

**WESTERN PRAIRIE HUMAN SERVICES BOARD MEETING**  
**September 2, 2022**

The meeting of the Joint Powers Board for Western Prairie Human Services was held September 2, 2022 at the Grant County Offices, first floor

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

Larry Lindor  
Nan Haggerty  
Troy Johnson  
Ken Johnson  
Gordy Wagner  
Cody Rogahn, intermittently  
Paul Gerde

**OTHERS PRESENT**

Stacy Hennen, Western Prairie Director  
Phyllis Reller, Social Services Supervisor  
Stephanie Rust, Pope County Auditor  
Amber Ramey, Lead Social Worker  
Ben Schulz, Social Services Supervisor  
Tracy Bowman, Fiscal Manager  
Katie Ennen, Lead Social Worker  
Veronica Beecher, Social Worker  
Jessica Disrud, Social Worker  
Melissa Frieler, Lead Social Worker

**MEMBERS ABSENT**

Doyle Sperr  
Bill LaValley, joined via zoom 9-11  
Dwight Walvatne

**A. OPENING:**

1. Executive Committee Member, Commissioner Troy Johnson, called the meeting to order at 9:00am.
2. The Pledge of Allegiance was said
3. The agenda was reviewed, Commissioner Lindor made a motion to approve the agenda, seconded by Commissioner Wagner, MCU
4. Approval of the August Minutes: After reviewing the minutes, Commissioner Haggerty made a motion to approve the minutes, seconded by Commissioner Gerde, MCU
5. A summary of bills was presented by the director. After review of the bills, Commissioner Lindor made a motion to approve the bills, seconded by Commissioner Wagner, MCU
  - a. The fiscal manager reviewed the financial statements and explained the graphs and data. There was additional data about where we are for expenses and revenues. At the end of July we are 58% through the year and our revenues are at 50% our expenses are at 49%. The director and fiscal manager noted that we have received some but not all of our 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter revenues and we talked about the difficulties the State is experiencing processing the waiver billing and targeted case management billing for the Grant County residents. After review Commissioner Gerde made a motion to approve the financial reports, seconded by Commissioner Wagner, MCU

**B. CONTRACTS**

6. **Childcare Variance:**

The director presented a request for a variance to switch a pre-school slot for a toddler slot. The director noted that this is within our policy in terms of the request, but it is the providers second request this year and our policy states one variance per calendar year. The director noted that this provider generally has lower numbers and is in good standing. The director indicated we are seeing significant issues for people looking for childcare and a significant shortage of childcare homes. The licensor is recommending that we approve this variance. After discussion, Commissioner Haggerty made a motion to approve the variance, seconded by Commissioner Gerde, MCU

**C. OLD BUSINESS**

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

The director reviewed the agency's out of home placement list. She noted that in July WPHS had 27 kids in placement, one less than the previous month. Two of the kids on this list were only partial month because they went home midway through July. We completed an adoption for three kids in early August. We have three adoptions in the final stages and two more initiated. We have four waived placements and three 18-21 placements with one aging out this year.

8. **Case Counts:**

The director reviewed the case counts and asked if there were questions on the summary she gave in the cover sheet. Questions were asked and answered.

9. **Personnel/Hiring Updates**

The director updated the board on the positions just filled and the internal hires and shifts that had been made. At this time, we have one open position, an eligibility worker in the Elbow Lake office that started from the changes made in our fiscal manager. The director noted that so far this year we have had seven new staff start, five internal moves, and five staff promoted to lead worker. The personnel committee met about the following items and is recommending approval to the board for all of them.

a. **Leave of Absence request**

The human resources (HR) director prepared a document for the board that the director went over. We have a request from an employee to use an intermittent leave of absence without pay, in accordance with the personnel policy. The employee is requesting this beginning on 4-11-23. The plan would be for that employee to work three days a week for approximately nine months because of a shortage of childcare, sooner if they can secure full time childcare before that. The policy allows this with a review or renewal of the leave every three months. The director talked about the supervisor's plan to fill those hours and we have some unique opportunities internally that would work in the short term. The personnel committee stressed that anything like this needs to be looked at on a case by case basis and considered in conjunction with looking at the caseloads and needs of that unit. Commissioner Wagner made a motion to approve the leave of absence with it coming to the personnel committee and board every three months in accordance with the policy, seconded by Commissioner Lindor, MCU

**b. Catastrophic Leave Personnel Policy change:**

The human resources director prepared a document for the board to consider.

**c. Child Support Temporary Appointment:**

The HR director requested that the board approve an emergency appointment of Pat Braaten to assist our office in fiscal matters for a maximum of 6 months at 32 hours per week maximum. The director. After review Commissioner Lindor made a motion to approve the emergency appointment request as presented, seconded by Commissioner La Valley, MCU

**d. Account Technician Hours**

**e. Fiscal Temporary Appointment**

**C. NEW BUSINESS:**

**10. Collaborative Safety Leadership and Training Proposal:**

Scott Modell and Noel Engelbrook from Collaborative Safety presented to the board via zoom at the director's request, on a training their company does. Collaborative Safety has been in Minnesota and several other states and the director and deputy director have both done their two-day general training when they were in Minnesota. Collaborative Safety is a training that looks at a culture from the top down that does not look at blame when things happen but rather a culture of systemic and policy change when things happen. It's a culture where it is safe for staff to tell us when something happens, which the science says will lessen the number of things that go wrong in the first place when staff feel safe and comfortable. The training has an in-person leadership and staff training component and then e-learning ongoing for leadership and staff as well. The board discussed it, Commissioner Haggerty indicated she went to the half day training when it was in our area and thought it was a good premise and is glad to see Minnesota still using it in areas and that we want to use it. The board talked about the importance of being mindful in creating our culture, since we will have a culture no matter what. After discussion Commissioner Haggerty made a motion to approve the training as presented, seconded by Commissioner Rogahn, MCU

**11. Vulnerable Adult Priority Changes:**

The lead social workers in the area of adult protection and the supervisor presented to the board about the changes made to the adult protection program recently in statute and the additional dollars allocated to us. They walked through the changes and how they impact the people we serve and showed some specific examples of where the dollars have helped us. The board asked questions and discussed the changes.

**12. 2023 Preliminary Levy Request:**

The director and fiscal manager presented the 2023 preliminary levy information to the board. We discussed that the first step is this board approving this and then the numbers will be sent to each County Auditor for them to present them to the individual boards and the individual boards have to approve whatever we set. We also discussed that the preliminary levy cannot go higher once we set it. The final levy, set in December, can go lower but not higher. The director presented what we came up with and then our discussion with the finance committee and some changes they proposed. The director noted that the finance committee was presented with a zero levy increase but had concerns about not having enough information at this time and wanting to be sure that we had adequate funds going into 2023. The director presented two options, one being a zero increase and one being a \$98,000 overall increase which would be \$37,700.60 for Grant County and \$60,299.40 for Pope County. Western Prairie's overall budget for 2022 is \$8,204,876. The board had a lengthy conversation about the benefits of both numbers and the reasoning of the finance committee for their recommendation. After discussion, Commissioner Gerde made a motion to set the preliminary 2023 levy for Western Prairie Human Services at \$3,377,987. The breakout would be \$2,078,475.40 for Pope, a \$60,299.40 increase, and \$1,299,511.60 for Grant County, an increase of \$37,700.60 for Grant County, seconded by Larry Lindor, MCU

**13. Union Update:**

The board was given an update of the union contract negotiations created by our labor attorney for the board's review. The director went over it with the board and indicated that we have contract mediation scheduled in Elbow Lake on October 12, 2022. It would be our hope that most things will be settled at that meeting. The director went over what is in the document in terms of differences the county and union are having in terms of wages and insurance contribution. The director noted that it is our hope to be able to have our Justin from Gallagher come and meet with the staff about the insurance policies and answer questions so staff understand it and can look at their own unique situations and choose the best plan for themselves. The board asked questions and discussed the update.

**14. 2020 Cost Report:**

The director reviewed and explained the 2020 cost report that she had a handout on. The cost report is generated by the Department of Human Services and the information comes from claims and reporting that goes into the State. Counties do not create this document. The director gave the board a summary of the three sections of the cost report: support programs, medical programs and social services programs. The director explained the centralized payments that are reported in the cost report. The director also noted that the medical support number was wrong. The director contacted the fiscal operations division (FOD) about it and they have gotten back to me with the total number but not the breakdown. The director will update the document and get it to the board when it is completed.

**Report from Board Appointments:**

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

The meeting was adjourned by Chairman Troy Johnson at 11:55 am

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Board Chair

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Board Secretary