

**WINNEBAGO COUNTY
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES**

PUBLIC HEARING

DATE: Thursday, June 25, 2015

LOCATION: Neenah Human Services Building

TIME: 8:30 a.m. to 9:30 a.m.

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Jerry Finch, Jim Koziczkowski, Ron Kuehl, Larry Lautenschlager, Mike Norton, Rob Paterson, Harold Singstock, and Tom Widener

BOARD MEMBERS EXCUSED: Donna Lohry

STAFF PRESENT: Bill Topel, Ellen Shute, Tom Saari, Mary Krueger, Leo Podoski, Ann Kriegel, Gina Vanden Branden, and Dorothy De Grace

Jim Koziczkowski, chairperson of the Department of Human Services Board opened the hearing at 8:30 a.m. by welcoming those present in the audience and introducing the Board members and staff who were present. Jim explained that the intent of the public hearing is to provide an opportunity for the public to comment on programs funded by the Department of Human Services for residents of Winnebago County who are affected by developmental disabilities, chemical dependency or mental illness, and on the financial and social service programs available through the Department. Jim reviewed the guidelines for the hearing.

The following information is testimony given:

Testimony given by Paul Eisen: Paul is a County Board Supervisor. He complimented the employees of the Human Services Department who are providing a safety net to our community. He pointed out several budget items for the Board's review: 1) public service revenues have decreased from the 2015 budget to the proposed 2016 budget by 4.9% or \$112,515; 2) client cost shares in Behavioral Health have decreased by 13.8% or \$40,000; and in Child Welfare the client cost shares decreased by 8.5% or \$20,000; 3) community residential service contracts in Behavioral Health shows about \$750,000 being spent in facilities outside of Winnebago County; for Child Welfare the amount is \$1.25 million; and \$750,000 is being spent for Child Foster Homes outside the county. Paul asked the Board to scrutinize these items at the appropriate time.

Lori Hill: Lori is the Executive Director of Friendship Place, which is a mental health outreach facility serving individuals with severe and persistent mental illness. She thanked the Board for its past support, which allowed them to open up an Oshkosh facility to serve more people. With the opening of that facility they are increasing the amount of services that they provide for individuals. Their two main goals are: 1) to increase the self-esteem of individuals that they serve by having them participate in their programs (they offer 35 programs per month in both locations) and 2) reduce the psychiatric hospitalizations for the individuals they serve. She asked for the continued support of the Board.

Carrie Huettl: Carrie gave testimony to what Friendship Place can do for an individual. Friendship Place has made a big difference in her life—she has made a lot of new friends who reach out to help others with their struggles. She has learned how to be her own advocate about having mental illness. She thanked the Board for its support.

Alisha Damrow: Alisha gave testimony on behalf of Friendship Place. She said that by joining Friendship Place she now has the structure in her life that she needed. She receives guidance and support from caring staff, which has increased her ability to socialize and be assertive with others in forming healthy relationships. The volunteer opportunities offered at Friendship Place have given her the chance to be an integral part of the community. She thanked the Board for its past support and for considering future funding to Friendship Place.

Mark Ziemer: Mark is the Director of Senior Services for the city of Oshkosh. He said the Oshkosh Senior Center significantly appreciates the Board's support. They serve individuals aged 50 and over by trying to embrace services around all of the dimensions of wellness. He said they have a tough road ahead with the number of older adults increasing each year. They'll need to continue balancing the dollars to find the right level of services and programs to do the most with the amount of money available. They are collaborating with the city, county and private businesses and organizations regarding transportation and other programs. Mark asked the Board to take serious consideration to recommendations that come from the Transportation Advocacy group.

With no further testimonies offered, the hearing was closed at 9:30 a.m.

Submitted by:

Dorothy De Grace, Secretary
Winnebago County Department of Human Services