

WESTERN PRAIRIE HUMAN SERVICES BOARD MEETING
January 7, 2022

The meeting of the Joint Powers Board for Western Prairie Human Services was held January 7, 2022 at the Pope County Courthouse

MEMBERS PRESENT

Dwight Walvatne
Bill LaValley
Troy Johnson until 12:30pm
Ken Johnson
Doyle Sperr until 12:30pm
Cody Rogahn
Paul Gerde
Larry Lindor
Nan Haggerty: arrived at 10:09am
Gordy Wagner arrived at 10:09am

OTHERS PRESENT

Stacy Hennen, Human Services Director
Kari Rude, Deputy Director
Phyllis Reller, Social Services Supervisor
Dave Salberg, Traverse County Commissioner
Crystal Zaviska, Eligibility Supervisor
Shawn Larsen, Morris Electronics
Bryan Gates, Pope County IT Director

1. The Chairman, Commissioner Rogahn, called the meeting to order at 9:05am.
2. The Pledge of Allegiance was said
3. The agenda was reviewed. Commissioner Gerde made a motion to approve the agenda with 9B changed to an approval, seconded by Commissioner LaValley, MCU
4. Approval of the December Minutes: After reviewing the minutes, Commissioner Lindor made a motion to approve the minutes with minor clarification, seconded by Commissioner Sperr, MCU
5. The director reviewed a summary of bills that were presented, the director explained that the bills were all to pay for expenses that will be covered by the Adult Mental Health Initiative grant. After review Commissioner Troy Johnson made a motion to approve the bills, seconded by Commissioner LaValley, MCU. After discussion, Commissioner Troy Johnson made a motion indicating that county levy dollars the counties have approved for Western Prairie shall be transferred to Western Prairie twice a year, in July and December, seconded by Commissioner Sperr, MCU

6. **Contracts**

A. Lakeland Mental Health Professional Contract:

The director reviewed the contract with Lakeland that contracts our mental health professional, located in the Elbow Lake office, to provide school based mental health services for an average of 24 hours per week. Lakeland Mental Health will reimburse Western Prairie at a rate of \$60,000 for this in 2022. The director explained that this had previously been a Grant County contract and indicated that it had decreased this year. The employee who provides this service also decreased her time with us to 24 hours per week on average. She will work more hours during the school year and less in the summer. The director explained how this contract originated and the board asked questions and discussed what these services looked like in all the school districts of Western Prairie. After discussion, Commissioner Lindor made a motion to approve the contract, seconded by Commissioner LaValley, MCU

B. PrimeWest Provider Participation Targeted Case Management Amendment:

The director reviewed the rates and explained that since rates were changed by DHS in July, but PrimeWest contracts based on a calendar year with the rates from the previous July, we will have two different rates for mental health targeted case management paid by PrimeWest for 2022 based on the county of residence of the person we are serving. For all other targeted case management services our rates will align in July of 2022. The director noted that currently the rate for Pope County residents is lower than the Grant County residents. She talked about what makes up the formula and indicated we have one of our fiscal officers working with the State on our data to try and determine why one is lower since many of our circumstances are the same. After review and questions Commissioner Gerde made a motion approving the amendment, seconded by Commissioner Troy Johnson, MCU

C. Public Defender Contract for Grant County:

The director reviewed this contract which was changing from a contract with Grant County to a contract with Western Prairie. The director explained why we have the contract and what it provides for our Grant County residents. The board discussed where and how this service is paid for Pope County residents and the director indicated that she would look into this and bring it back to the board. The board wants to make sure that all residents of both counties have the same opportunities available to them. After discussion, Commissioner LaValley made a motion to approve the contract with an amendment to one of the dates and a change in signatory from Grant County to Western Prairie, seconded with those amendments by Commissioner Gerde, MCU

D. Prairie Community Services Contract for Pope Residents:

The director went over the terms of a contract with Prairie Community Services for Pope County residents providing Community Support Programs (CSP) a service for adults who are seriously and persistently mentally ill. The director explained that this service is generally done in conjunction with adult rehabilitative mental health services (ARMHS) which is billed to medical assistance. The director noted that this provider does not provide ARMHS and only provides CSP, which is billed directly to the agency. The agency would prefer that a provider do both since ARMHS services are intended to be more intensive and more rehabilitative in nature. The director noted that we have some residents in Pope who chose this provider and want this provider and so we have continued our contract with them. The director told the board that this contract is funded out of a CSP grant from the State and the amount has decreased over the past three years as we move more and more people to rehabilitative services. After discussion, Commissioner Gerde made a motion to approve the contract, seconded by Commissioner Walvatne, MCU

E. **Payment Processing Agreement:**

The director explained that Grant County previously offered credit card payment for services rendered under a contract the Grant County Treasurer held. It is our desire to establish our own contract and also provide the service to our entire service area. Approving the contract allows us to receive credit card payments online or by phone at both sites. Currently there is a credit card machine in the Elbow Lake office, which was purchased for \$320 when we joined the Treasurer's contract. The director indicated that with this contract we can purchase another machine for the Glenwood site but we wanted to see how often it is used in person, wait for the renovation to be completed, and for the agency to move back into their larger building, which is more conducive to the public being in the meeting. After discussion Commissioner Lindor made a motion to approve the contract, seconded by Commissioner LaValley, MCU

7. **Old Business:**

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

The director reviewed the agency's out of home placement list. She noted that on December 15th we had 33 kids in placement. Since that time three have left placement, three are in trial home visits, two have pending adoptions, four are waiver placements, generally kids with disabilities or significant mental health issues, and seven are in adoptive placements. We believe two more may be going to a trial home visit soon.

B. **Update on System Mergers**

The director indicated that our Social Services Information System (SSIS) is slated to merge starting 4pm today, our Child Care Assistance Program, MEC2, is slated to merge next week, and then we have two systems left, PRISM, for child support, and METS, for medical assistance. Most of the dates for these systems were set based on DHS's scheduled updates and other needs from the systems. We have merged our integrated financial system (IFS), our e-mail conversion went well and we will be on track with our payroll system for our first WPHS payroll on January 21. The director noted that the supervisors and staff have worked incredibly hard on these changes and have done great work. We should all be proud of the extraordinary staff and management that we have.

C. **IT Contracting**

The board discussed the proposed contract from Pope County IT (PC) and the current contract between Morris Electronics (ME) and Grant County that WPHS will share with them. Shawn Larsen from Morris Electronics was present and talked with the board and Bryan Gates, the Pope County IT Director, was present and talked with the board. The Pope County IT director noted that he had concerns about continuing to provide services for Western Prairie that were based on questions the director has asked, concerned that requests the director has made would compromise system security, and compensation he indicated the director has declined to pay. The Morris Electronics owner talked about the requests that had been made and noted that while risks exist in anything we do electronically, the requests made were not a higher risk than other things that are currently being done, like e-mail on phones or a web portal for e-mail or payroll. Both ME and PC talked about the history of this relationship and how we got to where we are, the issues that have arisen, and what our options are. The director clarified her questions on the contract were not about the rate but about the automatic annual increases and the lack of cap or amount specified for regular service. She noted that we do not have any contracts like that and indicated that it will make it very hard to budget for, now and into the future. The director clarified that she had not gotten a bill. She had indicated that she was not sure if we could pay a bill with no contract and a historical rate that was different and indicated that the State Auditors may ask a lot of questions about that. The director stated she was aware that it was not her role to make the final decisions on a budget and she was asking those questions in the hopes of having a conversation about it, but that she never got a response on any of her questions. The director gave the board a handout that gave a timeline of events and laid out the questions she had. The director also provided an overview of the service costs as she could estimate them at this time both for IT services and hosting fees to the extent that she knew at this time. The board asked many questions of both ME and PC and discussed how to move forward. The board talked with ME about what rate they would change for standard services and he indicated that he would charge the same limit that PC had been asked to use for standard and normal service, and would be fine following the terms of the contract that was proposed to PC as well as the service level agreement. He did note that making a move like this would be a special project and would take a great deal of hours and time, and explained in depth what it would mean. In terms of hosting fees, the director had spoken with the Grant County Auditor who indicated he would not be charging a hosting fee. We discussed that this was more a product of not having an IT department and viewing the issues differently from that perspective. After much discussion the board asked the PC IT Director if he wanted a contract with Western Prairie. He indicated that his staff were feeling burned out and overloaded and he did not feel this was the time for them to enter into a contract and he would prefer not to provide these services at this time. The board discussed options moving forward and the owner of ME talked about the various scenarios going forward. All parties indicated that the conversion and server work that PC had done was great and the quality of work that WP received was equal to any other. After robust discussion, Commissioner Lindor made a motion to move all IT services to Morris Electronics at this time, seconded by Commissioner LaValley, MCU After further discussion about the hours that PC IT has put into this project in the 4th quarter of 2021 Commissioner Walvatne made a motion that WPHS pay Pope County IT for services rendered that PC IT has provided in the 4th quarter of 2021 at \$63 per hour and services that they will render in 2022 at \$65 per hour, seconded by Commissioner Gerde, MCU

8. **New Business:**

A. **Western Prairie Childcare Fund Plan Approval Letter**

The director reviewed the letter from the Department of Human Services (DHS) approving our plan for implementing CCAP, childcare assistance program.

B. Personnel Request for Non-Union Personnel:

The director discussed that it recently came to her attention that Pope and Grant counties did vacation accrual differently for their non-union personnel. In Grant they earned it on the same schedule in terms of accrual amount per year as the union and earned it every two weeks. In Pope the county gives the non-union staff all of their vacation time on January 1st for the year. The director indicated that while she would like to see accrual move to every two weeks process it isn't fair to do that to the Pope non-union staff, particularly since they are only able to carry over 40 hours of vacation so the two people this impact have kept their vacation to that area. The director recommended that the agency front them their vacation 1-1-22 at the same accrual they would have had with Pope County, since this hasn't been addressed in the union contract yet, with the understanding that starting 1-1-23 they will begin earning their vacation on a two-week basis, with the rest of the union and non-union staff. Commissioner Ken Johnson asked for clarity that they were being fronted a year of vacation versus having to work a year to get vacation because that would be very different. The director indicated she would ask, but noted that she believes they are fronted the time. If that is not the case she will bring the matter back to the board to correct. After discussion Commissioner Troy Johnson made a motion that WPHS would front the two non-union staff previously from Pope County their vacation for 2022 on 1-1-22 and that starting 1-1-23 they would begin to earn it on a 2-week basis, seconded by Commissioner Haggerty, MCU

C. Executed Community Support Program Contract between WPHS and the State:

The director gave the board a copy of the CSP Contract with the State. The director explained what the dollars are spent on and noted that the amount is a combination of what each county was awarded previously.

D. Letter Regarding Local Collaborative:

The director reviewed the letter from DHS indicating that both local collaboratives needed to have their Governance Agreement signed by all partners and submitted by February 28 2022. Included in the packet was a copy of Western Prairie's contract with DHS regarding the collaborative as well. The director indicated that she reached out to both collaborative coordinators and made sure they were aware of the deadline and both replied and said they were.

E. Agency Vehicle Policy:

The director and deputy director reviewed the policy outlining signing up, usage, records, and how to handle accidents. There is a policy in the Policy and Procedure Manual, which is more detail specific towards use. After review Commissioner Gerde made a motion to approve the policy, seconded by Commissioner Wagner, MCU

F. Meal/Travel Policy:

The director and deputy director explained the policy outlines the difference between day trips and overnight trips and goes over meal reimbursement for both. After review Commissioner Lindor made a motion to approve the policy, seconded by Commissioner Walvatne, MCU

G. Equal Employment/Affirmative Action Policy

The director and deputy director indicated that this policy is required to exit the Minnesota Merit System. Previously we were under the Merit policy regarding this. The director noted that this policy is developed from DHS's policy on this. After review, Commissioner Walvatne made a motion to approve the policy, seconded by Commissioner LaValley.

H. Hatch Act Policy

The director and deputy director noted that this policy defines our stance on lobbying activities for government employees in compliance with federal statute and is also necessary to exit the Merit System. After review, Commissioner Haggerty made a motion to approve the policy, seconded by Commissioner Wagner, MCU

I. Personnel Board of Appeals

The director and deputy director reviewed the final policy that is required to exit the Merit System. This policy develops a board of appeal for disciplinary actions for non-union staff and union staff if they choose this over their union process. After review, Commissioner Lindor made a motion to approve the policy, seconded by Commissioner Gerde, MCU

J. Merit System Letter and Resolution:

The director and deputy director reviewed the letter Western Prairie received from the Minnesota Merit System releasing them from the Merit System. They presented a resolution that needs to be passed accepting the responsibility that we take on when we exit the merit system. The director noted that exiting the merit system at the same time that we implemented a new payroll system, completed a personnel manual, and essentially began a new agency has been a tremendous effort. She noted that the Deputy Director has done an incredible amount of work on this and it's a tremendous accomplishment to get this done on time. After review of the resolution, Commissioner Wagner offered the Resolution, seconded by Commissioner Walvatne. A roll call vote was taken and the resolution was passed unanimously.

K. Administrative Update on Union Negotiations:

The director reviewed a document from our labor attorney outlining where we are in discussions with the union. We have made an offer for a memorandum of agreement on health insurance prior to engaging in union negotiations in an attempt to offer the agency health insurance and elective benefits. The union has voted against the plan at this time and we have not received a notice of intent to negotiate or any request from the union to negotiate. The initial request to negotiate must come from the union, not the agency. The board reviewed the document and asked questions.

L. Purchase of Vehicles from Pope County:

Pope County has two vehicles that are in their fleet that they just procured from Enterprise after their lease expired. They did so with the thought that Western Prairie could lease them from the county while we wait for our fleet vehicles to get here, they are expected in April 2022. Pope County reviewed the process and is instead recommending that Western Prairie purchase the vehicles, in order to streamline things like insurance and payment of expenses. Pope County is offering to sell a 2015 Grand Caravan with 52,250 miles on it as of December 2021 for \$12,000 and a 2015 Chevy Equinox with 71,204 miles on it as of December 2021 for \$13,000. The board reviewed the recommendation and the director indicated that she spoke with our fiscal manager and he agreed with Pope County's recommendations and that the prices were more than fair. After discussion, Commissioner Haggerty made a motion to approve Western Prairie purchasing the vehicles at the prices stated, seconded by Commissioner LaValley, MCU

M. Inclement Weather Policy:

The director presented a changed inclement weather policy from the one in the policy manual. The only significant change is that the agency closure of each site follows the county’s decision of whether or not to close the county offices. Further, it notes that if the agency site closes in accordance with a closure of the county campus then the agency will pay the salary of staff that were not already scheduled for time off. The director talked about the last day we ended up with a closure and how difficult it was for our staff who are on probation or just got back from maternity leave to make up their time or have any paid time off. The director noted that since we already budget for their wage it doesn’t cost us any additional money. The policy is reflective of Pope County’s policy related to this. After review and discussion, Commissioner Walvatne made a motion to approve the policy, seconded by Larry Lindor, MCU

N. Vacancy/Hiring Policy:

The director and deputy director reviewed the policy on filling vacancies in terms of process. The director noted that the policy allows the agency to hire a position that is budgeted for and was previously filled instead of coming back to the board. The director noted that since the board only meets once a month it could delay hiring to do otherwise. The director noted that any new position, position change, or grade change would first go to the joint personnel meeting and then the board. After review, Commissioner Gerde made a motion to approve the policy, seconded by Commissioner Lindor, MCU

O. Employee Payroll Deductions for January 21:

The director explained to the board that we are on a 1-week delay with regards to pay. Because the county wanted to close out their budget and term the employees from the county to Western Prairie on December 31, 2021 they issued a payroll check through December 31st on the 31st. Normally that would have occurred on January 7th and the first half of the agency’s health insurance contribution and the first half of the employees costs for health insurance and elective benefits would have come out of that check. The county’s did not deduct, and wouldn’t have since they deducted December’s in the previous two payrolls this month. For the January 21, 2022 payroll, Western Prairie will contribute 100% of the contribution of each county per the current county contracts and 100% of the employee contribution will also be taken out of their checks. For some, primarily those who take family insurance or those who put a lot of money into HSA, FSA or anything else this could be a large deduction from their first paycheck. The director gave the board a letter the deputy director drafted for the employees with different options for their deductions. The options are to take the second half out over time as long as it’s all taken out by April 29th, take the second half out on April 29th which is the first time we have a month with three paychecks, or they can take it all out on the 21st. They would need to sign the sheet and choose an option. On the sheet it also notes that if they leave employment before April 29th any remainder due would come out of their final paycheck. After discussion and review, Commissioner Haggerty made a motion to approve the process, seconded by Commissioner Ken Johnson, MCU

- The director asked the board if they wanted to offer zoom as an option for the public for meetings moving forward. There was discussion and the director clarified that if we have a guest who requests zoom we can always do that, the question is do we offer it to the public. After discussion, Commissioner Haggerty made a motion to offer zoom as an option for the public to view and participate in the meeting, seconded by Commissioner Ken Johnson. The motion failed with a tie, 4 ayes and 4 nays.

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 Rogahn. At 1:10am

Board Chair

Board Secretary