**WESTERN PRAIRIE HUMAN SERVICES BOARD MEETING**

**February 2, 2024**

The meeting of the Joint Powers Board for Western Prairie Human Services was held February 2, 2024 at the Western Prairie Human Services Office in Elbow Lake.

**MEMBERS PRESENT OTHERS PRESENT MEMBERS ABSENT**

Doyle Sperr Stacy Hennen, Director Gordy Wagner

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

Paul Wildman Dwight Nelson, Traverse County Commissioner

Larry Lindor

Dwight Walvatne

Bill LaValley

**A. Opening:**

1. Chair Troy Johnson called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.
2. The Pledge of Allegiance was said.
3. Election of Officers
   1. Chair: Troy Johnson called for nominations for the 02/24-02/25 period. Commissioner Larry Lindor nominated Commissioner Troy Johnson for Chair, seconded by Commissioner Sperr. Nominations were called for two more times with no further nominations, MCU.
   2. Vice Chair: Commissioner Troy Johnson called for nominations for Vice Chair. Commissioner Dwight Walvante nominated Commissioner Paul Gremmels as vice chair, seconded by Commissioner Larry LaValley. Nominations were called for two more times, with no further nominations MCU.
   3. Executive Member: Commissioner Troy Johnson called for nominations. Commissioner Larry Lindor nominated Commissioner Paul Gerde for the executive committee, seconded by Commissioner Doyle Sperr. Nominations were called for two more times, with no further nominations, MCU.
4. The agenda was reviewed. There are two additional items added to the agenda that need further approval. See item 23 and 24 in the minutes. Commissioner Gerde made a motion to approve the agenda as presented, seconded by Commissioner Wildman, MCU
5. Approval of the January 5, 2023 meeting minutes. After reviewing the minutes, Commissioner Lindor made a motion to approve the minutes, seconded by Commissioner Walvatne, MCU.
6. A summary of the January 2024 bills was presented by the director. After discussion, Commissioner Wildman made a motion to approve the bills, seconded by Commissioner LaValley, MCU.
7. The fiscal supervisor reviewed December 2023 financial information. After questions, Commissioner LaValley made a motion to approve the financial reports, seconded by Commissioner Gremmels, MCU.

**B. CONTRACTS/AGREEMENTS**

8. **Qualified Individual Contract**

The director presented a contract for a qualified individual. We need a qualified individual to do an assessment if we determine a residential placement may be needed. This is primarily used for children’s mental health. We don’t have very many of these, many years we will have zero. The contract before you is an hourly rate that we pay only if we engage the service. The hourly rate is set by the State so isn’t really a negotiation. After review and discussion, Commissioner Gerde made a motion to approve the contract, seconded by Commissioner Walvatne, MCU

9. **Morris Electronic Contract**

The director presented the 2024 contract for technology support with Morris Electronics. The director noted that we pay Grant County for part of the in-person support and remote support that we receive in the same amount that we paid in 2023. This contract is for our Glenwood in person and remote support. The director noted that the terms are the same, but the in-person presence is guaranteed to be one day per week. There cost for 2024 is $55,796 which is the same as 2023. After review and discussion, Commissioner Wildman made a motion to approve the contract, seconded by Commissioner Sperr, MCU

**C. OLD BUSINESS**

9. **Out of Home Placement List**

The director reviewed the out of home placement list for the month of December. Western Prairie Human Services have our lowest number of children in placement in the past year but a higher amount in payments. In November we had 23 kids in placement, in December we have 17 kids in placement. January has been extremely busy, and we have placed several kids in January as well. WPHS has two kids in 18-21 placement, both age 19. WPHS has three kids in waivered care. One of our waivered kids entered through the child protection system. The other two will be 18 this year and will move to the adult system. There are seven in the process of permanency and there are four working towards reunification. A Child protection case is done by family, so a case can involve multiple children and parents to be seen monthly, children and adult mental health are individual client cases to be seen monthly, and disability is an individual case to be seen monthly if a child is in placement, otherwise semi- annually or annual is the requirement.

10. **Case Counts**

The director and financial assistant supervisor discussed the current case counts. The healthcare unwind is approximately 60% processed for WPHS, the team is doing a great job at processing and keeping up with their timelines. Our staff is working nights and weekends to stay up with the flow and are looking forward to when there are less deadlines and less processes. WPHS numbers are dropping in MNSURE, this results in lots of extra phone calls and further explanations. In addition, 3 of the extended deadlines have ended at the same time resulting in a more significant decrease at once, but this was expected to occur. CCAP is having a slight increase. CSO has their typical amount of case closures. SNAP is showing a slight increase and we are back to TLR (Time limited recipient) rules of which was previously known as ABAWD (Able bodied adults without dependents) This only allows 3 of 36 months for SNAP unless working 30 hours a week. This rule is based on unemployment statistics and Minnesota does not qualify to be an exempt state as our unemployment rates are below the threshold. In addition, participants would be exempt from the TLR requirements at the age of 50, now a person is not exempt until the age of 52.

11. **Personnel/Hiring update**

The deputy director discussed that the agency currently has one child protection social worker position open at the Glenwood site. The social service supervisor position is also open along with four visitation aide position.

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

12. **Update on Traverse County**

The director gave an update regarding the possible merge with Traverse county. The Executive Committee has been meeting with a small group from the Traverse County board. WPHS has had some conversation about potential timelines as well as what is needed in order to decide the future direction. This is an update to the full board from the Executive Committee conversations.

13. **WPHS Official Depository**

The director indicated that we need to appoint official depositories for the next 12 months for Western Prairie Human Services. For 2024 the director proposed all banks located in Pope and Grant Counties. After review and discussion, Commissioner Lindor made a motion to approve, seconded by Commissioner LaValley. MCU

14. **WPHS Meeting Dates**

The director presented a schedule of official Western Prairie Human Services Board Meetings that included date, time, and location and continued to be on the first Friday of every month with the same rotation of locations. The schedule went through February of 2024. There was a motion to move July 5 meeting to July 12th. After review, Commissioner Sperr made a motion to approve the schedule as presented, seconded by Commissioner Gremmels, MCU

15.**Per Diam Rates 2024**

The director noted that in 2023 the board per diem was set at $100 per meeting with mileage paid at the current IRS rate. The director requested that the board decide if they want to make a change in that or keep it the same for 2024. Commissioner Gerde made a motion to continue with the same per diem for Western Prairie board meetings and committee meetings, $100 per meeting and whatever the current IRS rate of mileage is at the time of the meeting, seconded by Commissioner Wildman MCU

16.**WPHS Newspaper**

The director discussed continuing services with Grant County Herald and Pope County Tribune the official newspapers for Western Prairie Human Services. After review, Commissioner LaValley made a motion to make the Grant County Herald and the Pope County Tribune Western Prairie Human Service’s official Newspapers, seconded by Commissioner Walvante, MCU

17. **Committee’s WPHS Pays for Per Diam**

The director recommended for both fiscal and commissioners to determine annually what committees we pay a per diem and/or mileage for and to clarify if we are the payer of last resort or if a commissioner may choose to submit to WPHS if our per diem rate is higher than the agency or entity pays. After review, Commissioner LaValley made a motion to approve the list of agencies we provide a per diem rate to with the modifications as discussed, seconded by Commissioner Wildman, MCU

18. **Personnel Request 1**

The director discussed the hiring of an Eligibility worker. The personnel committee is recommending hiringa new Eligibility worker using our unwind dollars at 40 hour per week with the $75,000 the agency has left with the unwind money to accommodate the extra workload and allow the unit to specialize and provide future opportunities to bring additional services to our communities. The director noted that the unwind dollars, along with our federal match, will last us 2.5-3 years of salary. Once we have expended those those funds we will assess the landscape and decide if we decrease via attrition or if we look at other programs that we have talked about bringing in house. After review, Commissioner Wildman made a motion to approve, seconded by Commissioner Walvatne, MCU

19. **Personnel Request 2**

The deputy director discussed that Western Prairie Human Service would like to offer employees in income maintenance unit to either stay at 37.5 hours per week or move to 40 hours per week. This would be offered initially and then again yearly at open enrollment. Once an employee moves from 37.5 hours per week to 40 hours per week they may not revert back absent written agreement of the employer, per the current union contract. After review, Commissioner Lindor made a motion to approve, seconded by Commissioner Wildman, MCU

20. **Mental Health Annual Report**

The director explained that Western Prairie Human Services would like the ability to show an annual report of mental health 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.

21. **State and Federal Child Support Performance Measures**

The director discussed the state and federal child support report for their 2023 calendar year. Western Prairie board heard about the federal measures, our local, regional and state performance and was given definitions and explanations for all the measures and information about our program and how it works.

22. **Personnel Request 3**

The director discussed a desire to speak with the union about a short-term solution to administrative time banks that are over 40 because of our high caseloads over the past month and our struggle to keep them at 40 hours right now. The director noted that it would be short term and we could define it any way we would like. After discussion, Commissioner Gerde made a motion to approve, seconded by Commissioner Sperr, MCU. The parameters the board discussed was allowing people to go to 56 hours until Memorial Day and requiring they get back to 40 by Labor Day, to utilize what is generally a quieter time in our caseloads.

23. **Rainbow Rider**

Commissioner Gerde discussed that he felt it would only be proper for Pope and Grant Counties to reimburse WPHS for the capitol contributions for 2022 and 2023 because they want it to be clear that it is the county not WPHS purchasing the capitol investments. If a motion like this passes the director will reach out to both counties and ask them to discuss it at the individual board meetings. Commissioner Gerde made a motion to approve, seconded by Commissioner LaValley, MCU

**Report from Board Appointments:**

The meeting was adjourned by Chairman Troy Johnson at 11:50 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/Lindor

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