

**WESTERN PRAIRIE HUMAN SERVICES BOARD MEETING**  
**October 7, 2022**

The meeting of the Joint Powers Board for Western Prairie Human Services was held October 7, 2022 at the Grant County Offices, first floor

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

Larry Lindor  
Nan Haggerty  
Troy Johnson  
Ken Johnson  
Bill LaValley  
Cody Rogahn  
Paul Gerde  
Dwight Walvatne

**OTHERS PRESENT**

Stacy Hennen, Western Prairie Director  
Tracy Bowman, Fiscal Manager  
Kari Rude, Deputy Director, HR  
Crystal Zaviska, Supervisor  
Ben Schulz, Social Services Supervisor

**MEMBERS ABSENT**

Doyle Sperr  
Gordy Wagner

**A. OPENING:**

1. Chair Cody Rogahn called the meeting to order at 8:58am.
2. The Pledge of Allegiance was said
3. The agenda was reviewed, Commissioner Haggerty made a motion to approve the agenda, seconded by Commissioner Gerde, MCU
4. Approval of the September Minutes: After reviewing the minutes, Commissioner Lindor made a motion to approve the minutes, seconded by Commissioner Troy Johnson, MCU
5. A summary of bills was presented by the director. After review of the bills, Commissioner Haggerty made a motion to approve the bills, seconded by Commissioner LaValley, MCU
  - a. The fiscal manager reviewed the financial statements and explained the graphs and data. There was additional data about where we are for expenses and revenues. At the end of August, we are 67% through the year and our revenues are at 57% our expenses are at 51%. The fiscal manager and director talked about the ongoing difficulty we are having billing some of our services. DHS is working closely with us and think they have a solution so hopefully we will catch up on that soon. We will be resubmitting Q1 and Q2 reports with more detail. That will give us a more accurate picture. The fiscal manager went over the graphs she has created and asked the board if there were other ones they wanted to see. She noted that there are others she is working on but wants to make sure they get what they need. The commissioners were satisfied with the information they are getting. After discussion and review Commissioner Haggerty made a motion to approve the financial reports, seconded by Commissioner Troy Johnson, MCU

**B. CONTRACTS**

**6. Western Prairie Foster Care Transportation Agreements:**

The board discussed the nature of the transportation agreements and the director asked if the board wants to see every year or if they want the director to approve them. While none of them commit us to money there is the potential for it with the kids that we serve. We discussed how it works when a child goes into placement and needs transportation and how we typically take care of it. The board discussed it and indicated they would like to see them all but in one packet and they can approve them all in one motion. After review, Commissioner Troy Johnson made a motion to approve all of the school transportation agreements included below, seconded by Commissioner LaValley, MCU

- a. Ashby Public Schools After discussion,
- b. Glacial Hills Elementary School
- c. Herman Norcross School
- d. Minnewaska Area School
- e. West Central Area School

**7. Agreement of Provisional services**

The director noted that we currently have a contract with Ray of Hope and this would be an expansion of that current contract in order to provide some training to our child protection unit. The director talked about what we already receive and what is involved in the additional services. The costs for this would be covered by the staff's current training budget. The training should be wrapped up this year. After review and discussion, Commissioner Gerde made a motion to approve the contract, seconded by Commissioner Walvatne, MCU

8. **Lutheran Social Services**

The director reviewed the proposed 2023 contract with LSS for intensive in-home services. The director noted that the only change is the rates and the regional director and I sat down and spent some time talking about this. They are requesting a significant rate change for a couple of reasons. First, they are struggling to keep staff and have had to pay those more to get their experienced staff to stay and to recruit new staff. The second reason we talked about is equalizing to make sure all their counties are paying the same rate. Some were higher and some were lower. We also do not pay for administrative costs or for cancellations, so they need to make sure they meet their bottom line. The director talked about the service they provide and the fact that it's mostly nights and weekends and that we do not have anyone else who consistently provides this service. The in-home rate went from \$93.68/ hour to \$98/hour and family resource services went from \$72.83/hour to \$74.28. The board reviewed and discussed the rates and services. After discussion, Commissioner Gerde made a motion to approve the 2023 contract for Lutheran Social Services, seconded by Commissioner Troy Johnson, MCU

9. **Board Ratification with Tri Minn**

The director talked about the Integrated Financial Services (IFS) That Tri Minn provides. We have been receiving and paying for this under Grant County. We have been paying the same amount proposed here. Tri Minn was not aware we were our own joint powers so this is just clean up to get things on track. We also get notices of trainings and changes when we have our own contract with them. The board reviewed the proposed ratification from Tri Minn and their host contract which we would be operating under. After discussion, Commissioner Troy Johnson made a motion to approve the ratification, seconded by Commissioner Lindor, MCU

C. **OLD BUSINESS**

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

The director reviewed the agencies out of home placement list. She noted that at the end of August WPHS had 28 kids in placement, one more than the previous month. Three of the kids on this list were only partial month because they were adopted mid-August, and we also completed a transfer of custody in August. They're on the list if we paid for them at all. By the end of August, we had 24 kids in placement. We have five waived placements and three 18-21 placements with one aging out next year. We have five adoption or transfer cases open now that we are working on. The board asked if we could change the report to separate out or distinctly show waived kids, 18-21 kid, adoptive kids, and kids working on reunification and group them that way on the sheet. The director indicated we could do that.

11. **Case Counts:**

The director reviewed the case counts and asked if there were questions on the summary she gave in the cover sheet. The director noted the higher numbers for child welfare and indicated how important it is to get that position filled, both the one in Elbow Lake and Traverse County's position. Questions were asked and answered.

12. **Personnel/Hiring Updates**

The director updated the board on the positions just filled and the internal hires and shifts that had been made. At this time, we have one open position, a child protection social worker in the Elbow Lake office. We had a staff in Glenwood leave to go to the county she lives in and one of the Elbow Lake workers moved to the Glenwood office/ The director asked if they would like to meet new staff, both those hired so far this year and then on an ongoing basis. The board liked that and said they wanted to put names to faces and for the staff to know who they are. In November we will bring the staff new to the Glenwood office this year to the meeting and in December we will bring the staff new to that office this year to the meeting and then we will do it on a regular basis.

13. **Supplemental Benefits for 2023**

The Deputy Director/Human Resources Director spoke with the board about dental rates and plans for 2023. We are about to begin open enrollment for 2023 and our dental has gone up quite a bit. Our broker is recommending we move to another plan instead of asking our staff to pay the increase. The board reviewed the plan and after discussion Commissioner Troy Johnson made a motion to move to the Met Life \$1500 plan for 2023, seconded by Commissioner Haggerty, MCU

C. **NEW BUSINESS:**

14. **Western Prairie Local Advisory Council Appointments:**

The social services supervisor for mental health and chemical dependency spoke with the board about the new jointly formed Local Advisory Council that the board approved last month. He talked about the future plans and ideas that he and the staff on the LAC have for it moving forward and asked the board to appoint the following people to the LAC: Jodi Turner, Amanda Weigand, DeeAnn Miller, Keshia Anderson, Sharon Weber, Melissa Ryks, Lorri Ibach, Jean Ohman, and Melissa Frieler. Theresa Baumann, Connie Bullock, and Stephanie Aashess. After discussion Commissioner Lindor made a motion to appoint all those who requested it to the LAC, seconded by Commissioner Gerde, MCU

15. **Purchases for Glenwood Building:**

The director and deputy director went over some extra purchases needed for the Glenwood building that we learned of after we moved in. The director indicated that she does not have it budgeted and there is not permission for her from the board to approve unbudgeted things such as this so she brought it to the board. The board discussed both the purchases and what they wanted to allow the director to approve. After discussion there were two motions made:

- Commissioner Gerde made a motion to approve the proposed purchases for the building as laid out in the board packet, seconded by Commissioner Troy Johnson, MCU
- Commissioner Troy Johnson made a motion that the director be allowed to purchase unbudgeted items that are under \$5,000 with a follow up report to the board, seconded by Commissioner Haggerty, MCU

16. **Biennial Health Care Access Plan:**

The Eligibility supervisor talked with the board about updates that we want to make in our Biennial Healthcare Access Plan. She reviewed the proposed changes and why we are asking to make them. This plan defines how we provide payment for medical assistance mileage and what we allow or don't allow. Our changes propose that people may get their meals in gas stations since many of the gas stations in our area do have multiple options and eliminating the mileage limit for meals. There is a timeframe already noted that addresses that. These changes have been approved by DHS and now need board approval. After review, Commissioner Lindor made a motion to approve the plan as amended and approved by DHS, seconded by Commissioner LaValley, MCU

17. **Childcare Licensing Variance Requests:**

- a. Jessie's Daycare is requesting a variance request that does not meet our variance policy for a couple of reasons. The request is far longer than we allow for timelines. We allow 60 days in our policy and this is for 7 months and is almost every day. It also puts her with a lot of very young, small children at once. The other factor is she already has a variance for a dual license. The board discussed this at length, recognizing the difficulties in finding childcare and the difficulty in finding it for infants. The director agreed with that but also noted that we have thus far always followed our policy. Our policy is the same that Grant County had and Pope County had, and it follows the state recommendations for capacity and timelines. The director also reminded the board of their inherent liability when they allow a variance and noted that these guidelines are put in place for safety. The question was asked if we are stricter than North or South Dakota. The director noted that Minnesota is actually trying to come into compliance with Federal law and is not quite there yet. Our guidelines and regulations are following, and not more restrictive than, federal law. The director recommended not approving the variance. There was robust discussion on this and empathy from the commissioners on the realities of finding childcare. After discussion, Commissioner Troy Johnson made a motion to deny the variance, seconded by Commissioner Haggerty. Motion was approved with Commissioner LaValley voting against it,
- b. Megan Lardy requested a childcare variance that does meet our policy if she is operating at a C2 level of care. She is licensed to do C2 and C1 and is willing to function as a C2. The difference is the make up of her kids and how many she has in each category. The variance also meets the timelines that are laid out in our policy. After discussion, Commissioner Lindor made a motion to approve the variance with her operating as a C2 provider, seconded by Commissioner LaValley, MCU

18. **Federal Award Procurement Policy:**

The director reviewed and explained a policy on federal procurement that we learned is necessary for us to have when we completed the county audits this year. I have some questions about how we do professional contracts since we know that we don't have to procure professional services in the same manner. The director and fiscal manager have a meeting scheduled to go over this with the State Auditor's office. The board reviewed the policy and Commissioner Troy Johnson made a motion to approve the policy, seconded by Commissioner Haggerty, MCU

19. **2023 Holidays**

The Deputy Director reviewed the 2023 calendar for holidays and asked the board to approve it. The board reviewed it and asked questions. Commissioner LaValley made a motion to approve it, seconded by Commissioner Gerde, MCU

20. **Prepaid Medical Assistance Plan (PMAP) Procurement Update:**

The director indicated that we received notice that who our plans are is now public. We have two plans for children and family, which is the category most of our people fall into. The two plans are PrimeWest Health and Blue Plus. We have the same two plans for Minnesota Senior Health Options (MSHO) and have PrimeWest Health as our single source for Special Needs Basic Care (SNBC). The director indicated that we did get PrimeWest as the default and this is a critical thing since the majority of our people tend to default into a plan because they don't choose. The board asked questions and discussed the potential steps forward for PrimeWest Health.

**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 11:26 am

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Board Chair

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Board Secretary