**WESTERN PRAIRIE HUMAN SERVICES BOARD MEETING**

**January 5, 2024**

The meeting of the Joint Powers Board for Western Prairie Human Services was held January 5, 2024 at the Western Prairie Human Services Office in Glenwood.

**MEMBERS PRESENT OTHERS PRESENT MEMBERS ABSENT**

Doyle Sperr Stacy Hennen, Director Paul Wildman

Paul Gremmels Kari Rude, Deputy Director/HR Director

Troy Johnson Chris Schmitz, Executive Assistant

Ken Johnson Tracy Bowman, Fiscal Supervisor

Paul Gerde Crystal Zaviska, Financial Assistance Supervisor

Bill LaValley Dwight Nelson Commissioner Traverse County

Larry Lindor Kayla Schmidt, Commissioner Traverse Cnty

Dwight Walvatne Phyliss Reller, Human Service Supervisor

Gordy Wagner

**A. Opening:**

* Chair Troy Johnson called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.
* The Pledge of Allegiance was said.
* The agenda was reviewed. With no additions to the agenda Commissioner Gerde made a motion to approve the agenda as presented, seconded by Commissioner LaValley, MCU
* Approval of the December 1, 2023 meeting minutes. After reviewing the minutes, Commissioner Lindor made a motion to approve the minutes, seconded by Commissioner Gremmels, MCU.
* A summary of the December 2023 bills was presented by the director. After discussion, Commissioner LaValley made a motion to approve the bills, seconded by Commissioner Sperr, MCU.

1. The fiscal supervisor reviewed November 2023 financial information. After questions, Commissioner Lindor made a motion to approve the financial reports, seconded by Commissioner Walvatne, MCU.

**B. CONTRACTS/AGREEMENTS**

7. **Presbyterian Family Foundation Contract**

The director reviewed a contract Presbyterian Family Foundation’s (PFF)Guardianship/Conservatorship program. They provide services to vulnerable people with no family or no appropriate family. They have been providing this service for many years for people we serve.PFF is asking for an increase in the administrative fee. For other counties they have charged a higher fee for their guardianship program, and they still will be paying a higher rate. Other counties are paying the same rate as guardianship for all time, $57.78. PFF is asking to increase the compensation to $37.03 or a 10% increase from the last contract though they would prefer $40.00 per hour. After reviewing the minutes, Commissioner Lindor made a motion to approve the contract with the 10% increase, seconded by Commissioner Gerdes, MCU.

9. **Lakeland General Contract**

The director reviewed the proposed 2024 Contracts for Lakeland Mental Health Center. Services include: 1) Emergency Services- $82,565 (no change from 2023); 2) TCM Clinical Supervision- $141.37/hr (2023 rate was $138.37/hr); 3) Community Support Program- $76.90/hr (2023 rate was $75.40/hr); 4) Children's Therapeutic Support services- $76.90 (2023 rate was $75.40/hr); 5) Pre-petition Screenings- $105.00/hr (2023 rate was $103.00/hr.); CSP expenditures were $1,347.24 in 2022, and $3,233.30 to date in 2023. Clinical Supervision costs in 2022 were $20,865.56, and to date in 2023 are 18,949. After reviewing the minutes, Commissioner Wagner made a motion to approve the contract, seconded by Commissioner LaValley MCU.

10. **Lakeland Contract MH Professional**

The director presented the Lakeland Contract for 2024 Contract with Lakeland Mental Health Center for the services of Dawn Gehrke, a Western Prairie employee, for School Based Mental Health Services. The contract amount is $60,000 over 2024, or $15,000 per quarter. This is the same amount as the past two years. The director noted that our staff has indicated that they may retire in 2024. If that happens, we can terminate the contract with 30 days-notice. After reviewing the contract, Commissioner Gerdes made a motion to approve the contract, seconded by Commissioner Wagner, MCU.

11. **Lutheran Social Service Contract**

The director reviewed the contract between Lutheran Social Services and Western Prairie Human Services. Western Prairie Human Services is required to pay for guardianship for all persons who have an order of Informa Pauperis. When Western Prairie Human Services finds the need to pursue guardianship–family and friends are first choice. Western Prairie Human Services only contract when there are no other safe persons to do the job. The rates varied in the past from $55.50 to $95.00. Western Prairie Human Services will now be paying a set rate of $61.00 per hour which is what they ask of counties. After reviewing the contract, Commissioner Lindor made a motion to approve the contract, seconded by Commissioner Gremmels, MCU.

12. **Prairie Community Services**

The director went over the terms of a contract with Prairie Community Services for to provide Community Support Services to adult residents in Pope County (none typically in Grant) with Serious and Persistent Mental Illness. Community Support Services is requesting a rate of $44.55/hr, an increase from $39.15/hr, which had been unchanged since 2011. This new rate continues to compare favorably to the 2024 rates of other providers such as Lakeland Mental Health Center ($76.90) or Vikingland CSP ($100.00/hr). Community Support Services expenditures from Prairie Community Services in 2022 were $10,727.11 and $8,485.83 to date in 2023. Factors involved in referrals include the option of male staff and staff availability. For the past couple years, only two clients have received this service from this provider. After reviewing the contract, Commissioner Gerde made a motion to approve the contract, seconded by Commissioner LaValley, MCU.

13. **Child Support Coop Agreement**

The Financial Assistance Supervisor discussed IV-D Child Support Cooperative Agreement that is renewed every 2 years with the agency, State, County attorney’s and with Pope and Grant County Sherrif’s department. The cooperative agreement is to establish and maintain written Cooperative Arrangements between the County and other county officials who have a statutory obligation pursuant to 45 C.F.R., section 302.34 to cooperate with the State and County as necessary to provide services required under the IV-D Program in compliance with this Cooperative Agreement. After reviewing the contract, Commissioner Sperr made a motion to approve the contract, seconded by Commissioner Lindor, MCU.

**C. OLD BUSINESS**

14. **Out of Home Placement List**

The director reviewed the out of home placement list for November, 2023. For the month of November, we have 23 kids in placement. At the end of October, we had 25 kids in placements with a cost of $28,057.20. Our newer placements are older kids, and those kids typically have higher costs because of their age and sometimes their circumstance in entering placement. We placed a sibling group of 2 that are very high needs. One has reunified, the other is unlikely to reunify and the parents in the case are highly combative. We have several kids we are working on permanency with, 7 transfer of custody’s and one adoption are in process. We continue to have a sibling group of 6 in a trial home visit. We did win our appeal on that; we are waiting to see if the other county appeals the result. With our trial home visits we have 17 kids in active placement. Our voluntary mental health placement is about half of our overall cost of out of home placements. That child turns 18 in 2024 and will be discharged at that time. There is no option for 18-21 for that child.

15. **Case Counts**

The Financial Assistance Supervisor discussed the Child Support numbers. Child Support continue to decrease as a result of cleaning up cases and emancipations. Child Care Assistance is projected to spend 61.4% of our funding this year. This is an increase from the 35.1% projection calculated in march. As you see throughout the year, the case numbers don’t change much, but at least one family was approved with 5 children who qualified. This plays a large role in our projection in comparison to case counts. This plays a large role in our projection in comparison to case counts. MA-EPD Medical Assistance for Employed Persons with a Disability no longer have an asset test. This is great news. SNAP/MFIP/DWP/MSA/GA/Housing Support: Maplewood Manor in Elbow Lake now accepts the Elderly Waiver (EW) and is registered to accept Housing Support as well. We are calling our folks who reside there encouraging them to apply if they are below the $10,000 asset limit for Housing Support and $3,000 for EW. The lead Adult EW and Supervisor met with Crystal from Maplewood Manor and provided informational flyers and applications for the facility to distribute as well. This was a long-term goal for the adult lead worker. Our SNAP and DWP numbers increased and the reapplications make for more work but the teams are doing great. The director talked about the areas on the social services side that are high right now, child protection and children’s mental health are among them. Child protection is very high right now and very busy. That is something that changes month to month.

16. **Personnel/Hiring update**

The deputy director discussed that the agency currently has one child protection social worker position open at the Glenwood site. The agency has also received a retirement notice for a social services supervisor. The retirement date has been set for July 31, 2024. The agency is seeking approval to hire the position as soon as possible to help with the transition. After discussion, Commissioner Ken Johnson made a motion to approve hiring this position immediately, seconded by Commissioner Walvatne, MCU.

**D.** **New Business:**

17.  **Region IV Letter**

The deputy director discussed Region IV fiscal information letter. Western Prairie Human Service serves as the Fiscal host, and as the fiscal host there is a fiduciary responsibility to ensure that the spending of the grant is within audit boundaries and meets all auditing standards as well as meeting the grant requirements.

18. **Employee Sick and Safe Time**

The deputy directory discussed a new policy regarding Sick and Safe Time. Sick and safe time is paid leave employers must provide to employees in Minnesota that can be used for certain reasons, including when an employee is sick, to care for a sick family member or to seek assistance if an employee or their family member has experienced domestic abuse, sexual assault or stalking. An employee is eligible for sick and safe time if they work at least 80 hours in a year for an employer in Minnesota; and are not an independent contractor. Temporary and part-time employees are eligible for sick and safe time. Sick and safe time requirements will not apply to building and construction industry employees who are represented by a building and construction trades labor organization if a valid waiver of these requirements is provided in a collective bargaining agreement. After reviewing the minutes, Commissioner Wagner made a motion to approve the policy change, seconded by Commissioner Lindor, MCU.

19. **CP Annual Report**

The director explained that Western Prairie Human Services would like the ability to show an annual report of child protection unit. WPHS, collectively as a board, management, and staff, did a lot of work to get us where we are and we feel like overall we are in a good place. WPHS are serving people well, starting to engage more in the communities, building ties, and building partnerships within each county. WPHS staff have done a fantastic job and the board has been supportive and helpful the whole way.

20. **Clay County**

The director discusses the data breach in Clay County and where we’re at. All letters for our agency have went out and we did not get any calls. We were fortunate that it was only about 40 letters that we had to send out.

21.**Wage Study**

The director and deputy director discussed turnover with the board regarding some positions that have had higher turnover. We looked at how we compare in pay to our region with some regional data for 2023.  The board discussed what options we feel are present to us.  After discussion, Commissioner Lindor made a motion to contract with David Drown, per our last review of vendors, to create all new job descriptions, seconded by Commissioner LaValley, MCU.

Meeting adjourned- 11:45

**Report from Board Appointments:**

The meeting was adjourned by Chairman Troy Johnson at 11:45 a.m.

A. Lakeland Mental Health Center………………. K. Johnson/Gerde

B. Horizon Community Health Board…………….. Sperr/Walvatne/Lindor/Wagner

C. Prime West Health CBP………………………… Wagner/K Johnson/T. Johnson/Lindor

D. West Central Communities Action, Inc. ……… K Johnson/Gremmels

E. Agency on Aging………………………………….. Lindor/LaValley

F. Child Protection Pre-Placement………………. . T. Johnson/Gremmels

G. Rainbow Rider …………………………………….. LaValley/Walvatne/Gerde/

H. R4S Governing and Executive Board………….. K. Johnson/Wildman

I. Child and Youth Council………………………….. Sperr/Wagner

J. WPHS Personnel Committee……………………… Lindor/Wildman/Sperr/T. Johnson

K. WPHS Executive Committee………………………. T. Johnson/Walvatne/Gremmels

l. WPHS Finance Committee………………………... Gerde/Lindor/LaValley/K. Johnson

M. WPHS Safety Committee…………………………. Sperr/Wildman

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Board Chair Board Secretary