

**WESTERN PRAIRIE HUMAN SERVICES BOARD MEETING**  
**July 7, 2023**

The meeting of the Joint Powers Board for Western Prairie Human Services was held July 7, 2023 at the Western Prairie Human Services Office in Glenwood.

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

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

**OTHERS PRESENT**

Stacy Hennen, Director  
Kari Rude, Deputy Director/HR Director  
Tracy Bowman, Fiscal Manager  
Dwight Nelson, Traverse County Commissioner  
Crystal Zaviska, Financial Assistance Supervisor  
Phyllis Reller, Social Services Supervisor  
Michelle Aanenson, Eligibility Worker

**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 Michelle Aanenson, Eligibility Worker
4. The agenda was reviewed. The director requested to add two things to the agenda, Baker-Tilly maintenance agreement under contracts and CIBS under new business. Commissioner Gerde made a motion to approve the amended agenda. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Wagner, MCU.
5. Approval of the June 2, 2023 meeting minutes. Commissioner Lindor made a motion to approve the June minutes, seconded by Commissioner Gremmels, MCU.
6. A summary of bills was presented by the director. The director reviewed the June 2023 bills. After discussion, Commissioner Walvatne made a motion to approve the bill summaries, seconded by Commissioner LaValley, MCU.
  - a. The fiscal manager reviewed May 2023 financial information. After discussion, commissioner Lindor made a motion to approve the financial reports, seconded by Commissioner Wildman, MCU.

**B. CONTRACTS/AGREEMENTS**

**7. Vikingland 2023 contract:**

The director presented a contract in order for Vikingland CSP to provide Community Support Services to clients who reside in the counties of Western Prairie Human Services. CSP expenditures for Vikingland were \$4,375.00 in 2021 and \$7,025.00 in 2022. While significantly more expensive than other providers, factors involved in referrals include the option of male staff and staff availability. Commissioner Gerde made a motion to approve the contract. The motion was seconded by Commissioner LaValley, MCU.

**8. Baker-Tilly:**

The director presented a maintenance contract with Baker-Tilly. After discussion Commissioner Wildman made a motion to approve the contract. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Sperr, MCU.

**C. OLD BUSINESS**

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

The director reviewed the out-of-home placement list. The Agency continues to have children in out-of-home placement. The director reviewed the categories of cases and progress made with reunification or permanency of the children. The cost of out-of-home placements has increased by \$2,500, which could be a number of things, including rate assessments and specialty placements for children.

**10. Case Counts:**

The director reviewed the case counts for social services. There has been a large increase in the numbers of adult protection and children's mental health case management. The overall number of child protection cases has seen a decrease, which is typical for this time of year. The Financial Assistance Supervisor shared information in regards to child care assistance program receiving an influx of applications, however there has been little follow through by applicants, so the data not reflected in the case counts. Starting 7/1/2023 TLR's (Time Limited Recipients) will be restarting. This means recipients will receive 3 out of 36 rolling

months of SNAP unless employed or they meet and exemption. MFIP/RCA/GA will move to 6 month budgeting and Household Report Forms will be discontinued. They will be prospectively budgeted similar to SNAP. Retro budgeting will no longer occur for these programs. On 10/1/2024 general assistance increases from \$203 per month to \$350, the first increase since 1986. This program will continue to receive yearly COLA adjustments similar to other programs. Also in 10/2024, Representative Payee will now match social security amounts for deductions \$52 per month. The current drug testing policy of convicted drug felons needs to be updated or eliminated in order to be in compliance with new statute and DHS recommendations. The agency is no longer able to withhold benefits if a convicted drug felon tests positive for an illegal substance. After discussion Commissioner Lindor made a motion to eliminate the policy. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Wildman, MCU.

**11. Personnel/Hiring Updates:**

The director provided information with regards to staffing. Carrie Orr has been hired for the case aide position at the Glenwood site. All positions in the agency are occupied. There is currently one employee on leave.

**D. New Business:**

**12. Childcare Assistance Plan (CCAP)**

The financial assistance supervisor presented information on the childcare assistance plan. The 2024-2025 CCAP Fund Plan is up for renewal due to DHS 9/15/2023 for approval. Counties and tribes must submit a biennial child care fund plan to the commissioner. Child care assistance program rules and laws allow counties and tribes to establish some local policies and procedures. These local policies and procedures, when included in this plan and approved by the commissioner, are considered county/tribal policy and are used to support agency decisions during appeals. The department of human services (DHS) will review and approve county and tribal child care fund plans. Counties and tribes will receive approval letters for their child care fund plans from the commissioner of DHS. This plan period begins on January 1, 2024. The agency will post the plan on our website for 30 days for stakeholders to review. Commissioner LaValley made a motion to eliminate the policy. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Walvatne, MCU.

**13. Local Advisory Council (LAC) Application**

Cassandra Adams has requested to be appointed to the Grant-Pope mental health coalition local advisory council. Commissioner Wagner made a motion to approve the contract. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Gremmels, MCU.

**14. Timeliness Certificate**

The director shared the eligibility unit met the performance timelines in the processing of expedited and 30 day SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) applications for the first quarter of 2023, achieving a 96% of or applications processed within the state timelines. This is a measure which will be completed quarterly by the state. One barrier can often be an inability to get a hold of the person applying for the initial interview or waiting to get back information necessary to process their application.

**15. Glenwood Building Furniture Needs**

The director presented information regarding furniture needs discovered after the move into the newly renovated building in Glenwood. There is a need for storage with lateral files and bookshelves. There are also some small office tables. The deputy director/human resources director accepted requests made by supervisors or employees. The supervisors and deputy director/human resource director observed the space and consulted regarding the request in terms of business operations. The agency obtained a quote from Interium in order for the furniture to look uniform. This was completed in the Elbow Lake office after the building was completed as employees began to see the functionality of items, so it is consistent with past practice. The Elbow Lake bill was paid by human services. The cost is \$16,601.13 and includes all installation and fees. Commissioner LaValley made a motion to approve the contract. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Wildman, MCU.

**16. Child and Youth Council Update**

The director shared information about the child and youth council. The Grant County Child and Youth Council (CYC) met and discussed several issues.

- WPHS taking over the fiscal host piece for the Grant County, which is the standard practice with the Pope County CYC. The school had some turnover in their finance department. The agency would be able to set finances to alleviate too much additional work. Currently the agency does not charge a fiscal host fee or an administration fee for either CYC due to wanting the money received to be spent on services in the community.
- The Elbow Lake CYC discussed partner contributions and believe that the contributions should be happening, along with the statement that it occurs in every CYC. The agency does not make a partner contribution to the Pope County CYC. It was noted and indicated that any discussion of dollars coming from WPHS would need to be presented and approved by the WPHS board. The director also noted that GCSS was paying \$15,000 annually; \$5,000 was for social services, \$5,000 for public health, and \$5,000 was for corrections. Each school was also supposed to pay a contribution but have not since 2019. While the State agreement on CYC's indicates that there should be partner contribution, it also indicates that it can be in kind services or staff time. The director does not recommend that WPHS financially contribute but instead that we contribute with in kind services in terms of the fiscal host and by waiving our administrative fee. The director also does not recommend that human services be expected to fund the public health or corrections part since they are also multi county boards and have their own funds and boards.

Commissioner Wagner made a motion to move forward with a partner contribution with in kind services in terms of the fiscal host and by waiving our administrative fee. The board recommended the CYC become a 501C3, or charitable tax exempt agency, before they will consider any other request for contribution from Western Prairie. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Sperr, MCU.

**17. Personnel Request**

The deputy director, on behalf of the agency, is requesting to move the office support specialist position in Elbow Lake to 40 hours per week on a permanent basis due to work load necessity and to align with the number of hours worked by the position at the Glenwood site. At the current employee wage, this would result in an annual increase of \$2,372.50. The personnel committee has reviewed the request and is in agreement with the recommendation. Commissioner Wildman made a motion to approve the contract. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Gremmels, MCU.

**18. Internal Committee Updates**

The director provided updates to internal committees at WPHS.

**19. PrimeWest Grant**

The director presented information on using the grant for homemaking services. In addition. The agency is wanting direction from the board to continue working towards additional senior services. The director noted there may be a future need to hire employees in order to expand services. The cost would be covered as much as possible through grants and reimbursements. The board was in agreement to continue to pursue additional services for seniors.

**20. Collaborative Intensive Bridging Services (CIBS)**

The director presented information on the intensive in-home service to assist in stabilizing a child's behavior in order to remain in the home and access community-based services, thus decreasing the likelihood of out-of-home placement. The agency currently receives a state grant for the program. The application for the next grant is due. The agency asked for an initial grant application amount of \$118,000 and an additional grant application amount of \$30,000. Commissioner Sperr made a motion to move forward with applying for and implementing the grant funds. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Walvatne, MCU.

**Report from Board Appointments:**

Lakeland Mental Health Center.....K. Johnson/Gerde

Horizon Community Health Board.....Sperr/Walvatne/Lindor/Wagner

PrimeWest Health County Based Purchasing..... Wagner/Lindor/K. Johnson/T. Johnson  
West Central Community Action INC..... K. Johnson/Gerde  
Agency on Aging..... Lindor/LaValley  
Child Protection Pre-Placement..... T. Johnson/Gremmels  
Rainbow Rider..... Gerde/Wagner/LaValley/ Walvatne  
R4S Governing and Executive Board..... K. Johnson/Lindor  
WPHS Executive Committee..... T. Johnson/Walvatne/Gremmels  
WPHS Safety Committee..... Wildman/Sperr  
WPHS Personnel Committee..... Wildman/Lindor/Sperr/T. Johnson  
WPHS Finance Committee..... Gerde/Lindor/K. Johnson/LaValley

The meeting was adjourned by Chairman Troy Johnson at 11:21 am

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Board Chair

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Board Secretary