



BOARD MINUTES

WRIGHT COUNTY HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES BOARD

April 12, 2021

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

DATE APPROVED: May 10, 2021

I. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Wright County Health & Human Services Board met in regular session at 1:30 p.m. with Husom, Daleiden, Wetter and Kaczmarek present. Vetsch absent. Vice Chair Kaczmarek presided.

STAFF PRESENT:

Christine Partlow, Business Manager
Sarah Grosshuesch, Public Health Director
Noami Blomberg, Administrative Specialist
Mason Coaty, Information Systems Specialist
Jennifer Stein, Child Support Officer (remote)
Kate Dahl, Fiscal Supervisor (remote)
Lisa Spencer, Office Manager (remote)
Karen Popken, Child Support Supervisor (remote)
James O'Dell, Technology Supervisor (remote)
Jon Young, Public Health Supervisor (remote)
Jennifer Oxley, Office Technician I (remote)
Kimberly Johnson, Financial Services Manager (remote)
Lee Kelly, County Administrator (remote)
Michelle Miller, Social Services Manager (remote)
Paige Bratsch, Social Worker (remote)
Tara Moy, Accounting Clerk (remote)
Diane Erkens, Social Services Supervisor (remote)
Heather Lemieux, Assistant Finance Director (remote)
Christine Treichler, Social Services Supervisor (remote)
Jessica Nelson, Social Services Supervisor (remote)
Jill Pooler, Social Services Manager (remote)
Katrina Segner, Office Technician I (remote)
Lindsey Meyer, Finance Director (remote)
Jacob Anson, Health Promotion Coordinator (remote)

II. OTHER:

Leslie Wojtowicz, CMJTS Development Manager (remote)
Barbara Chaffee, CMJTS Executive Director (remote)
Tricia Bigaouette, CMJTS Director of Finance and Economic Development (remote)
Diana Ristamaki, CMJTS Program Manager (remote)

III. MINUTES APPROVAL

ACTION: Husom moved, Daleiden second, to approve the March 8, 2021 minutes. Motion carried

IV. REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Remove Michelle Braatz from the New Hire list; her start date was moved to April 19.

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

V. CONSENT AGENDA

- a. APPROVE REQUEST TO CANCEL 2021-04-26 HHS BOARD MEETING
- b. ACCEPT HHS ADVISORY RESIGNATION
 - i. Lauri Stammer – District 1

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

V. NEW HIRE

- a. Katrina Segner, Office Technician I – Office Support Team, March 15, 2021
- b. Paige Bratsch, Social Worker – Intake & Investigation Team, April 5, 2021
- c. Tara Moy, Accounting Clerk – Fiscal Team, April 5, 2021
- d. Jennifer Oxley, Office Technician I – Office Support Team, April 5, 2021
- e. ~~Michelle Braatz, Eligibility Specialist – Adult Family Financial Services & OT Team, April 12, 2021~~

VI. EMPLOYEE OF THE MONTH – MAY

Jennifer Stein is May Employee of the Month.

VII. REGULAR AGENDA

A. Social Services/Public Health/Financial Services

- 1. CENTRAL MN JOBS & TRAINING SERVICES (CMJTS) ANNUAL UPDATE
(BARBARA CHAFFEE, CMJTS EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR)

Chaffee Acknowledged and thanked Commissioner Husom for her outstanding leadership in her eighth year of service on the CMJTS Board; outlined last year’s achievements and initiatives, reporting five new Specialized Centers: Milaca, North Branch, Pine City and Sandstone.

The annual fiscal audit ending June 30, 2019 yielded positive result, having no issues or concerns in the financial report.

The pandemic posed challenges to engage participants, however, there will be a 60-day wind down for the Minnesota Family Investment (MFIP) to resume its normal rules when the peacetime emergency ends on April 14, 2021. CMJTS is currently offering in-person services by appointment. Other programs discussed are the Adult Dislocated Worker Program through the Workforce Innovations and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and the Youth Program of Eligibility. CMJTS plans to have a drive-through job fair in June this year, following a successful event with Wright County Economic Development Partnership in October 2020, which saw 55 job seekers.

The Board sought additional information such as numbers/percentages of job seekers, enrollment, placement in Wright County and its performance compared to neighboring counties. The observation is that, unemployment is still high yet there are many employers looking for workers based on local advertisements alone. Chaffee pointed out that the \$600 boost in unemployment benefits contributed to significant reduction in job service participation.

- 2. DISCUSSION: HHS UNREIMBURSED PANDEMIC EXPENDITURES
(CHRISTINE PARTLOW)

Partlow sought Board reconsideration to reimburse HHS for the \$2M COVID-response expenditures – HHS maintains its own separate fund balance – as this takes a significant portion out of its budget balance fund. Assistant Finance Director Heather Lemieux explained the decision in August last year to leave HHS unreimbursed, otherwise other departments will need reimbursements as well. County Administrator Lee Kelly agreed that at that time, it was a simple method but that the Board could change direction if desired.

Partlow stated that majority of expenditures stay in the general fund whereas HHS expenses are maintained in its own fund balance. The concern is that the current HHS fund balance has been

sustaining the COVID response. Grosshuesch also expressed her concern for the long-term impact to the fund balance when the federal funding to COVID expires.

Daleiden did not see any advantage of transferring the money now when the county covered the COVID operation, unless a significant impact can be proven. Kaczmarek agreed stating that if the concern is just to ensure at yearend that all departmental funds are even, it can certainly be assessed, but he did not see the point of doing the extra work now just for that reason. Finance Director Lindsey Meyer assured that the general fund will be used to offset HHS if it goes on deficit and that the County cannot touch a high HHS fund balance to offset a low fund balance in another department. Husom stated that with HHS' current \$9M fund balance, the Agency should have enough to carry out for the budget year. Daleiden, however, stated that this should not negatively affect HHS's standing because of the COVID expense.

CONCENSUS: The decision in August 2020 stands and leave everything as-is. No transfer of COVID reimbursements to HHS will be authorized.

3. PRESENTATION: CONTACT CENTER

(James O'Dell)

O'Dell demonstrated features of the new contract center which went live March 31. The new system promotes positive customer experience, giving staff the ability to respond to client inquiries, remotely or in-office, using different online platforms that clients use. To enhance customer service, for example, HHS aims to "consult transfer" all incoming calls when necessary – consult transfer is when the receiving party puts the caller on hold while calling the intended party before connecting the call.

The system also calibrates service level via data report of calls answered, abandoned rate, waiting time on queue and many more. Callers are given two minutes or less in the waiting queue before they get the option for a call-back request without losing their waiting spot.

Daleiden asked if it can be rolled out to other departments. Partlow left that possibility to the Board, Administration and IT.

B. Administration

1. DIRECTOR'S COMMENTS

Material handout: March 9, 2021 letter of support for Rural LOS for Rural Minnesota Opioid Response for Black, Indigenous, People of Color, Plus (RM-OR4BIPOC+) Implementation Grant.

Kimberly Johnson announced and acknowledged Cynthia Otto-Forsythe's service to Wright County. Otto-Forsythe, Eligibility Specialist, retires on May 3, 2021 after joining Wright County in July 2012.

The meeting adjourned at 3:00 p.m.

Minutes submitted by Naomi Blomberg, Administrative Specialist