

## CASS COUNTY SOCIAL SERVICES BOARD MEETING

March 4, 2019

### MINUTES

With quorum present, Commissioner Steen called the meeting to order at 2:01 p.m.

**Present:** Glenn Ellingsberg, Duane Breitling, Rick Steen, Brian Hagen, Vern Bennett, Mary Scherling

**Absent:** Chad Peterson

**Presenter:** Chip Ammerman, Director

#### I. Approval of Minutes

Mr. Ellingsberg made a motion to approve the February 4, 2019 Board minutes. Mr. Bennett seconded it. Motion carried.

#### II. Legislative Update

Mr. Ammerman explained there are three bills that will impact Social Services.

House Bill 1520 would have the most impact to Juvenile Court and delinquent offenders. It redefines the age of an individual capable of committing a state or constitutional offense from 17 to 10 years of age. This bill also introduces the development of a detention screening tool by Juvenile Court to be used by law enforcement to assure a delinquent child is being placed appropriately when in custody. Mr. Ammerman states one concern the county directors have with this bill is the inspection of juvenile court records, as well as medical, educational and school information, of the delinquent child by the victim or victim's guardian. He states it would be redacted appropriately, but the directors have concerns due to the protection of the information and who it would be shared with. The county directors will be testifying against this when the bill is heard next week. Section 7 of the bill further defines Child Protective Services' (CPS) role when there are non-caregiver sexual abuse concerns. Currently, CPS only assesses cases where the offender is a caregiver. If the offender is a juvenile, the worker might assist law enforcement, but the case would not be assigned. The amendment would mean a CPS worker would assess and safety planning the concerns until the court became involved. This may increase the overall CPS caseload by approximately 50 cases per year.

House Bill 1033 is the introduction of a Pilot Project for Home and Community Based Services (HCBS). There was not much objection to the overall bill, but there was some inaccuracy in the testimony provided by Lutheran Social Services' (LSS) Jessica Thomasson. Sharon Kleeman, Manager of Adult Services, responded to the testimony via a letter sent to the Senate Human Services Committee and Representative Judy Lee clarifying HCBS' role and what tasks they perform for members of the community in order to keep them safely in their homes as long as possible. Tasks such as housekeeping, personal cares, etc. are performed by Qualified Service Providers licensed through the State. Community Living Services (CLS) and LSS would like to provide these services, along with Cass County, in order to better serve our community. Ms. Kleeman stated this would only drop the amount of Cass County cases by approximately 10. She was asked what issues would be solved by this Pilot Project. Ms. Kleeman explained CLS and LSS do not feel Cass County was aggressive enough in engaging clients with services. Ms. Kleeman explained clients are able to make their own decisions and the county's workers are not able to force or order services if the client does not want them.

Senate Bill 2124 is the Social Services Redesign Bill. This bill will address the budgeting process, creation of the zones and zone boards, employee status, State Attorneys and Child Care Licensing.

Mr. Ammerman explained the budgeting process will need to be addressed quickly as there is no plan after the current budget ends June 30, 2019. The budget for 2020 will be based on 2018 budget with inflators. If additional amounts are being requested above that determined amount, the county/zone will have to present argument as to why the additional amount is needed.

Originally, August 2019 was the deadline for zone proposals. This has been rescheduled for January 2020. At this time, Cass County has not received any proposals from other counties. Cass County is able to fulfill the requirement to be its own zone due to the population being more than 60,000. Each zone will determine what services they will provide while teaming with other zones to assist in sharing service programs, such as Intake, Licensing, APS, forensic interviewing, etc. Having zones will allow more sharing of services for some of the outlying cities and towns that might be easily accessible to the neighboring county. There can only be a maximum of 19 zones. Each zone will have a zone board with their primary focus being service delivery. The board would continue to be a decision making group versus advisory committee as originally proposed. Each board would consist of the agency director, Commission and community representatives, and a legislator from the zone area. The Chair would be elected by the board.

There would be no major change from the original proposal regarding the State Attorneys. One attorney from the zone would represent. There was a concern for conflict of interest for cases when the child is in State custody. It was determined that the County Director would be the custodian in such situation, which would allow the State Attorney's representation.

County employees, including the director, would not be reclassified as state employees as discussed previously. Child care licensors, however, would become state employees as the Regional Office oversight will be removed and licensors will consult the State directly.

Mr. Bennet was looking for clarification regarding Section 4 of HB1520 as to why a delinquent child's records would be treated any differently than a victim's when it comes to inspection and what would be shared. Mr. Breitling researched the Century Code and explained it is just the placement of the Section in the bill that makes it confusing. Both the victim and offender's records would be treated the same.

### **III. Operations Report**

Mr. Ammerman explained the agency is currently using the TriMetrix hiring process to fill open positions. The process defines the position's role and the traits and competencies needed to be successful in that position. He explained it is not much different from what the agency was doing before, but it is a more formalized process.

Adult Protective Service (APS) cases are slowly increasing as community partners are becoming more aware of issues affecting that population. Ms. Kleeman will be proposing to the State to increase the current .5 position to 1.0; however this decision will be based on the contract. Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) has been somewhat stable with the average caseload around 80 cases versus last year at 72-75 around this time. Mr. Ammerman and Ms. Kleeman were asked what the growth has been in the last three years because House Bill 1520 would increase funding for Adult and Human Services to \$1.58 million. The last time this was calculated, it was found the county was significantly underfunded and that South Central Human

Services and Southeast Human Service Center were understaffed. Ms. Kleeman and Mr. Ammerman were unable to provide those statistics at this time.

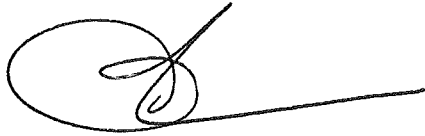
Mr. Schock explained training for SPACES Second Release (R2) will conclude on March 15, 2019 with the conversion taking place March 18, 2019. He states there have been positive reviews from staff regarding R2 versus the first release. The only challenge staff currently face is cases can only be converted at the time they are up for review for each program, requiring staff to convert and determine eligibility at the same time. Conversion of one case for one program can take up to two and a half hours. There are approximately 19,000 cases that would need to be converted. Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) continues to be leveling off.

CPS is currently at full staff. This is the eighth month of cases being up 23%. The Pilot Project was successful for the workflow but the caseload continues to be a challenge. The amount of children in foster care continues to decrease.

Mr. Hagen asked Mr. Schock about the availability of Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) to those attending college. Mr. Schock explained in order to qualify for TANF, the applicant would need to have a child and participate in the JOBS Program through Job Service. They would be required to complete a work assessment and participate in a work program in order to receive benefits.

**IV. Adjournment**

Mr. Ellingsberg made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 3:06 p.m. Meeting adjourned.



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Chad Peterson, Chair  
Cass County Social Services Board



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Blair Hodge, Recorder