**WESTERN PRAIRIE HUMAN SERVICES BOARD MEETING**

**May 6, 2022**

The meeting of the Joint Powers Board for Western Prairie Human Services was held May 6, 2022 at the Pope Courthouse, third floor

**MEMBERS PRESENT OTHERS PRESENT MEMBERS ABSENT**

Dwight Walvatne Stacy Hennen, Western Prairie Director Larry Lindor

Bill LaValley Kari Rude, Deputy Director Doyle Sperr

Troy Johnson Dave Salberg, Traverse County Commissioner

Ken Johnson Ben Schulz, WPHS Supervisor

Gordy Wagner Crystal Zaviska, WPHS Supervisor

Cody Rogahn Phyllis Reller, WPHS Supervisor

Paul Gerde Diane Kittelson, WPHS Senior Coordinator

Nan Haggerty

1. The Chairman, Commissioner Rogahn, called the meeting to order at 9:07am.
2. The Pledge of Allegiance was said
3. The agenda was reviewed. The director requested that we add 8J, Discussion on DHS’s stance on Juneteenth. Commissioner Gerde made a motion to approve the amended agenda, seconded by Commissioner T. Johnson, MCU
4. Approval of the April Minutes: After reviewing the minutes and noting a small grammatical error, Commissioner Haggerty made a motion to approve the minutes, seconded by Commissioner T. Johnson, MCU
5. The director a summary of bills that were presented. After review, Commissioner Haggerty made a motion to approve the bills, seconded by Commissioner LaValley, MCU. The director then went over the Quarter 1 budget for Western Prairie. She noted that we are still combining certain areas in the budget so you can see some duplicates. She also noted that the fiscal manager said that now that we have all the data back from the counties we can start to make some overall spending comparisons from previous years. At the end of the first quarter we are 25% through the year and our spending is at 23% in income maintenance and 19% in social services. Revenues are low right now because we’re still receipting in things and case management revenues have just started to come in, as well as Quarter 4 revenues.

1. **Contracts:**

None

1. **Old Business:**
2. **Out of Home Placement List**:

The director reviewed the agency’s out of home placement list. She noted that on March 31st WPHS had 24 kids in placement, three less than the previous month. The director had a document that reviewed all kids who have been in placement over 12 months and their current status and she reviewed that with the board, that was twenty-one kids total. Three of those placements are 18-21, four of them are 260D waiver placements, 5 are pending transfers to family out of State, four are pending adoption and are close to completion, one we have an adoption match we’re looking at, and five we have filed the termination and have a relative adoption ready. Overall we are starting to finally see a decrease in many of the kids who came into care during COVID and we had hold ups, whether that be with other States or our own system.

1. **Case Counts:**

The director noted that our human services cases are relatively stable with the exception of adult protection, where the numbers are extraordinarily high. The caseloads ebb and flow so this may not last but it’s good to keep our eye on it. Overall, social services numbers are up a little but not an alarming amount. The director reviewed the healthcare numbers and noted that we have added 127 healthcare cases since January. We discussed that the peacetime emergency will likely be ending and we will start doing renewals this fall. We have many workers who have never done healthcare renewals, if they’ve been here less than 2.5 years, so we will need to work through that. Since January we have added 39 food support cases, decreased our MFIP cases by 8, and stayed relatively stable in child support and child care assistance.

1. **Personnel/Hiring Updates**

The director indicated that the only position we have open is a WPHS position that is primarily located in Wheaton. The deputy director explained where and how we are recruiting for that and talked about our timeline to hire and noted that the Traverse County child protection worker also just left so we are working with Traverse County to hire as well. It’s hard to hire in an area that isn’t very populated and is very rural. The director noted that our eligibility supervisor previously from the Elbow Lake Office has resigned. This left us with some decisions to make. We discussed the work we had done to see whether one or two supervisors was appropriate in this office and talked about the struggles that exist when you have two people operating the same programs and supervising areas that merge and mix all the time. The director indicated that after extensive research and discussion with the involved parties and looking at other counties structure she is recommending that we do not fill the vacant eligibility supervisor position. The recommendations instead is that we look at four lead workers, three for eligibility and one for child support eventually and that we redo our current supervisor’s job description to include this. The board had a lot of questions about if this would work and how it would work. In the discussion several of the commissioners wanted to make sure that the employees did not think this was a cost savings measure for us, they didn’t want them to worry we would be cutting positions or not filling them and increasing their workload. The director agreed that this was not driven by budget at all, it was driven by what we felt would make the most sense for WPHS and would best serve the staff and the people we serve. There was discussion about if they would approve the changes and have us come back next month for the wage and description approvals and after discussion Commissioner Haggerty made a motion to approve the changes and allow us to keep moving and not come back with the wage information but to go ahead and update job descriptions and hire, seconded by Commissioner T. Johnson, MCU

1. **Legislative Update:**

The director briefly reviewed the MACSSA legislative update with the board and noted that many things are in conference committee and we are not necessarily as involved at that point. She reviewed some of the areas we have been watching closely.

1. **New Business:**
2. **Request Regarding Local Advisory Council:**

The mental health and chemical dependency social services supervisor spoke with the board about our local Children and Adult Local Advisory Councils (LAC). He indicated that we are having some trouble getting all the right people in the seats in both counties and the two groups have been discussing if they should join into one. The board had a handout in their packet that explained the role of the LAC and had reviewed it. The supervisors request was permission from the board to explore combining the Pope and Grant County LAC’s into one WPHS LAC. He talked about the similar needs and the role his staff play on the LAC and the role we would like them to play. After questions and discussion, Commissioner Haggerty made a motion to approve the exploration of a joint LAC between the current Grant and Pope County LAC’s, seconded by Commissioner Walvatne, MCU

1. **Caregiver Support Program Update:**

The Senior Coordinator located in Glenwood and supervisor of that program came and updated the board on the Senior Caregiver Grant that we received for Grant, Pope, and Stevens Counties. They talked about the purpose, our progress thus far and what our end goals were. The board asked questions about that and other programs operated within the senior coordinator and were updated.

1. **Letter regarding 2021 Fiscal**:

The director reviewed letters we received from DHS praising our fiscal staff in 2021 for getting all quarterly reports in on time, all total there were 68 reports between Grant and Pope, 34 each. The director noted that we may not get this letter for 2022 as our quarter one reports were a day late because we needed to get data from the counties and get it inputted into IFS in order to even begin them and we didn’t get all that until shortly before it was due. We also had some problems both with submitting and with them getting what we submitted. This is our first quarter submitting as WPHS, so problems are expected.

1. **Human Services Performance Management Report**:

The director reviewed the first Human Services Performance Management (HSPM) report that Western Prairie has received as one agency and they did very well. The first measure was a percent of SNAP and Cash applications processed timely. The HSPM performance threshold is 75%. WPHS’s performance was 97.8%, compared with the region at 94.4% and the state at 90.6%. The second measure was the percent of expedited SNAP applications processed within one business day. WPHS’s performance was 84.3% compared with the region at 70.1% and the State at 44.8%. The director noted that our performance is indicative of the skill and dedication of our staff. The board commended the staff for their performance.

1. **Technology Committee Updates:**

The technology committee was able to meet to go over a host of recommendations with the director and the Shawn Larsen from Morris Electronics. The director summarized the discussion and went over each recommendation individually. The first recommendation from the committee was to purchase Winscribe. The director explained that Winscribe was a transcription system primarily used by child protection. The director reviewed the system and the needs and uses and explained that we would be sharing the cost with the Grant County Sheriff’s department and would be able to transfer our current licenses over from the Pope County Sheriff’s office. The quote is for $8,843.50. Of that cost our annual obligation would be around $2200. After discussion, Commissioner Haggerty made a motion approving the quote and moving forward with the system, seconded by Commissioner LaValley, MCU. The second quote was for Know B4, a system that trains and tests your staff on their knowledge regarding computer safety to help them not click on things that will compromise our system. Both Grant and Pope County have this or are getting it this year. The quote was for one year at $1,608.75 or three years at $3,861. The technology committee recommended three years since it is a cost savings overall of $965.25. After review, Commissioner Gerde made a motion to approve the 3-year quote, seconded by Commissioner Wagner, MCU. The director provided the board with a quote for RSA Authentication Manager, or dual authentication. The director explained the system and noted that the quote is for $14,205.9. She noted that many of the costs are one time and the software and tokens need to be renewed every three years at a cost of approximately $3,700. The technology committee recommended this system and quote. After review, Commissioner Haggerty made a motion to approve the proposal, seconded by Commissioner T. Johnson, MCU. The last quote was for the Glenwood conference room in the building currently being renovated for primarily human services with some meeting spaces for public health. The board discussed if this quote should go to the Pope County board or be considered here and talked about the overall cost and the process on things like this. The technology committee had recognized these questions so recommended this move to the full board for discussion. After discussion, Commissioner T. Johnson made a motion to approve the quote and move forward, seconded by Commissioner Wagner, MCU. The director also noted that we are working on a technology inventory and getting one updated so we can then get a replacement schedule done and reviewed with the technology committee.

1. **Childcare Provider Proclamation:**

The director reviewed a proclamation recognizing child care provider day, which was the day of the meeting, for providers in the Western Prairie jurisdiction. The board reviewed the proclamation and Commissioner LaValley made a motion to approve, seconded by Commissioner Gerde, MCU

1. **Alternative Work Schedule Policy:**

The director and deputy director/HR went over a policy for alternative work schedules (AWS). It was discussed that we are recommending that new AWS’s be no more than 90 days. Employees can apply more than once and all applications go to the full management team to ensure that we are equitable. Our labor attorney did review this and approved of the language in the policy and said it met her expectations and recommendations. The director noted that this policy allows those who pre-COVID had an alternative work to continue with that once we move into the renovated building on a permanent basis, per the previous agreement. The policy also notes that if those who had an AWS before January 1, excluding COVID schedules, will be honored. It further states that if the employee chooses to discontinue the AWS the current policy will take effect for them. After review and discussion, Commissioner Haggerty made a motion to approve, seconded by Commissioner LaValley, MCU

1. **Letter of Thanks to DHS:**

The director gave the board a letter she drafted thanking the Department of Human Services (DHS) for their assistance with our merger. The director noted that the project manager and team that was assigned to our merger were incredibly helpful and made our process quicker and smoother than it would have been otherwise. The director talked about the work we were able to do with CUREM and that we are the first merger to be able to do that, likely because our project management team worked on it and advocated for that. The director felt that it would be appropriate for their supervisors and the Commissioner of DHS to know about our experience and hear after review of the letter, Commissioner K. Johnson made a motion to approve the letter and send it to the commissioner, seconded by Commissioner T. Johnson, MCU

1. **Procurement Update:**

The director noted that we are completing the regional rating process for procurement on May 9th. After that is done a resolution can be done to note the county preference of remaining a single source plan and naming who we think that should be. The director indicated that she has already spoken with the Grant County Auditor and the Pope County Administrator and given them a draft resolution for them to consider and put on their board agenda on May 17th. It is the director’s understanding that it will be on both county’s agenda that day.

1. **Juneteenth and the State’s process for June 20, 2022:**

The director and eligibility supervisor recently learned that on June 20th the State of Minnesota will not be working in honor of Juneteenth on June 19th. They have further decided that they will close most of the eligibility, financial, and child support systems that day as well. The director and supervisor reviewed what this means for our staff and what the impact is. The Minnesota Association of County Social Services Administrators (MACSSA) executive director has made initial contact with DHS to inquire not only what the expectation is for counties to have normal work operations, but how we would process expedited applications and what the deadlines would be for those applications since we would not be able to process them with the systems down. The board discussed our options and agreed that we should make some internal plans for possibly an in-service or training that day and wait and see what DHS’s response is to MACSSA. The board requested an update of this at our June 3rd meeting.

**Report from Board Appointments:**

1. Lakeland Mental Health Center………………………K. Johnson/Haggerty
2. Horizon Community Health Board……… …………..Sperr/Walvatne/Lindor/Wagner
3. PrimeWest Health County Based Purchasing……… Wagner/K. Johnson/T. Johnson
4. West Central Community Action INC……………… Rogahn/K. Johnson
5. Agency on Aging……………………………………. Lindor/LaValley
6. Child Protection Pre-Placement…………………….. T. Johnson/Haggerty
7. Rainbow Rider………………………………………. LaValley/Walvatne/Gerde/Rogahn
8. R4S Governing and Executive Board………………. K. Johnson/Rogahn

The meeting was adjourned by Chairman Rogahn. At 11:47 pm

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Board Chair Board Secretary