

**MEETING OF THE
WINNEBAGO COUNTY
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES BOARD**

Minutes

DATE: Monday, March 1, 2021

TIME: 3:00 p.m.

PLACE: Virtual Meeting via Zoom

MEMBERS PRESENT: Larry Lautenschlager, Donna Lohry, Mike Norton, Jerry Finch, Chris Kniep, Karen Powers, Harold Singstock, Nicole Neuhoff

MEMBERS EXCUSED: Judy Wright

STAFF PRESENT: Bill Topel, Renee Soroko, Janet Rohloff, Beth Roberts, Ann Kriegel, Annette Beattie, Heather Foust, Mary Salzer, Kari Kraft and Pam Bartelt

OTHERS PRESENT: Vicky Fitzgerald, Winnebago County Finance Department

Larry Lautenschlager called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM #1: PUBLIC COMMENTS ON AGENDA ITEMS

There were no public comments.

PROGRAM #2: Child Welfare (CW) PLACEMENT REDUCTION

Annette Beattie, CW Division Manager, introduced Kari Kraft and Mary Salzer, CW Supervisors, joining us to with information gathered from the CW division which include 9 Supervisors and 75 staff. They discussed philosophy change and services and strategies to best support families. Annette gave an overview of past practices where children were in placement for long periods of time and placement decisions were based on risk and not safety standards. The belief was that placement was the best solution. When working with families, the past focus was compliance of the family doing what was expected. There were high expectations for parents in order to reunify their children. As this approach was reevaluated, it was determined ineffective with our mission to keep families together. Revising Guiding Principles helped in creating strength based and family centered social work practice. The primary focus is safety and realistic outcomes. Workers partner with families as the entire family system is affected by trauma. Coping skills are developed and/or enhanced. Families know what works best for them. We need to listen. Empowering and supporting parents using the least intrusive services has proven to be very successful. Cases are open for up to one year following reunification to ensure continued support, safety and well-being. There are several strategies, services and supports to help return children quickly and keep families together. Services include: In Home Safety Services and home checks, incentives, Family Mobile Team assistance, home consultants, natural supports in family members or friends, parent support and training programs, substance use disorders treatment, mentors, in-home safety plans, respite services, in-home

therapy as well as other interventions as needed. Any combination of these services and support are utilized to meet the needs of the family. Services wrap around the family to support and prevent removing the child from the home. 29% of placements of youth are with family members/kin.

AGENDA ITEM #3: APPROVE MINUTES OF THE FEBRUARY 1, 2021 HUMAN SERVICES BOARD MEETING

Jerry Finch moved for approval of these minutes; seconded by Mike Norton and carried unanimously. (8-0)

AGENDA ITEM #4: ACCEPT MINUTES OF THE FEBRUARY 8, 2021 ADRC COMMITTEE AND FEBRUARY 9, 2021 SPECIALIZED TRANSPORTATION COUNCIL MEETINGS

Harold Singstock moved for acceptance of these minutes; seconded by Mike Norton and carried unanimously. (8-0)

AGENDA ITEM #5: INPATIENT & INSTITUTIONAL PLACEMENT STATISTICS

Bill Topel reviewed placement statistics: Child Welfare (CW) Division – Juvenile Corrections remains at 0.0 Actual Daily Populations (ADP). Residential Care Centers are at 1.0 ADP. Behavioral Health (BH) - Specialty Hospitals for adults is at 3.9 ADP with the youth being at 2.3 ADP. Secure Detention is at 0.6 ADP. Foster Care is at 73.3 ADP.

AGENDA ITEM # 6: FINANCIAL REPORT

Janet Rohloff shared the 2020 projected financials year end summary. Numbers are estimated and unaudited. Projection of \$6,000,000 unexpended at year end. All items were significantly impacted by Covid. *Travel* category was less with a decrease in home visits due to telehealth services. Training sessions were held virtually with decreased registration costs, hotels, meals and other related expenses. Most of the savings are in *Operating Expenses* as a result of several changes which include: providers closing periodically for various reasons including staffing issues; consumers unwilling to be placed in a facility due to increased risk of exposure; group homes postponing admissions or requiring a 2 week isolation; congregate meal sites have closed with approximately \$100,000 unspent CARES Act nutrition funding (which has been carried over to 2021); consumers accessed assistance from other sources. Revenue, additional grant and other unexpected revenue was affected by the CARES Act reimbursement also. Based on historical trends, it is estimated 56.4% of the 2020 Human Services surplus is related to the pandemic.

AGENDA ITEM #7: DEPUTY DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Renee Soroko mentioned that in April the management team is participating in an agency based "*Cultural Humility*" training that discusses equity, inclusion, diversity. If deemed helpful, the training will be offered agency wide. Wisconsin Counties Association (WCA) recorded a webinar regarding this topic that will be shared as a link in the staff newsletter. The link was also shared with DHS board members. This is a 4 hour previously recorded webinar that can be viewed at your own pace.

'*Inclusa*' is a managed care organization (MCO) similar to *Lakeland* and *Community Care* which will be moving in to our region. We are establishing a contract with a target date of April 1st.

The majority of the Human Services staff have been vaccinated at this time.

AGENDA ITEM #8: DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Bill Topel shared that Wisconsin Counties Human Services Association (WCHSA) is looking at the upcoming *Human Services Day at the Capitol* which will be held virtually this year. Information will be shared once finalized.

Bill meets with the Northeast Regional Directors frequently. One of the topics is how counties are operating and continue to adjust. Most counties are continuing to work virtually while encouraging staff to transition back slowly. There is not a fixed date for all staff to return to the office. Counties are considering a mix of work locations with some staff working in the office and some continuing to telecommute.

Congress is currently debating a stimulus package. If approved, there will be a large amount of money designated to Winnebago County that can be used for intensive assistance programs such as rent, utilities, property taxes and mortgage assistance. A workgroup will convene to include department heads and community partners.

AGENDA ITEM #9: BOARD MEMBER REPORTS

Larry Lautenschlager mentioned the WCA Legislative Conference will be held virtually this week. The WCA Health and Human Services Steering Committee meets virtually Friday, 3/19/2021.

Mike Norton inquired about the mental health concerns in schools. These meetings with schools had been put on hold due to Covid and will resume this month.

Chris Kniep addressed a connection with the eviction task force workgroup for funding as they have been working on assistance programs all year.

Larry welcomed Nicole Neuhoff to the Human Services Board.

With no further business, Karen Powers moved for adjournment; seconded by Donna Lohry and carried at 4:35 p.m. The next meeting of the Human Services Board will be held on **Monday, April 5, 2021 at 3:00 p.m. via Zoom.**

Respectfully submitted by Pam Bartelt, Human Services Department/pb