

Ward County Social Service Board
Minutes
April 2, 2019 – 8:00 AM
Ward County Commissioner's Chambers

PRESENT:

Shelly Wepler
John Fjeldahl
John Pietsch
Jim Rostad

ABSENT:

Alan Walter

Also present were Melissa Bliss, Director and Karen Schultz, Recording Secretary

MOTION:

It was moved by Jim Rostad, Seconded by John Fjeldahl and unanimously carried by the Board approval of the Agenda for April 2, 2019 with the addition of SPACES Update for an item of information.

MOTION:

It was moved by John Pietsch, seconded by Jim Rostad and unanimously carried by the Board approval of the Minutes of the March 5th, 2019 Regular Board Meeting.

MOTION:

It was moved by Jim Rostad, seconded by John Pietsch and unanimously carried by the Board approval of the bills for April 2nd, 2019.

MOTION:

It was moved by John Fjeldahl, seconded by Jim Rostad and unanimously carried by the Board to receive and file the Budget Recap Expenses for February 2019.

MOTION:

It was moved by John Pietsch, seconded by Jim Rostad and unanimously carried by the Board to receive and file the Revenue Report for February 2019.

The Board reviewed the General Assistance approvals and denials. No appeals were scheduled.

Director Bliss informed the Board that we currently have 6 positions that will need to be filled within the agency for the Child Welfare Units. These positions were advertised and closed yesterday with anticipation that the applicant list will be received this week so that we can proceed with setting up interviews. She also informed the Board that one FC Case Management/Recruitment, Retention and Licensing position was reclassified to be a full time FC Recruitment, Retention and Licensing position and this was filled internally with a current employee in the Foster Care Unit.

Director Bliss relayed to the Board that she had recently attended a meeting with various agencies in the area in regards to the Attendant Care Program which is currently managed by

Lutheran Social Services out of Grand Forks. They currently have 7 part time people to help fill the need for attendant caretakers, however, there is not a senior associate in place to coordinate the needed coverage. Therefore, LSS would prefer to no longer be involved with the attendant care program and thus, a meeting was held to discuss a solution. A suggestion was made for a potential local person to see if there was interest in being a local coordinator and that person was contacted and is seeking more information. Director Bliss indicated that she would really like to see DBGR or the Village take interest in this program and she has reached out to both of them but has not heard back. Another meeting will be held later this month to discuss any progress on a solution to this issue.

In regards to a recent proposal to have the County move to a new system of credit cards which entails a reward program, Melissa Bliss indicated that she would like our Social Services department to opt out of the proposed change. She cited the numerous employees that would need to be issued cards and the amount of tracking that it would entail for a minimal reward. The current system we have in place is managed well and we would prefer to maintain what we have in place at this time.

In reference to space in lieu of rent, Melissa indicated that she, along with Auditor Devra Smestad, Marissa Haman and Connie Zieske, participated in a conference call with Abacus. They provided information to the firm as to what costs Ward County Social Services pays for directly so that they are aware when making their determination. Chair Shelly Wepler indicated that the intent of reimbursement was to go towards the cost of the building and possibly future needs such as carpeting, painting, etc. Additional information regarding this topic will continue to be brought forth at future Board meetings.

As an update to SB 2124, Melissa indicated that the House has passed an amendment to make HCBS (Home and Community Based Services) workers State employees. There was not a definitive answer as to why this is being proposed. The Bill will now go to Appropriations and she will continue to update the Board as things arise. She also indicated that legislators are no longer being considered to make up part of the the proposed Zonal Board as initially proposed.

Director Bliss informed the Board that representatives from Deloitte as well as a Regional Representative is currently on site to assist with the SPACES implementation. She wanted to make the Board members aware that some recipients entitled to monthly SNAP benefits may not have gotten those benefits in a timely manner due to the conversion and issues with the systems periodically going down.

Additionally, Chair Wepler asked Director Bliss to provide numbers of overdue/beyond deadline child welfare cases to her at the next meeting as the Chairperson is to be made aware of these.

Motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:45 am by John Pletsch and seconded by John Fjeldahl.

Shelly Wepler , Chairperson

Date

Karen Schultz, Recording Secretary