

CASS COUNTY SOCIAL SERVICES BOARD MEETING
August 7, 2017

MINUTES

With quorum present, Chair Bennett called the meeting to order at 1:37 pm.

Present: Vern Bennett, Arland Rasmussen, Chad Peterson, Mary Scherling, Rick Steen, Brian Hagen, Glenn Ellingsberg

Presenter: Chip Ammerman, Director; Robert Wilson, County Administrator

I. Approval of Minutes

Mr. Rasmussen made a motion to approve the June 19, 2017 Board minutes. Ms. Scherling seconded it. Motion carried.

II. Overtime Discussion

Robert Wilson, County Administrator, and Cindy Stoick, Human Resource Director, provided an update to the Board regarding employee overtime. Ms. Stoick stated there is approximately 80-100 overtime hours being recorded each month. With this high amount of overtime, there is a risk of burnout, risk of higher liability, and a concern about how staff can effectively and efficiently complete their tasks without errors. The majority of the overtime is being used by Economic Assistance supervisors, with the exception of one clerical staff. Mr. Ammerman stated he does review the overtime report monthly, if not more frequently.

The budget designates \$100,000 for overtime expenses; this does not include those staff who take compensation time. In 2016, \$78,000 was used for overtime expenses and it is estimated to be between \$84,000 – \$87,000 for 2017. Mr. Ellingsberg asked if there are any tasks that are not mandatory that staff are able to discontinue doing? Mr. Ammerman stated he has had discussions with management and asked all supervisors to discuss and compile a list with their staff of tasks they are mandated to do, tasks that are nice to do, and tasks they will not do so he can discuss with the State. This was completed approximately three years ago, with many tasks being eliminated due to them not being mandatory.

It was asked, in order to lower caseloads of supervisory staff, if some cases could be redistributed. Mr. Hagen suggested that management could meet with Human Resources and agency supervisors to review job descriptions in order to help redistribute tasks to lessen or eliminate overtime. Mr. Ammerman stated he would be willing to do this. Mr. Ammerman stated the amount of staff the agency hires is not enough to keep up with the constant increase of cases.

Ms. Scherling questioned if schools are doing enough to educate the people coming into the workforce. Mr. Ammerman stated there is no educational requirement for eligibility workers; however, there is an option to attend classes through Bismarck State College. These classes are based on very general Economic Assistance information and are not that helpful in having staff be fully trained when beginning employment. With the addition of an Economic Assistance trainer position, new eligibility workers are being trained faster and are able to take cases faster than they have in the past.

III. Q-Flow Report

Mr. Ammerman stated the data gathered by Q-Flow, the ticketing system in Economic Assistance, continues to be a very positive addition to that division and the numbers continue to be pretty static. When implemented in March 2016, the numbers were slightly skewed due to clients printing multiple tickets based on the reasons for their visit. This issue seems to have corrected itself with the 2017 statistics being the most accurate since the implementation.

Mr. Ammerman reports the staff continue to work on the integration between Q-flow and the Outlook Calendar. The State initially had concerns of client information being accessible and steps have been taken to lessen this concern with the Q-flow system. It's hoped the integration between the two systems will be in place by the end of 2017 which will assist in creating efficiencies for the Economic Assistance Division.

IV. 2017 Spend Down Authorization

Mr. Ammerman presented the Social Services' budget at the Commission Hearing last week, which was approved as presented. Mr. Ammerman requested the Board's approval to move forward with the recommendations to purchase items originally in the 2018 budget with funds from the 2017 budget. These include items such as computers, equipment, expanding Laserfiche to Family Services, as well as sponsorships for community service providers. Mr. Ammerman would also like to move forward with building renovations with the support of Michael Montplaisir, County Auditor.

Mr. Rasmussen made a motion to approve the 2017 Spend Down. Ms. Scherling seconded it. On roll call, the motion passed unanimously.

This request will be presented at the County Commission meeting on August 21, 2017 for approval.

V. Operations Report

There have been quite a few personnel changes in the last three years, due to a large amount of retirements and personal leaves. Mr. Ammerman stated the turnover due to retirements was expected by the agency and stated that should drop again for the next few years.

Economic Assistance has been changing the way appointments are managed with clients. There is a small group of Eligibility Workers who are testing scheduling their own appointments with clients. Benefits of this process include more flexibility to meet with clients during a time that works for their schedule, which hopefully will decrease the "no shows" for appointment times. In addition, spreading out the appointments will help in parking and the number of people in the lobby at any given time. This test group is recommending implementing the revised practice to the Economic Assistance Planning Team and it's hoped this will be in place in the near future.

The roll out of the web service that will assist staff in finding client information more efficiently is getting set to release. The second phase of SPACES has been pushed back until April 2018.

Board members questioned the replacement of Executive Director Maggie Anderson with appointee Christopher Jones. Mr. Ammerman stated he believed Mr. Jones will do very well in this position as he is very receptive and has great healthcare business background. Mr.

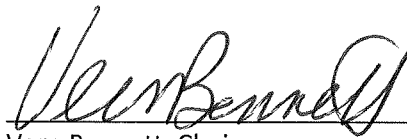
Ammerman stated Mr. Jones appears to put efficiency and effectiveness as a high priority and is open to new ideas.

Mr. Ammerman shared an update regarding part-time staff which was questioned at the Budget Hearing. There are currently ten part-time staff covering six positions, which has been at their own request. There are currently three, half time positions with one being the foster care licensing, one foster care case management and one part-time attorney. The new part-time foster care case management position available in 2018 will combined with the existing part-time case management position which will now be a full time position.

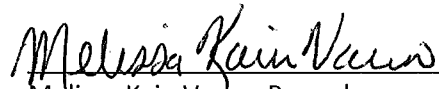
Mr. Steen asked Mr. Ammerman how Cass County Social Services intends to live within the budget in 2019 and if this is even possible. Mr. Ammerman stated at the current time, it would not be possible. There are quite a few sponsorships that could be removed; however, it would cost the State more to fund. For example, the agency pays \$600 to maintain a child in foster-family support program in the PATH contract care per month, if this sponsorship was removed, it would cost the State \$3,800. This proves the cost efficiency of it being funded through Social Services. Home and Community Based Services and General Assistance Burials could potentially be covered by the County as the State mandates this assistance. The possibility exists that continued underfunding could lead to potential staff layoffs.

VI. Adjournment

Mr. Steen made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 2:37 pm. Mr. Rasmussen seconded it. Motion carried.



Vern Bennett, Chair
Cass County Social Services Board



Melissa Kain Varho, Recorder