

CASS COUNTY SOCIAL SERVICES BOARD MEETING

August 6, 2018

MINUTES

With quorum present, Chair Bennett called the meeting to order at 2:00 p.m.

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

Absent: Mary Scherling

Presenter: Chip Ammerman, Director; Linda Dorff, Family Services Manager; Sidney Shock, Economic Assistance Manager

I. **Approval of Minutes**

Mr. Steen made a motion to approve the July 2, 2018 Board minutes. Mr. Peterson seconded it. Motion carried.

II. **Social Service Redesign Updates**

Mr. Ammerman and Mr. Schock have continued to attend their sub-committees working on the Social Service Redesign. Mr. Ammerman, who is the chair of the Child Welfare committee, briefly explained recent developments in the Redesign project, stating delivery areas in the State will stay where they are at and remain open. It is believed clients should receive the same quality of service no matter what area they live in. The Redesign has been discussing removing county borders and creating zones to better serve clientele, making it more convenient for them to go to the closest agency, versus their county location. Cass County's Child Protection Unit will be the pilot project in September 2018, which presents a different approach of assessing abuse/neglect concerns. There will also be a change in the State's computer system, FRAME, which currently causes CPS staff to spend about 60% of their time entering data. It was asked if the program has gotten any better. Mr. Ammerman clarified that FRAME and the systems used by Economic Assistance are two different programs. Mr. Schock stated SPACES, the EA computer program, has not necessarily gotten better, but staff have become more skilled in dealing with it.

Mr. Ammerman explained the various change processes the agency is currently modeling and using which relate to each other. The starting point is always to look at and remember the "why". Theory of Constraints (TOC) is leading the Social Service's Redesign focus. This looks at all the barriers and how they can be overcome. It identifies what critical activities are for a position and how those activities should be streamlined in order to become more efficient. In addition to the Social Service's Redesign project, Mr. Ammerman and Ms. Dorff have been attending meetings in Minneapolis sponsored by the Alia Foundation. These meetings focus on a different approach to the way Child Welfare reports are assessed, and cases are handled. It assists in looking at the reason the agency is getting involved, with the intent to reduce placement of children, which diminishes additional trauma a child may experience during that time. Additional pieces of the change process Social Services is using include the transformational change process to assist in problem solving and communication, as well as coaching and leading staff with clear expectations among management and staff. Mr. Ammerman left the meeting with Ms. Dorff and Mr. Schock continuing to present on the status of the redesign and Alia projects.

Ms. Dorff again explained that TOC will look at the critical activities a position does, determine the barriers of accomplishing those activities and how those barriers can be eliminated. It is important to have all key players involved because this shifts the impact all areas involved. The process has been started in Intake and continues on with CPS. Ms. Dorff explained the importance of these critical tasks being a "full kit", meaning that once the task is handed off, it has been done completely and thoroughly, eliminating the need for it to be returned to the previous staff for additional information or processing. Ms. Dorff stressed the need for community partners to be better educated in the details needed to complete a 960 report, which is something Ms. Dorff and Mr. Ammerman will be working on. CPS is also starting a pilot project in September. Management have attended webinars regarding TOC presented by Kristen Cox, who is an Executive Director of Management and Budget in the State of Utah. She will be here to assist in the implementation of the CPS Pilot Project in September. Ms. Dorff was asked how federal laws play in to the proposed changes. She explained the process looks at the laws and questions why it is being done this way and asks whether it can be done differently. She states there is room for interpretation regarding some of the laws. Ms. Dorff explained that Cass County is one of five counties within the Nation who are involved in the Alia Foundation, which is revolutionizing the Child Welfare system. It looks at how to reduce the amount of harm and trauma a child encounters during the process and the best way to maintain the family dynamic through the assessment process.

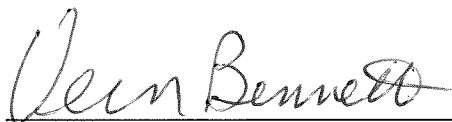
Mr. Schock discussed the preliminary outline the Economic Assistance Sub-Committee has developed, which defined the areas that they felt needed the biggest change. Some of those areas included creating a centralized locations for a Client Call Center, Resource Support for Eligibility Workers, as well as Training. There has also been talk about outsourcing the processing of Low Income Heating and Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) and Child Care Assistance (CCA) applications. These have been done by community action partners in the past; however, the process was returned to the county in 1980 due to those agencies being too liberal in giving out program funds. Mr. Schock stated one of the biggest accomplishments that has occurred recently for Economic Assistance is the implementation of Work Number. Kurt Bliggenstorfer, representative from Equifax, provided training to Eligibility Workers on this program, which allows eligibility workers to move applications from pending to approved/denied quicker, making a more efficient process. Mr. Schock explained Chris Jones wants the agency to practice service management and focus on the quality of service provided to our clients, versus process management, which focuses less on the client and more on the rules and guidelines of delivering the services.

III. **Operations Report**

There was no discussion on the Operations Report.

IV. **Adjournment**

Mr. Peterson made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 2:45 p.m. Mr. Rasmussen seconded it. Motion carried.



Vern Bennett, Chair
Cass County Social Services Board



Melissa Kain Varno, Recorder