

CASS COUNTY HUMAN SERVICE ZONE BOARD MEETING

December 6, 2021

MINUTES

With quorum present, Interim Co-Director Jacobson called the meeting to order at 2:01 PM.

Present: Chad Peterson (via Teams), Mary Scherling, Brian Hagen, Rick Steen, Duane Breitling, Jim Kapitan

Absent:

Presenter: Kim Jacobson, Human Services Zone Interim Co-Director; Robert Wilson, County Administrator; Lynn Flieth, Human Services Zone Interim Co-Director; Sidney Schock, Economic Assistance Division Manager;

I. Approval of Minutes

Mr. Breitling made a motion to approve the November 1, 2021. Board minutes. Mr. Steen seconded it. Motion carried.

II. Management Team Update

The Administrative Services Manager position recently vacated by Marla McIntyre has been reclassified to an Executive Staff Officer (ESO) position. Duties will include the supervision of the administrative team and a member of the management team. The position will also be responsible for Human Resource practices and training of all levels of management. Heather Collins was offered and accepted the ESO position. She will start on January 3, 2022.

Mr. Breitling provided an update on the Zone Director position. Of the four candidates interviewed, the hiring committee consisting of both County and State representatives agreed to offer the position to Gail Bollinger.

Mr. Breitling made a motion to extend an offer to Gail Bollinger for the Cass County Human Service Zone Director position contingent on the completion of a background check, salary, and benefits negotiation. Mr. Steen seconded it. On roll call, motion passed unanimously.

Ms. Bollinger was present and introduced herself, stating she looks forward to joining the agency. Ms. Bollinger has over 25 years of leadership and management experience in human services and private non-profit organizations.

III. Facilities/IT Updates

Through thorough assessment and analysis along with consultation with the Information Technology (IT) Department, it was determined that many CCHSZ team members do not have the appropriate type of computer system to meet their essential job duties. A summary of recommendations was provided to ND DHS. 2021 budgetary authority and availability provided opportunity to execute a plan for a sizable purchase of Surfaces, keyboards, and hard cases. In addition, a plan was made to utilize existing equipment to support the system replacement schedule. The Surfaces have arrived. However, due to shipping delays, the keyboards and cases have not arrived and are impacting system roll-out. In addition, web cams have been ordered for all team members who will not have a Surface and/or lack a monitor with camera/audio ability. The goal with this overall purchase and ripple is to ensure all team members will have full audio and visual ability for Team meetings.

In March 2020, IT purchased 60 to 80 laptops due to an increase in telecommuting as a result of COVID. With the implementation of the new batch of Surfaces, those employees who receive Surfaces will be assigned this system as a main workspace. Team members will not be assigned two systems. There will continue to be a few Surfaces available for dispatch if a desktop user is

in temporary need of a portable unit. Direct (state) funds were utilized purchase this equipment. Appreciation was expressed to IT for their help in this transition.

Mr. Wilson provided a summary of the recent Building Committee meeting. The Cass County Commission voted to support the recommendations of the building committee to modernize the Annex including both workspace and technology updates. T.L. Stroh completed a space study in 2016, along with subsequent studies by Eide Bailley and Foss. While all studies were reviewed, Eide Bailley's study focused more on the Economic Assistance space to be more efficient within that division and the Foss study focused on office furniture for the entire campus. It was decided that utilizing T.L. Stroh would be preferred given their history with the building. Both Interim Co-Directors have provided input on workflow and grouping certain units in specific areas. The goal is for a cohesive plan for the entire facility.

It was inquired if the changes would satisfy the needs with an increase in the refugee population. Ms. Jacobson explained that due to the current Economic Assistance re-design, a client would not need to be on-site due to implementation of a state-wide caseload, client call center, and centralized mail. Clients can do more online and there are more staff across the state working from home. Offices will be given to those who require face-to-face interaction and those who need the additional support to be successful.

IV. General Assistance (GA) Policy

All human service zones are transitioning to a unified General Assistance policy, which includes Indigent Burials effective January 1, 2022. Division Manager Sidney Schock was involved in reviewing and providing input on the drafting of the unified General Assistance policy.

A proposed addendum was provided to the board for consideration. The addendums addressed items historically needed in Cass County when delivering the General Assistance Program. The addendum impacts Chapter 300 of the Unified General Assistance manual. The \$250.00 cap per individual per calendar year, was provided, indicating this was outside any other services received through the County and used to meet the immediate needs not covered by any federal or state program. Under the unified policy, indigent burials are determined with a standardized application and eligibility is determined by policy. This was previously funded by County dollars but with the creation of Zones, this is now a state funded program. In 2022, there will be a state-wide authorized indigent burial amount determined by the Department of Human Services (DHS) and the Funeral Director Association.

Ms. Scherling made a motion to approve the addendums to chapter 300 of the Cass County General Assistance Manual. Mr. Breitling seconded. Motion passed.

V. 2021 DHS Authorized Bonus

Discussion was held regarding bonuses authorized by DHS and related to the COVID-19 impact for state and zone employees. As of this date, criteria is still pending to determine team member eligibility. However, the intent to distribute the bonuses with the December 2021 payroll. Ms. Jacobson and Ms. Flieth will seek input from managers/supervisors and/or division managers once criteria is established.

VI. Operations Reports

There was an inquiry as to whether the statistics reported are for Cass County or the entire state. Economic Assistance Division Manager Sidney Shock explained the numbers are only for Cass County. Mr. Schock continues to have issues collecting statistics due to the Cognos report timing out caused by the number of cases assigned to Cass County. The state looks at all cases the same; however, each case has different time management requirements. Mr. Schock indicated that Cass County has higher constant contact cases (TANF, childcare) and lower one-and-done cases (LIHEAP). As the agency moves to the regional approach, the hope is that the

state will utilize the skills and expertise individuals have developed to continue an efficient workflow.


It was questioned what the transition will look like when the new Zone Director begins. Ms. Jacobson and Ms. Flieth understand there will be a transition time; however, it is unsure what this will look like. They did seek feedback from the current Zone Board on the transition.

VII. Adjournment

Mr. Steen made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 2:45 pm. Mr. Breitling seconded. Motion carried.



Kim Jacobson, Interim Zone Director
Cass County Human Services Zone Board



Blair Hodge, Recorder