

**GRANT COUNTY SOCIAL SERVICES BOARD**  
**August 17, 2021**

The regular meeting of the Grant County Human Services Board was held August 17, 2021

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

Dwight Walvatne  
Bill LaValley  
Doyle Sperr  
Ken Johnson  
Troy Johnson

**OTHERS PRESENT**

Stacy Hennen, Social Services Director  
Justin Anderson, County Attorney

Dwight Walvatne called the meeting to order at 12:23 pm

**Pledge of allegiance was done**

**APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA:** The agenda was reviewed. The director indicated that we could remove 8C. After review, Troy Johnson made a motion to approve the amended agenda, seconded by Bill LaValley, MCU

**MINUTES:** The minutes of the July 20, 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 Doyle Sperr 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. 2021 Amended Children’s Mental Health Respite Grant:

The director reviewed the amended contact from the State of Minnesota for our children’s mental health respite grant, noting that it is amended because the State increased it. After discussion, Troy Johnson made a motion to approve the agreements, seconded by Bill LaValley, MCU

B. Childcare Variance Request:

The director reviewed the child care variance request from Heidi Blume with the board. The director indicated that it is within the scope of our policy and this is a provider in good standing. The director noted that the request states that she knows she would need to ask for more days than expressed in the letter and the director noted that would be a violation of our policy and she would likely not recommend that. The board agreed that she should be aware that an extension of this variance would unlikely be approved if it violates our policy. With that caveat, Doyle Sperr made a motion to approve the variance, seconded by Bill LaValley, MCU

**OLD BUSINESS**

A. Case Counts:

The director reviewed all of the cases counts and noted the increases and decreases. Our child protection cases are down, likely because we are short staffed and are not able to take any Parent Support Outreach Cases. We discussed the intensity of the cases we have since so many of them are placements and the work that goes into placement cases.

B. First Floor Meeting Room:

The director and county attorney talked with the board about the current policy for using our 1<sup>st</sup> floor meeting space after hours. Currently it requires a county staff be present and that can limit who uses it now. The first floor is effectively locked except for that meeting room and the bathrooms so it could be used. The board discussed different options. The expressed concern for what we would do if there was any property damage or mess left. We talked about options and other meeting spaces and how they address that. The County Attorney indicated he would contact the other cities in the county and see what their policy was and report back to the board when he has that.

**NEW BUSINESS**

A. Wilkin County Contract:

The director and county attorney requested that the board revisit their decision in July to terminate the licensing contract with Wilkin County immediately. The director noted that we have several negative actions pending right now and they will require our staff’s prep time and time. The county attorney indicated that maintaining the contract through that would ensure that we get compensated for all of our time, that there is a good transfer that occurs, and that the negative actions we have get completed appropriately. Our licensor would also like to be able to offer training to any new person coming in. There was a lot of discussion on the pros and cons and after discussion Doyle Sperr made a motion to terminate the contract at the end of 2021, seconded by Ken Johnson. The motion passed with four aye’s and one nay from Commissioner Troy Johnson.

B. Childcare Recruitment:

The director gave the board an example of a child care and foster care recruitment pamphlet that Pope County did and indicated that while we would like to do something similar, we want to wait on some things until the merger so we don’t print materials with two different letter heads. The director asked the board what scope they wanted her to look at recruitment with, a small amount of funds or a more substantial amount of funds. The board noted that the childcare shortage, particularly infant childcare, is critical to economic development and growth and they are willing to consider setting a substantial sum of the American Recovery Act dollars that the county gets to this if it makes sense and the proposal seems workable. The director talked about some ideas she and her staff have been talking about and indicated we would have a plan for them soon.

C. Placement Data:

The director reviewed the June out of home placements with the board. For July we have 26 children in placement from 14 families. We are waiting on the final court date for adoption of four children from two sibling groups, and a transfer of custody to family in another case. We are ready to move the third sibling out of state to be with their other siblings that we have there as well, which brings us closer to adoption with that family. The director talked about the large sibling groups we have and how difficult it is to find permanent placements for those kids, and the issues we are having with methamphetamine use of parents. We also have three children placed because of their disability, which is the highest we have been. The director noted that in July out of home placements cost us \$42,517.42.

D. July Financial Report:

We are 58% of the way through the year. At this point in the year our expenses are at 53% and our revenues are showing 85%. That isn't accurate because with our change in staff the tax levy amount did not get entered into IFS. As a result, it looks like we're way over revenue and we are not. We are in the process of fixing that. Out of home placements are slightly over budget but the services we use are holding steady or under budget so that helps. Overall we appear to be on track with the exception of out of home placements.

E. Joint Powers Board Update:

The director reviewed with the board the next steps now that the joint powers agreement is fully executed by both counties. In September we will have an organizational meeting and we will move ahead with a multitude of issues that were on hold for this decision. We have a lot to do in the remainder of the year but we're on track with all that we know about.

F. Letter from the County Attorney:

The director gave the board the letter from the county attorney's office terminating our current staffing agreement at the end of 2021. The board asked what the plan was for managing that. The director told the board that with the merger we will be able to absorb those cases into the three workers we will have in WPHS. We won't need to add staff and should see some cost savings in that area.

G. Regional Transportation Council:

The director shared an e-mail with the board indicating that West Central has decided to discontinue that grant and they are not hosting this anymore. The director noted that we are the only region without a MNDot grant for this now, but also noted that unlike other regions, we have 4 public transportation companies in our region. This makes it harder to coordinate and collaborate.

H. Human Services Performance Management Report on Child Protection:

The director reviewed Grant County's HSPM report on the child protection measures and noted that we have a PIP in one area that's ongoing and we requested and received an extenuating circumstance on the other because COVID prevented us from moving two kids out of State to relatives, thus putting our relative placement numbers too low. The director talked with the board about her overall concerns with how these measures work for smaller counties and how biased it appears to be for small counties. The director has had two conversations with DHS in addition to several last year and they indicated last year they were going to re look at the small numbers formula but they still have not. The director also showed the board the maps that demonstrate clearly that small counties, border counties, and counties with a lot of tribal land are disproportionately impacted by these measures and have more PIPS even though we know that our staff do really good work and perform well. The director and the board discussed it and the board asked that the director put together a document that outlines the issues with the measures so they can take it to their organizations and start the conversation. It seems like a good project for Minnesota Rural Counties. The director indicated she would do that.

I. Statewide Map of status of human services offices being open to the public:

The director showed the board the map and noted that almost all offices are again open to the public in some manner. The director will watch this for changes for informational purposes as the delta variant seems to keep spreading.

J. Ap Extender Migration:

The director gave the board a quote to migrate data from our old electronic document managing system (EDMS) Ap Extender into CaseWorks. The director indicated that we are leaving many old files in Ap Extender and are only bringing over what we need for daily work now or upcoming audits that we know we will have. Doing that reduced the quote substantially. Ap Extender's quote is \$12,500 to move 66,816 documents that total up to 603,464 pages. For our staff to do that would be impossible in many areas, we simply don't have the time. If we can't get them moved by April 2022 we will pay for another year of licenses and we lose the efficiency of our new EDMS system. The board discussed it and agreed that it is likely a time savings from the hours we would be paying staff at all ranges of our pay scale to do this. After discussion, Doyle Sperr made a motion to approve the quote from App Extender for \$12,500 for the migration of data to our new system, seconded by Troy Johnson, MCU

K. SUD-IMD County Share Letter:

The director gave the board a copy of a letter from the commissioner of human services dated August 2, 2021 indicating that they will no longer be seeking repayment from the county their share of payments that DHS sought and received from the federal government for stays at institutes for mental disease facilities (IMD) that they should not have gotten. The director reminded the board that the decision to bill for services that were not medical assistance eligible was not the county's decision, it was the State's decision. The director also reminded them that the department of human services was well aware that it was not appropriate to bill those dollars. While we're glad, we will no longer get bills for this, we were declining to pay the bills since we did not make the mistake.

L. Traverse County Contract:

The director noted that at the request of the joint board, the director talked with the Traverse County board extending an invitation for them to have someone attend the joint board meetings as an observer to see how we will operate so they can decide what they want to do in the future. Commissioner Salberg indicated an interest, so the director will send him the meeting information.

M. Private Client Data:

All pertinent data was discussed.

The meeting adjourned at 3:54pm

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