

GRANT COUNTY SOCIAL SERVICES BOARD
April 20, 2021

The regular meeting of the Grant County Human Services Board was held April 20, 2021

MEMBERS PRESENT

Dwight Walvatne
Bill LaValley
Doyle Sperr
Ken Johnson
Troy Johnson

OTHERS PRESENT

Stacy Hennen, Social Services Director
Justin Anderson, County Attorney
Ashley Hokanson, Human Resources

- Chair Walvatne left at 3pm and Vice Chair LaValley ran the meeting at that time.

Dwight Walvatne called the meeting to order at 1:21 pm

Pledge of allegiance was done

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA: The agenda was reviewed and after review, Troy Johnson made a motion to approve the agenda, seconded by Bill LaValley, MCU

MINUTES: The minutes of the March 16, 2021 meetings were reviewed. Bill LaValley made a motion to approve the minutes, seconded by Doyle Sperr, MCU

BILLS: The Social Services Claims Abstract and Purchase of Service Bills were presented and reviewed. After questions Ken Johnson made a motion to approve the bills, seconded by Bill LaValley, MCU

BOARD REPORTS: Report from Board Appointments

Lakeland Mental Health..... Ken Johnson
Horizon Community Health Board..... Doyle Sperr, Dwight Walvatne
County Based Purchasing..... Troy Johnson/Ken Johnson
West Central Communities Action, Inc... Ken Johnson
Agency on Aging..... Bill LaValley
Child Protection Pre-Placement..... Troy Johnson
Rainbow Rider..... Bill LaValley/Dwight Walvatne
Region IV South Governing Board..... Ken Johnson

CONTRACTS

- A. None this Month

OLD BUSINESS

A. **Case Counts:**

The director reviewed all of the cases counts and noted the increases and decreases. Our child protection intakes continue to be high and we continue to see growth in our medical assistance cases as well.

B. **Legislative Update:**

The director reviewed MACSSA's legislative update and highlighted the things of particular importance or impact for small counties. The Omnibus bills were released and the director went over some concerning things in there and some good things for counties.

NEW BUSINESS

A. **SNAP Processing Timelines:**

The director noted that the staff did a great job of meeting the federal requirements of processing SNAP applications within five days for expedited and 30 days for regular SNAP applications for 2019 and 2020. We received certificates that the director shared with the board. We met the 96% threshold for all of 2019 and Q1, Q2, and Q4 in 2020.

B. **Background Studies: Gemalto:**

The director talked with the board about the State going with a new vendor for fingerprint studies. That means the machine we have now, which we bought when this first started five or six years ago, will no longer be usable. The new vendor will require the use of their machine which will cost \$20,000 versus the \$5,000 we paid for ours originally. The director indicates that it appears we will not be able to provide fingerprinting anymore and said that the vendor indicates in their proposal that there will be a place within 35 miles of everyone in the State. We have seen no evidence of their plan to do that or been involved in this process at all.

C. **Adult Protection Mandatory Reporter Training:**

The director noted that our senior coordinator did a mandated reporter training for the region via zoom. She did well and actually maxed out the number of participants, which is 300 people.

D. **Placement Data:**

The director reviewed the out of home placements with the board. We have 20 children in placement from 13 families, with fourteen kids who are State wards, pending adoption or adoption placements and three children placed under 260D for their own disabilities. The director noted that we have an adoption date set for early May with a sibling group of three, two of whom are our state wards and one is Pope's, and we have a relative adoption that we believe will be done in May as well. We should have one 18-year-old leave by the end of the month as well. We have another sibling group of 2 who we just sent the adoption placement agreement in, which is the last step, and a sibling group of two where we just completed the terminations so adoption is the next step.

E. **March Financial Report:**

The director reviewed the financial report with the board. We are 25% of the way through the year and our revenues are at 24% and our expenses are at 21%. We are slightly over budget in out of home placements since we have so many kids waiting for adoption. Our cash balance is up \$279,373 from this time last year. The reality is that it really depends on our expenses from year to year and when we receive certain revenues, which can vary.

F. Traverse County Board Presentation:

The director reviewed the document that she gave the Traverse County Board that compares what we do for them and charge and what it would cost them to do it all themselves. The director noted that it appears to her that if Traverse plans to stay with the contract we will need to look at increases that account for more of our staff's time being spent on ICWA intakes and assessments since the requirements make them much more time intensive. The director indicated that it seems that some of the staff in Traverse would like to see the board negotiate to keep a contract for certain things, like child protection, but take back other things that they would like to do or have in house, like a director or less intensive types of case management. The director asked the board where they stand on that since it has been a point of conversation multiple times for the director. The board agreed by consensus that they were not interested in a piece meal contract, for our supervisors and staff it only keeps working if it is a complete contract. While the contract will need to be with WPHS in 2022 they don't see the remainder of the board seeing it differently.

G. Joint Board Meetings:

The director gave the board an organizational chart for Grant County today, Pope County today, and Western Prairie as it is currently planned. The board asked the director to please keep it updated and bring it to the board when we look to make changes and add positions.

H. Medical Assistance Enrollment Data

The director gave the board statewide and local information on enrollment into public health care, or medical assistance. It went up quite a bit in 2020, which isn't unusual if unemployment is high. Thus far in 2021 it appears to be flat and not still increasing.

I. Fiscal Officer Position:

The director, county attorney, and human resources director brought the updated grading and job description to the board for approval. It recently came to our attention that the fiscal officer was doing far more than was in her current job description. We discussed that fact that we knew fiscal itself may be rated too low but weren't necessarily aware of the specific things that our fiscal officer is doing. We aligned the position to fit what we know Western Prairie will need and to be reflective of the duties the position is currently doing. We discussed how we will go through this process for the rest of the positions and what our plan is to merge the two pay systems into one. After questions and discussion Ken Johnson made a motion to approve the re-grading of the fiscal officer to a grade 11 and move the current fiscal officer according to the union contract. The motion was seconded by Doyle Sperr and MCU

J. Potential Case Aide Position:

Human Resources, the County Attorney and the director spoke with the board about the needs we are hearing and seeing from our child protection staff. The director had a document that listed out all the concerns and work that the social workers indicated is preventing them from getting their daily work done and they feel is contributing to the overall feeling of burnout, which leads to the turnover that we have experienced in our two-county agency. The director indicated that the supervisor got information from other counties about how they handle this paperwork and it seems that most counties have one case aide for about 10 social workers and they do the things that our staff mention. The director is recommending that we consider hiring a case aide that is split 50/50 with Pope County. The director indicates she does not have a preference about who employs them or what office they come out of, but did note that we are already very short staffed in Pope and will be training three people. Grant already has a case aide job description too, so it would move quickly. The director indicates she plans to ask the Pope County board about this in their first meeting in May and then if all is approved move forward as is appropriate. After questions and discussion, Troy Johnson made a motion to approve the case aide position for child protection, contingent on Pope County's approval as well, seconded by Ken Johnson, MCU

K. Child Protection Transportation and Supervised Visitation Proposal:

The director, human resources, and county attorney gave the board a proposal to address the needs that we have for transportation and basic oversight of visits for children who are in out of home placement that our social workers are currently doing in lieu of their normal work, also causing the burnout and fatigue that the director spoke of a few minutes ago. Other counties have hired a number of "casual" employees. Employees who are not benefitted, do not have a set schedule, do not work more than an average of 13 hours a week and receives an hourly wage without benefits. They are not union members and have no standing within the union and have to pass the car seat training, pass a background check, have a valid driver's license, be able to perform some basic tasks that are in the attached job description. The pay will be determined by Baker Tilly but we believe will be commensurate with a case aide since that is who typically does these things in larger counties. The director indicates that as of late last week the social workers were spending an average of 35 hours per week total transporting and supervising visits. The board indicated they would like an initial and possibly ongoing random UA's for this position since they are not in our office and we have little interaction with them on a regular basis. Human resources indicated that she was working on that. After discussion, Bill LaValley made the motion to approve this position and allow us to move forward for hiring, seconded by Doyle Sperr, MCU

L. Senior Spotlight Article:

The director noted that the senior coordinator is back to putting articles in the paper whenever possible. The director will resume putting them in the board packet as they are published so the board is aware.

M. Western Prairie Fiscal Formula:

At the board chair's request, the director added information on the fiscal formula to the board packet. The director went over the four pages that show the options for establishing an initial fund balance and the formula and process for establishing the annual levy. The board reviewed the information and asked questions. This will be part of the ten-minute conversation in the May temporary JPA meeting and followed up in more detail in a work session before the June meeting.

N. Private Client Data:

All pertinent data was discussed.

The meeting adjourned at 4:10 pm
