

**CASS COUNTY SOCIAL SERVICES BOARD MEETING**  
**July 1, 2019**

**MINUTES**

With quorum present, Commissioner Peterson called the meeting to order at 1:35 p.m.

**Present:** Chad Peterson, Glenn Ellingsberg, Vern Bennett, Duane Breitling, Rick Steen, Mary Scherling

**Absent:** Brian Hagen

**Presenter:** Chip Ammerman, Director; Michael Montplaisir, County Auditor

**I. Approval of Minutes**

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

**II. 2020 Budget Proposal**

Mr. Ammerman explained there were a couple major points to discuss regarding the budget and the State taking over Social Service funding. The first being indirect costs that will be the County's responsibility. Michael Montplaisir, County Auditor, reported the State identified some of the indirect costs would include the Legal Department, telephones, postage, copier maintenance, insurance, general office supplies, toner, and software. The State would provide funds for computer upgrades done on a regular cycle, along with burial assistance and In Lieu of Rent payments. Mr. Montplaisir is still seeking clarification on this because there are many items in the State's list that is used solely by Social Services and, therefore, should be covered through State funding of Social Services. Mr. Montplaisir also reported there is no clear date for Cass County employees to transition from County employees to State employees. He stated some may transition in August and others not until 2020. They anticipate clarification of these issues at the July 15, 2019 meeting.

Mr. Ammerman reported the he and the Management Team, along with Chair Peterson, Mr. Montplaisir, and Robert Wilson, County Administrator, began initial budget discussions that will be presented to the State for approval. Mr. Ammerman stated each zone should have equitable distribution of cases and compensation. He gathered information from other counties in North Dakota in order to develop the proposal. This information was provided to Board Members with the proposed staffing additions, along with their justifications. Mr. Ammerman is seeking additional positions to include an attorney and paralegal; line staff, lead workers, support staff and supervisor for Economic Assistance; Social Workers in Family Services; and an additional Social Worker for Adult Services. He is also making requests to increase positions that are currently .5 FTE to 1.0 FTE in Foster Care Licensing and Adult Protective Services. All would be State funded or State contracted except for the Legal positions, which would be considered an indirect cost and come from the General Fund. Mr. Ammerman explained in order for Cass County to be approved for these positions, the position would have to be open somewhere else within the State.

Regarding salaries, Mr. Ammerman explained County employees typically receive a Cost of Living Adjustment and a step increase annually. This would be discontinued with State funding. This causes concerns as new employees coming in will be making as much as an employee that

have been here for numerous years. It is anticipated all County employees will see a 2% increase which aligns with what State employees receive. Mr. Montplaisir does not expect the cost of insurance to increase for employees at this time and reports there is sufficient reserves to cover an increase if needed.

In 2020, Mr. Ammerman anticipates a cost of \$2.75 million to be transferred to the State, leaving an estimated base of \$9.78 million for the 2020 Budget. He is seeking direction from the Board members regarding the proposal requests. Mr. Ammerman anticipates the State will approve some of the requested additions, but not all. Chair Peterson explained the County should prepare for all additional positions, including office space. Mr. Wilson stated there has been preliminary discussion regarding additional office space in the Annex basement if needed. Mr. Ammerman stated he would not want to home base anyone, but would like to make employees more mobile.

Mr. Bennett made a motion to approve the 2020 Budget as written. In discussion, Ms. Scherling stated it would be wise for the Board to approve the budget as written as it will be the only opportunity to ask for the positions. On roll call, motion passed unanimously.

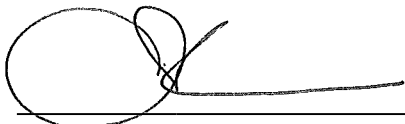
Mr. Ammerman asked the Board if they would prefer him to send the 2020 Budget Proposal right away or with the zonal plan. It was agreed that he and the Board would meet to discuss the zonal plan and send both the plan and Budget Proposal to Department of Human Services at the same time. In discussion, it was decided to meet prior to the next Commission Meeting held on July 22, 2019 for further discussion on the zonal plan and zonal board.

**III. Operations Report**

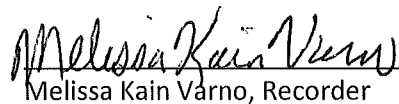
The report was distributed prior to the meeting; however, due to time constraints was not discussed.

**IV. Adjournment**

Mr. Steen made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 3:03 p.m. Ms. Scherling seconded it. Meeting adjourned.



Chad Peterson, Chair  
Cass County Social Services Board



Melissa Kain Varno, Recorder