

Ward County Human Service Zone Board

Minutes

May 5th , 2020 – 8:00 AM

Second Floor-Ward County Commissioner Chambers

PRESENT:

Melissa Bliss –Zone Director
Clayton Fegley
Mac McLeod-present by phone
John Fjeldahl
John Pietsch
Jim Rostad
Alan Walter
Shelly Wepler

Also present was Zone Board secretary, Karen Schultz.

MOTION:

It was moved by Shelly Wepler, seconded by Alan Walter and unanimously carried by the Board, approval of the Agenda for May 5th, 2020.

MOTION:

It was moved by Shelly Wepler, seconded by Mac McLeod and unanimously carried by the Board, approval of the minutes for the regular board meeting of April 7th, 2020 with the correction of John Fjeldahl being listed as a present member at that meeting.

MOTION:

It was moved by Alan Walter, seconded by John Pietsch and unanimously carried by the Board to receive and file the bills for May 5, 2020.

MOTION:

It was moved by Shelly Wepler, seconded by John Fjeldahl and unanimously carried by the Board to receive and file the March 2020 Budget Recap Expense Report.

MOTION:

It was moved by Alan Walter, seconded by John Pietsch and unanimously carried by the Board to receive and file the March 2020 Budget Revenue Report.

Director Bliss presented information to the HSZ Board regarding an emergency shelter which is a sheltering program for someone who does not have a home to go to when a 14 day quarantine is needed due to Covid 19. This has been planned by conference calls with the State and approximately 200 other entities on that call where concerns were addressed about the lack of shelter for Covid related cases of individuals in need of a shelter. The program is funded by FEMA and is located in a local hotel with 24/7 security. Meals are provided by Commission on Aging with transportation arranged through a local cab company. Case management of these individuals will be done by the Regional Human Service Center and the intake will be done by a current employee of the Ward County HSZ. The plan is in place, however, there are currently no individuals in the shelter in Ward County at this time.

There was discussion about the current and ongoing needs of the homeless population. Zone Board member Mac McLeod, Director of the Homeless Coalition, indicated that this was something that they could not prepare for but that progress continues to be made. Mac

indicated that the local food pantries will contact Mac with appropriate referrals and that if they meet the criteria, they will then be instructed to contact the intake worker for the new emergency shelter. Screening of individuals will be done in the form of a questionnaire but they will then be referred elsewhere for the actual medical diagnostic testing for Covid 19.

In regards to the impact of program administration during the pandemic, Melissa indicated that the State office of the Department of Human Services indicated that they have not received a single call to express a complaint about the lack of services being provided, pointing out that services are being provided as needed. The economic assistance caseloads were up by 30% across the state in April. CPS cases are down at this time but it is believed to be because children are not in school or socializing with others which is where a number of the reports are generated from.

Director Bliss stated that approximately 50% of the staff are currently working from home with no issues at this time. The agency plan for reopening includes having appropriate PPE for child welfare workers, social distancing, clients not being taken beyond the lobby area and face-to-face interviews will continue to be suspended in an effort to limit personal contact. We will continue to encourage online applications, use of the outdoor agency dropbox and continue with telephone interviews as needed. Child welfare visits can take place outside of the home when appropriate. Melissa indicated that the agency does need some time to prepare and these plans are made with not only concern for the employees but also for the public.

Melissa made a request for volunteers to serve on the Human Service Zone Planning Committee with her to aid in the implementation of the Human Service Zone Plan. Shelly Weppler and John Pietsch volunteered to serve as part of this committee with Director Bliss.

Due to time constraints, a personnel update was not given on this date.

Mtg Adjourned at 8:59

Melissa Bliss, Ward CHSZ Director

Date

Karen Schultz, Recording Secretary