

Ward County Social Service Board

Minutes

May 7, 2019 – 8:00 AM

Ward County Commissioner's Chambers

PRESENT:

Shelly Wepler
John Pietsch
Jim Rostad
Alan Walter

ABSENT:

John Fjeldahl

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

MOTION:

It was moved by Jim Rostad, Seconded by Alan Walter and unanimously carried by the Board approval of the Agenda for May 7, 2019.

MOTION:

It was moved by Alan Walter, seconded by John Pietsch and unanimously carried by the Board approval of the Minutes of the April 2nd, 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 May 7th, 2019.

A question was brought forth as to what the expense for an HR Manual was and Melissa indicated that she would check into that and bring an explanation to the next monthly Ward CSS Board Meeting.

MOTION:

It was moved by John Pietsch, seconded by Alan Walter and unanimously carried by the Board to receive and file the Budget Recap Expenses for March 2019.

MOTION:

It was moved by Jim Rostad, seconded by John Pietsch and unanimously carried by the Board to receive and file the Revenue Report for March 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 advertised that are vacant within the agency for the Child Welfare Units. She also indicated this appears to be a statewide problem, trying to find qualified applicants to fill these positions.

Addressing the Social Service redesign and pilot projects, Melissa indicated that our agency is now involved in a Long Term Care pilot involving the eligibility worker program. She also recently learned that the plan for those employees doing the long term care eligibility programs is for them to become State employees.

Director Bliss relayed to the Board that as of May 31st, Lutheran Social Services will no longer be involved with the Attendant Care program. Currently, someone in Grand Forks needs to be contacted to reach out to someone locally in our area or come themselves from Grand Forks and if no one is found, the Social Service staff needs to take shifts to sit with the child, which is what has been taking place recently. Chairperson Wepler inquired if Dakota Boys and Girls Ranch has been contacted to inquire if there would be interest in their agency running the program while utilizing our current facility. Director Bliss stated that they had not been asked. Chair Wepler would like this explored further and expressed interest in being involved in that discussion with DBGR and would like an update to the situation presented at the next monthly Board meeting.

Director Bliss had provided a copy of the Ward County Social Services Travel Policy/Use of Personal Vehicles to the Board for approval.

MOTION:

It was moved by Alan Walter Seconded by Jim Rostad and unanimously carried by the Board to approve the Ward County Travel Policy , pending reviewal by Ward County Human Resources in regards to compliance with the County travel policy currently in place.

Melissa Bliss provided the Board with a form that needs to be filled out in regards to the IRS Review of Access to FTI Information. Melissa will fill out the form as requested but just wanted the Board to be aware of the information that she was being asked to provide.

Regarding the ongoing discussion of space in lieu of rent., Melissa is in possession of a cost allocation plan provided by Abacus, noting that it looks as though there is some duplication of costs so it is still a work in progress. Chairperson Wepler asked that a copy of the plan be emailed to her for review.

As requested at the April monthly Board Meeting, Director Bliss provided the number of overdue/beyond deadline child welfare cases that may be denied for payment and that number was 'two', citing the amount of time it has taken to complete these cases which were initially assigned to workers who are no longer with the agency.

Director Bliss provided the Board with information regarding foreign language interpreter services indicating that the State has a contract with Language Link and that is also what most counties currently use. This is a service that you do not pay for unless you use it. Melissa has also presented this information at the Department Head Meeting.

As an additional note, Melissa Bliss informed the Board that a Foster Parent Appreciation Banquet will be held on May 14th at the First Assembly of God. She also stated we currently have approximately 50 licensed foster homes with 110 children in care.

Prior to adjournment, Board Member Alan Walter, who was absent from the last Board meeting when Melissa Bliss indicated that she would like our Social Services department to opt out of the proposed change to the county credit card program, expressed that he feels Social Services should partake in the program. Director Bliss again reiterated the need for 70(+) cards as well as noting that she didn't think the county should make money off of our expenses which is state money that is being spent. Mr. Walter stated that this is a question then that needs to be asked or we need to make the move to the new credit card system along with the rest of the County. Melissa will look into this and provide information as to what she learns about the circumstance.

Meeting adjourned at 8:42 am.

Shelly Wepler , Chairperson

Date

Karen Schultz, Recording Secretary