

Ward County Human Service Zone Board

Minutes

September 19<sup>th</sup>, 2023, 7:45 AM

**PRESENT:**

Kristi Frederick  
Shelly Wepler  
Mac McLeod  
Rich Berg  
Jason Olson  
Matt Ruby

**ABSENT:**

Hiedi Folstad-Miller  
Karen Schultz

Also present today- Amy Boyle and several staff from the agency, three of whom were receiving Service Awards today. Also present was Nicole Lang, former staff member returning and now employed as Child Welfare Division Manager. She is from Underwood.

Meeting was brought to order by Director Kristi Frederick.

**MOTION:**

It was motioned by Matt Ruby and seconded by Mac McLeod and carried unanimously to approve the agenda with some amendments to some dates listed under financials. Everything listed as June was changed to August. With these changes everything was passed for the September 19, 2023 Agenda.

**MOTION:**

It was motioned by Shelly Wepler, seconded by Matt Ruby, and unanimously carried by the Board that the minutes for the regular board meeting of August 15<sup>th</sup>, 2023, be approved.

**MOTION:**

It was motioned by Mac McLeod and seconded by Shelly Wepler and carried unanimously by the Board to receive and file all financial documents:

- a. August 23 Expenditures and bills for September 5<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup>, 2023 Pages 3-23 of packet
- b. Budget Recap Expensed for August 2023 pages 24-32 of packet
- c. Budget Revenue Report for August 2023 page 33 of packet
- d. FC Recruitment and Retention Report page 34

Shelly Wepler inquired about some costs that are not yet clarified as direct or indirect. Amy Boyle, Acct. Budget Specialist presented the board with a 3-page explanation of these costs and went into detail about some items that are set by new state regulations that need to be included and worked out for our understanding. Further discussion will be provided at our future meetings. One of the biggest issues remains to be the status of

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staff as county or state employees. As the state sets salaries, some talks have been held to move all employees to the state, however, there is some resistance to this at the state level and in the legislative committee. It appears, per report from Matt Ruby, that when discussions are held, there is one Zone Director/administrator that voices objections which results in the issue not changing. Matt suggested that the Zone Directors provide some wording to the legislature that could address this and make it more workable. More to come on this as Director Frederick meets with the group across the state.

**Director's Report**

- Personnel Update- At this point, most of the open positions have been filled through recruiting efforts with the remaining open positions to be recruited and hopefully filled in the next month or so. Interviews are scheduled as possible.
- Employee Service awards today. Two of the three staff receiving awards were present. Lindsay Welsh, Jenna Aasand and Missy Carver all were recognized with for their 3 year service award.
- A presentation was conducted recently at Minot State University. A table board was displayed which showed information about services and what the county provides to people of the area. This was put together by a current intern. It was suggested that this would make a great recruitment brochure to use in the future.
- Economic Assistance Report today explained how the Zone has been part of the Day of Caring held at the Pursuit Church. Last year, the Zone had staff there and today from 3 to 6pm today, Zone staff will again participate to allow more potential persons who may need some assistance to have contact with personnel and get information on how to proceed to get their needs met at our Zone agency.
- Incoming calls for help have been getting much better for the clients. There is a two tier system developed. Calls to Tier 1 have averaged around 1 minute for response and Tier 2 average around 4 minutes. This is in comparison to how calls from a year ago, when there were wait times of 30 minutes. Missed calls are less than 5%.
- Youth in the Office Team have not met over the last month due to other conflicting meetings. It is expected that they will again meet prior to the next Board Meeting.
- Youth Works update was given, handout in packet was updated by Director Frederick during the meeting. It appears we had 24 days in care over the last month and no report on youth held in Attendant Care at this time.

**Administrative Restructuring**

- 4th Floor has been vacated with just a few things left in one office. This should be taken care of this month.

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- Bids came in for furnishings and other needed office equipment. At this time, we do not need to get special permission to use indirect costs as there are ample funds in our 2023 Budget to purchase needed equipment. Board reviewed the bids
  - **Motion**
    - It was moved by Shelly Wepler and seconded by Matt Ruby and passed unanimously by the board to accept the bid from Gaffaney's for **\$71,900** to purchase all items except for white boards which will be purchased from Clute Office in Minot.

**Other items for discussion**

- The subject of indirect and direct costs was broached at the end of the meeting with Shelly Wepler asking Matt Ruby, State Legislator, why it is done this way and how to get it to a point that makes more sense to how our Zone functions. See previous statements in minutes for more detail. This will be ongoing discussion as things are still adapting to the new laws and regulations. Items that dominated this free-flowing discussion were 1) how reimbursement for building space is allocated and should we not compute shared space as part of the figures and, 2) the issue of state versus Zone employee status. Matt Ruby took many notes on the concerns and tried to help our group understand how the state is dealing with this issue, referring back to the Zone Directors providing some wording that may help to address this concern and be accepted by all parties. This will all hinge on the Zones working together on this and coming up with an acceptable proposal that they can all support.

**Meeting adjourned at 8:47 AM**

  
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Kristi Frederick, Ward CHSZ Director

11/24/2023  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

  
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Rich Berg, Secretary