**WESTERN PRAIRIE HUMAN SERVICES BOARD MEETING**

**March 4, 2022**

The meeting of the Joint Powers Board for Western Prairie Human Services was held March 4, 2022 at the Pope County Courthouse

**MEMBERS PRESENT OTHERS PRESENT MEMBERS ABSENT**

Dwight Walvatne Stacy Hennen, Western Prairie Director Larry Lindor

Bill LaValley Kari Rude, Deputy Director

Troy Johnson Dave Salberg, Traverse County Commissioner

Ken Johnson

Doyle Sperr

Cody Rogahn

Paul Gerde

Gordy Wagner

Nan Haggerty

1. The Chairman, Commissioner Rogahn, called the meeting to order at 9:02am.
2. The Pledge of Allegiance was said
3. The agenda was reviewed. Commissioner Gerde made a motion to approve the agenda, seconded by Commissioner Troy Johnson, MCU
4. Approval of the February Minutes: After reviewing the minutes and noting some non-content errors, Commissioner Haggerty made a motion to approve the minutes, seconded by Commissioner Troy Johnson, MCU
5. The director reviewed a summary of bills that were presented. The director indicated that we are waiting for the counties to close out their books and send us a final accounting. We hope to have a budget next month. After review of the summary of expenses Commissioner Haggerty made a motion to approve the bills, seconded by Commissioner LaValley, MCU.

1. **Contracts:**
2. **Lutheran Social Services (LSS) Amendment to the Contract:**

The director reviewed the amendment which is to add Collaborative Intensive Bridging Services (CIBS) to our current contract with LSS for Intensive In-Home therapeutic services. The director noted that we have been doing this program for the past two to three years but the things that are not covered by medical assistance had previously been covered by the System of Care (SOC) grant that we got in collaboration with Clay and Ottertail Counties. That has helped pay for a lot of the staff training for both LSS and us over the past few years. We are now looking to add other counties to our programming to help spread out the cost of things that we haven’t historically paid, like clinical supervision. The rate for this is the same as our 2022 contract with LSS for intensive in home which is $93.64/hour for intensive in home, master’s level, and $72.83/hour for family resources, a bachelors level of care. After discussion Commissioner Haggerty made a motion to approve the contract addendum, seconded by Commissioner LaValley, MCU

1. **Old Business:**
2. **Out of Home Placement List**:

The director reviewed the agency’s out of home placement list. She noted that on February 15th WPHS had 30 kids in placement, down one from the previous month. Of our children in placement we no longer have any children in a residential placement, they have either reunified or moved to waivered placement. Both of our larger sibling groups are in a permanent placement. We are preparing a transfer of custody for one and awaiting the Department of Human Services (DHS) return of our adoption paperwork for the other group. We completed an adoption this week and have a few more that may have left placement by next month.

1. **Case Counts:**

The director noted that our human services cases stayed relatively stable, with a minor increase that was spread across programs. We increased our child support cases by 4 cases and our child care assistance cases are up by one. Where we saw a startling increase is in our income maintenance cases. We have 110 more healthcare cases, 16 additional MFIP (Minnesota Family Investment Program) cases and 168 additional SNAP (supplemental nutrition assistance program) or food support cases. The director noted that this is only approved cases, not applications that we got in and processed and denied for lack of eligibility. The director noted that it is the supervisor’s belief that this is a result of DHS changing their online application from Apply MN to an app called MN Benefits. It has caused a significant increase in cases throughout most counties. The director noted that if these increases continue we are going to have to seriously look at staff capacity. The other issue at play is that none of our new staff, within the past two years, know how to do healthcare renewals. When those begin again there is going to be a learning curve for a lot of our staff.

1. **Personnel/Hiring Updates**

The director told the board that we currently have three positions open and we need to speak with them about two of the offers we would like to make and we have another personnel request as well.

* The Deputy Director/Human Resources spoke with the board about the eligibility case aide that we are hiring in the Glenwood office. We have a very experienced person interested and we are looking to offer the best package we can. The deputy director noted that the scale on the Pope County scale and we were starting people at step 5 because of the scale on the Grant Contract side and at the advice of Baker Tilly who did our new pay scale. Because of her experience, which we detailed, we are asking to start our case aide at step 9, $21.61 per hour and would like permission to add some human resources data tasks to that position and have it rated with that in mind and bring back to personnel and the board. After discussion and questions, Commissioner Rogahn made a motion to approve the offer and having the duties added and having it rated with those in mind, seconded by Commissioner Walvatne, MCU
* The Deputy Director talked about a candidate for the open child protection position in the Elbow Lake site and an applicant we have who left Pope County last year to try new opportunities. That person has applied and is interested in coming back to WPHS. She has 9 years of direct experience and was a lead worker for us before leaving. She is aware we do not have any lead worker or supervisory positions open and is interested in the social worker position we have in the Elbow Lake site. We requested permission to offer up to step 7 as a starting wage, $30.42/hour. The board discussed it and Commissioner Haggerty made a motion to approve us offering up to step 7 of the Grant County Social Worker scale, which is$30.42/hour, seconded by Commissioner La Valley, MCU
* The deputy director shared a request for a 12 week leave of absence for Veronica Beecher for the purpose of maternity leave. She does not qualify for FMLA (Family Medical Leave Act) because she has not been with Grant County for a year. The director noted she came to Grant County from Pope County and she does have a year combined, but she did not transfer internally she simply applied for the job and took it because she had not been with Pope an extraordinarily long time. It is our recommendation that her request be granted. After discussion, Commissioner Wagner made a motion to approve the 12 week leave of absence, seconded by Commissioner Troy Johnson, MCU

1. **New Business:**
2. **Region IV South Proposed Joint Powers Agreement amendments:**

The director reviewed the proposed changes to the Joint Powers Agreement for our Adult Mental Health Initiative Grant, operated through Region IV South for Douglas, Grant, Pope, Stevens, and Traverse Counties. The actual changes will need to be sent to each individual board and the director will do so. She wanted to review it with the board and answer any questions before doing so in case she was not present when it was reviewed. The board reviewed it, questions of the proposed changes were asked and answered, and they instructed the director to send it on to each county for their independent approval.

1. **Pope County Local Advisory Council (LAC) Appointment:**

The director reviewed a request from Mary Store to be appointed to the Pope County LAC as a member. The director reminded them that each county has a local advisory council and WPHS oversees both in our mental health unit. After discussion Commissioner Gerde made a motion to appoint Mary Store to the Pope County Local Advisory Council, seconded by Commissioner Haggerty, MCU.

1. **Human Services Performance Council (HSPM)**:

The director talked with the board about some work HSPM is doing with relation to small numbers. The director has talked with the board about the current system and how it appears that it creates disparities for counties with small numbers for several reasons. The director reviewed the document on small numbers with the board and talked about the process as it would go forward.

1. **IT Updates: Server and Security**:

The director noted that earlier this week we had transferred our server from Pope County to Grant County in accordance with the decision they made in January. The director reviewed the prep that was done and advance work to minimize the impact to staff. She noted that we had significantly more issues in one of our locations than the other and that some of our staff we incapacitated for extended times and many of our remote workers form that location were impacted as well. The director has been in close contact with Morris Electronics and he will be doing a 360 review on the process and reporting to the full board regarding the results. Morris Electronics and I have also been talking about adding KnowB4 to our e-mail server and dual authentication to enhance our overall security. When we have more information on content and cost the director will get a meeting set up with the technology committee.

1. **Inclement Weather Policy:**

The director and deputy director reviewed some proposed changes to the Western Prairie Human Services Inclement Weather Policy that would allow us some more discretion for both sited. The board reviewed the proposed changes and discussed it. The director noted that the changes were two sentences and they were highlighted. The board reviewed the policy and recommended that we remove the second sentence and the overall change be: **The Agency Director, in consultation with at least one member of the Executive Committee, may decide to close an office due to weather conditions**. After discussion Commissioner Haggerty made a motion to approve an updated policy with the addition of the above sentence, seconded by Commissioner Troy Johnson, MCU

1. **Legislative Summary:**

The director reviewed several bills and MACSSA’s (Minnesota Association of County Social Services Administrators) legislative priorities. The board asked questions and talked about current legislative action.

1. **Voice Over IP (VOIP) phones:**

The director gave the board a quote to replace all of the phones in the Glenwood Site. She noted that before the pandemic the State had notified counties of their intention to discontinue certain models of the VOIP phones that those who are on the State phone system use. Both Grant and Pope Counties are on the State phone system. In 2020 Grant County upgraded all of their phones with that in mind. Pope County had not done that yet and the phones in our Glenwood site will need to be replaced, this year. The director indicated that the attached quote was for phones and key expansion modules, which are necessary for the front desk to have. She estimates that we will need a maximum of 40 phones at $327.11/phone and 2 of the expansion modules at $365.29/module. The maximum this will cost us is $15,662. Before ordering them the director is talking with Morris Electronics about some staff’s desire to not have a desk phone and instead use only their county issued cell phone for a phone or to use only JABER, which would not require a desk phone since it goes through their computer. Once she has a final count of those things within both offices we will possibly move phones from Elbow Lake to Glenwood and not have to order so many. This is the maximum we will need. After discussion, Commissioner Troy Johnson made a motion approving phone purchases of up to $15,662 after an assessment of agency needs, seconded by Commissioner LaValley, MCU

1. **Closed Session for the purpose of union negotiations:**

At 10:55am Commissioner Haggerty made a motion to close the meeting to the public for the purpose of discussing union negotiations, seconded by Commissioner Dwight Walvatne, MCU

At 11:22am Commissioner Haggerty made a motion to open the closed meeting, seconded by Commissioner LaValley, MCU

**Report from Board Appointments:**

1. Lakeland Mental Health Center……………………… K. Johnson/Haggerty
2. Horizon Community Health Board……… …………...Sperr/Walvatne/Lindor/Wagner
3. PrimeWest Health County Based Purchasing…………Wagner/K. Johnson/T. Johnson
4. West Central Community Action INC……………….. Rogahn/K. Johnson
5. Agency on Aging……………………………………. Lindor/LaValley
6. Child Protection Pre-Placement…………………….. T. Johnson/Haggerty
7. Rainbow Rider………………………………………. LaValley/Walvatne/Gerde/Rogahn
8. R4S Governing and Executive Board………………. K. Johnson/Rogahn

The meeting was adjourned by Chairman Rogahn. At 11:41 am

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Board Chair Board Secretary