with expenses and at 11% for revenues. The fiscal manager noted that we are lower for revenues because we haven't received our first half of taxes and we are just catching up with targeted case management and waiver billing. Overall, we are on track. We are also tracking software, IT, and legal costs for the data requests that we have received and will be reporting that in May. Commissioner Gremmels made a motion to approve the financial reports, seconded by Commissioner Walvatne, MCU.

B. CONTRACTS/AGREEMENTS

7. Volker Childcare Variance:

The board reviewed a request to replace a pre-school slot with a toddler slot. We have previously denied variance requests for this provider solely because they were infant variance requests. This request fits within our policy and is recommended by our licensor. After discussion, Commissioner Wagner made a motion to approve the variance request, seconded by Commissioner Gerde, MCU

8. Jennen Childcare Variance:

The board reviewed a request to have a toddler spot in place of a pre-school aged child. The variance fits within our policy, the provider's license is in good standing, and the licensor is recommending the approval of the request. After discussion, Commissioner Wildman made a motion to approve the variance request, seconded by Commissioner LaValley, MCU

C. OLD BUSINESS

9. **Ruby's Pantry:** The board had a presentation from Ruby's Pantry about their process as it relates to food distribution sites and food drops. The presenter noted that Ruby's Pantry has been operational for 20 years and has served over 300,000 families since they started. They have 85 distribution sites. The board asked questions and reviewed the information given.

10. **Out of Home Placement List:**

The director reviewed the agency's out of home placement list. She noted we have 30 kids in placement this month, which is lower than last month but higher than our average. The director reviewed the categories and progress made in each category. The director reminded the board that because of how early in the month our board meetings are these sheets are actually 2 months behind, so this month we are looking at February. Next month we will see March which will be updated to show the four reunifications we had in February and in June we will see March's which saw 2 adoptions, one kid age out, and one transfer of custody. We also have a sibling group of four that will achieve permanency soon. However, we placed a sibling group of six and another child too. The numbers ebb and flow.

11. **Case Counts:**

The director reviewed the case counts for social services and the financial assistance supervisor reviewed the case counts for child support, MNSure, and MAXIS. The director noted that variances in our social services numbers are largely due to intake numbers, caseloads are steady. We are higher in adult protection still and the higher number of out of home placements, particularly large sibling groups, is placing some pressure on our child protection unit.

12. **Personnel/Hiring Updates**

The director updated the board on the vacancy since last month. We have zero approved leave of absences right now. The director discussed the recommendation of the personnel committee as it relates to the medical assistance unwind. The dollars that were in the legislature are going to pass and will likely be distributed July 1st but retroactive to the date the bill is signed. We have had some changes since we last talked about this and we are asking to hire an eligibility worker with the unwind worker knowing that we would have one extra staff and recognizing that we would go back down in numbers with attrition. The director noted that we know more information now with our case aide and office support all being trained so we see the need as being here. We would also like to purchase some technology equipment with it. After questions and discussion Commissioner Lindor made a motion to use these dollars to fund an eligibility worker with the understanding that we will go back down to the current number of positions through attrition, seconded by Commissioner Wildman, MCU

D. NEW BUSINESS:

13. **Managed Care Enrollment Numbers:**

The director went over the managed care enrollment numbers. When we moved from a single plan to having to have two plans there was thought that our other managed care would get about 10% of the market. Based on the numbers for Western Prairie are 2% of our clients went to the second provider. The board reviewed and discussed the numbers presented.

14. **Traverse County Contract**

The director reviewed the current status of the contract in terms of when it expires, what it entails, and what the potential options are. She indicated that she is bringing it now because Traverse would need to know what our options are. Commissioner Schmidt and Commissioner Nelson from Traverse County were present and the board engaged in a conversation with them about their thoughts. The WPHS board indicated that they have questions about how this would impact the fiscal formula, what it would look like program wise and essentially a desire to get our own first year review and audit in the books before we make any large changes. The WPHS board agreed that more time would be the best thing. There was some discussion that long term contracting may not be the most appealing to Western Prairie, but without more information they weren't comfortable giving a definitive answer. After considerable discussion Commissioner LaValley made a motion that the WPHS board would consider a one year extension to the current contract so there was more time for discussion, planning, and information gathering. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Sperr, MCU

15. **Safety Committee Appointment's**

The director noted that we are ready for board appointments to the Safety Committee and for non-union staff appointments. After discussion the board agreed that the chair would appoint the board members to the committee. After discussion Commissioner Wildman and Commissioner Sperr were appointed by the chair. The director recommended that Crystal Zaviska, Kari Rude, and Tracy Bowman be appointed to the Safety Committee as non-union members with the director being appointed to oversee and attend when necessary. Commissioner LaValley made a motion to approve the recommendation for non-union personnel on the safety committee, seconded by Commissioner Wildman, MCU

16. **Letter Regarding Fiscal Reports**

The director noted that We received a letter from the Department of Human Services commending our fiscal department for getting all 32 major quarterly reports in on time for 2022. The director noted that no department has seen more change and turnover than fiscal and the director feels it's important to note the level of professionalism that existed regardless of the change and turnover. We did submit some corrected and changed reports as we honed our fiscal process in terms of coding and process. That means that our fiscal team likely submitted closer to 40 major reports with the corrected ones. They have done a fantastic job and seem to be on track with a great group of staff and a strong leader. The board agreed that the fiscal department has really worked hard and that the fiscal manager is doing a great job.

17. **Opioid Federal Settlements/County task forces**

The director was asked to give an overview of this process in terms of each county's involvement and what, if any, role Western Prairie may have in this. The director noted that each county board is the responsible entity for these dollars and all dollars have been receipted into the county and is overseen by the County Auditor and/or Treasurer. The director noted that both the Grant and Pope County Board's have passed a resolution indicating they will accept and participate in all future settlements and another resolution appointing a committee to oversee the dollars and defining at what point you want board approval, which can vary county by county. We discussed the desire of each county to keep the money local for right now and the director noted that WPHS wants to respect each county's wishes and wants to see what each community wants. If WPHS asks for anything it will likely be preventative and/or educational in nature. The board agreed those kinds of things would be good multi county projects.

18. **Social Media Policy**

The deputy director presented a social media policy for the board to approve. The deputy director

reviewed the contents and reasons for the policy and noted that we continue to enhance and improve our data practices and policies and continue to work with the attorney the board approved for that. After review, Commissioner Lindor made a motion to approve the social media policy as presented, seconded by Commissioner Wagner, MCU.

19. **Native American Heritage Day**

The deputy director requested the board consider making a change to the name of a holiday in our personnel policy. We are asking only for the personnel policy change since we have a union contract that goes through 2024. The Eligibility Supervisor spoke about this and noted that she, the deputy director and the director have been completing the Equity Works Leadership Institute through MACSSA and the Humphrey School of Policy and the conversation originated from that and a desire to build in racial equity into our policies and processes. Currently the holiday we have the day after Thanksgiving is listed as Day after Thanksgiving. However, that day is also the Native American Heritage Day. We would like to change the name in the policy manual and are requesting board approval to do so. It does not have any financial impact to us. After discussion, Commissioner Wagner made a motion to approve the request, seconded by Commissioner K. Johnson, MCU.

20. **PrimeWest Strategic Planning Dates of June 2-3**

The director noted that PrimeWest has scheduled their strategic planning for June 2nd and 3rd starting at 10am on the 2nd. We have at least four commissioners who will be invited to that and the director has been invited as well. Our June board meeting is on the 2nd in Elbow Lake. The director was looking for some direction on what to do. Re-scheduling our meetings can be very difficult. After discussion Commissioner Wagner made a motion to move our June meeting to the PrimeWest Conference room and have it from 8am-10am in Alexandria, seconded by Commissioner Gerde 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/LaValley, Walvatne
- H. R4S Governing and Executive Board..... K. Johnson/Lindor

The meeting was adjourned by Chairman Troy Johnson at 11:42 am

Board Chair

Board Secretary