

**Ward County Human Service Zone Board**  
Minutes  
February 21, 2023  
Second Floor-Ward County Commissioner's Chambers

**PRESENT:**

Kristi Frederick  
Shelly Wepler  
Mac McLeod  
Rich Berg  
Jason Olson  
Hiedi Folstad-Miller

**ABSENT:**

Matt Ruby

Also present was Karen Schultz, Zone Board Secretary designee.

Meeting was brought to order by Director Kristi Frederick.

**MOTION:**

It was moved by Rich Berg, seconded by Jason Olson and unanimously carried by the Board that the Agenda for February 21, 2023 be approved as presented.

**MOTION:**

It was moved by Mac McLeod, seconded by Shelly Wepler, and unanimously carried by the Board that the minutes for the regular board meeting of January 17<sup>th</sup>, 2023, be approved.

**MOTION:**

It was moved by Shelly Wepler, seconded by Hiedi Folstad-Miller, and unanimously carried by the Board to receive and file the January 2023 Expenditures, bills for February 7<sup>th</sup> and February 21<sup>st</sup>, 2023, Budget Recap and Budget Revenue for January 2023 and the FC R & R Report.

Personnel updates included the following: Foster Care– 6 position openings currently advertised; CPS – 2 current openings – interviews within the next week; In Home- 2 current openings but not advertised at this time; EW Tech Support -job offer pending; Eligibility Worker currently advertised.

A 5 year service award was presented to Jennifer Martin, Eligibility Worker. Debra Lee was also acknowledged as a 15 year service award recipient which will be presented at the Ward County Commissioner Meeting today.

Director Frederick submitted the updated Ward County Human Service Zone Plan to the State on February 1<sup>st</sup> and anticipates it will be approved. The plan contains addendums and contracts along with any pertinent up to date information.

Alert Media is fully operational. Accidental toggle pulls have been handled appropriately.

Economic Assistance redesign rollout occurred on February 13<sup>th</sup>. All customer service related calls are being redirected to 1-866-614-6005. A statewide mail center is located in Bismarck with personnel who will then distribute mail to the appropriate zones. The Zone will continue to monitor how the updated procedures/changes are going.

Director Kristi Frederick provided the Board members with a copy of a draft letter to the Ward County Commission with supporting correspondence in regards to use of the Morgan building as an uncertified youth shelter for emergency purposes. It was reported that in 2022, there were 26 days where youth were sheltered in the office and so far in 2023, there has already been 36 days of youth sheltered on site in the office.

There was discussion as to how the youth in our custody end up at our office without a more permanent placement and why the numbers are up greatly in 2023 and whether the legislative changes are a contributing factor.

Some concerns were noted as this only being a temporary solution and the building not being a certifiable shelter and what it would take to upgrade the building and interior of it as a reasonable emergency temporary living arrangement. Director Frederick also presented the information about CASO (Come Along Side Others) as another possible solution to run a program to help care for youth in this situation. This is a volunteer organization looking to aid in this need with more information needing to be gathered. Across the State, there are different needs for youth and also facilities as options in other cities as well.

The Board was informed that we have hired 3 temporary emergency caregivers and are looking to hire 3 more. There was question as to how much training these caregivers are given in the event that youth become violent. Kristi indicated that the workers are not to engage and that all child welfare workers now have their toggle security feature and will be on a shift with the temp workers.

Dir. Frederick asked the Board what they would like to see as next steps towards a solution and she was asked to communicate with the Board in a few weeks as to whether she has received any answers or further guidance and whether there is a need for another meeting. Dir. Frederick indicated she would be out of the office through March 3<sup>rd</sup> and could set up a meeting some time after that. Rich Berg, Shelly Weppeler and Mac McLeod offered to be on a special committee, if needed, to work on issues and alternatives.

Mtg Adjourned at 8:51.

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Kristi Frederick, Ward CHSZ Director

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Date

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Rich Berg, Secretary