



BOARD MINUTES

WRIGHT COUNTY HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES BOARD

February 22, 2021

Christine Husom,	District 1
Darek Vetsch,	District 2
Mark Daleiden,	District 3
Mary Wetter,	District 4
Michael Kaczmarek,	District 5

DATE APPROVED: March 8, 2021

I. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Wright County Health & Human Services Board met in regular session at 1:31 p.m. with Husom, Vetsch, Daleiden, Wetter and Kaczmarek present. Chair Vetsch called the meeting to order.

STAFF PRESENT:

Christine Treichler, Social Services Supervisor (remote)
Diane Erkens, Social Services Supervisor (remote)
Jami Goodrum Schwartz, Director
Jill Pooler, Social Services Manager (remote)
Kimberly Johnson, Financial Services Manager (remote)
Lee Kelly, County Administrator (remote)
Michelle Miller, Social Services Manager (remote)
Noami Blomberg, Administrative Specialist
Sarah Grosshuesch, Public Health Director

II. MINUTES APPROVAL

ACTION: Husom moved, Wetter second, to approve the February 8, 2020 minutes. Motion carried.

III. REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF AGENDA

ACTION: Daleiden moved, Wetter second, to approve the agenda. Motion carried.

IV. REGULAR AGENDA

A. Social Services/Public Health/Financial Services

1. DISCUSSION: FIVE-YEAR WIC CONTRACT

(JAMI GOODRUM SCHWARTZ, SARAH GROSSHUESCH)

Goodrum Schwartz sought direction from the Board on the \$375K Women, Infants and Children (WIC) grant due for renewal in 2022. The Request for Proposal (RFP) from the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) rolls out March 1, with the Letter of Intent due March 16, and the grant application by April 2.

Through the Federal Department of Agriculture, MDH grants WIC funding every five years, with counties having first right of refusal to administer the program. Wright County is one of only three counties statewide that exclude WIC operations from their Health and Human Services program, allowing WIC grants to be awarded to Wright County Community Action (WCCA).

Although WCCA can apply to renew the grant, HHS, the default administrator of the program, with Board consent, may choose to exercise its control of the right of first refusal with MDH. Grosshuesch outlined the positive and negative impact of this approach – ultimately, as affirmed by Husom and Goodrum Schwartz, HHS' absorbing WIC provides efficient and comprehensive services to clients, which according to Husom, may outpace any other consideration.

Public Health will explore ways to accommodate the shift such as staffing acquisition or reorganization of existing staff, depending how other program funding impacts workload. The probable funding cut to the Child and Teen Wellness Program potentially allows reallocation of staff

time to WIC operations. Wright County HHS could also opt for multi-county partnership to provide the resource and coordination, giving clients the convenience of cross-county enrollment and some sharing of staff resources.

Goodrum Schwartz reminded the board that whatever direction it decides, HHS has multiple programs aligned and in place to complement WIC; prioritizes the community's best interest, ensuring that families receive the resources they need. She added that she is confident that HHS can effectively administer the program.

CONSENSUS: The Board agreed to entertain an exploratory study whether to bring WIC in-house or retain WCCA as the program administrator if they decide to renew; discuss at the Committee of the Whole on March 11 or 12; WCCA is invited to present information if interested to retain WIC.

ACTION: Provide cost benefit analysis and comparison from both agencies: number of WCCA referrals, county partnership, benefit over risk to the WCCA/HHS relationship, staffing, WIC utilization as a percentage of the population and the percentage of the population receiving SNAP versus WIC, other beneficial information.

B. Administration

Material handout: letter of support for WCCA's Proposal to the MN Pollution Control Request for Proposal (RFP) for Prevention of Wasted Food and Food Rescue Grant.

Goodrum Schwartz informed the Board of her resignation from the Workforce Development Board effective June 30, 2021.

The COVID Response Team expressed its appreciation of the Highway Department's partnership throughout the vaccination process.

HHS is working on the details for Agency response to the January 27 letter from DHS regarding the 2019 State Audit Review.

The meeting adjourned at 2:28 p.m.

Minutes submitted by Naomi Blomberg, Administrative Specialist