

CASS COUNTY SOCIAL SERVICES BOARD MEETING

May 5, 2022

MINUTES

With quorum present, Chair Bollinger called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m.

Present: Commissioner Duane Breitling; Commissioner Rick Steen; Carey Fry; Brian Hagen; Julie Haugen; Michelle Kommer; Dan Madler; Gail Bollinger

Absent:

Presenter: Gail Bollinger, Zone Director; Heather Collins, Executive Staff Officer; Robert Wilson, Cass County Administrator.

I. **Approval of Minutes**

Ms. Fry made a motion to approve the April 4, 2022, Board minutes. Mr. Hagen seconded. Motion carried.

II. **County Commission proclaimed May as Foster Care Month**

Cass County Commission signed a proclamation declaring May as Foster Care Awareness Month. There will be a variety of community events occurring in May that will acknowledge Foster Care Month as well as a picnic honoring Cass County foster families.

III. **Follow-up from Economic Assistance Featured Program in April**

Chair Bollinger provided the Board with additional documentation that was requested from Economic Assistance at the April Board meeting. This included the 2022 Federal Poverty Guidelines and the North Dakota Child Care Assistance Program Sliding Fee Schedule. It was asked if there are asset tests completed when considering program eligibility. Chair Bollinger confirmed there are, depending on the program.

IV. **Personnel Updates**

Heather Collins provided an overview related to Zone turnover in the last year. She explained the reason for the dramatic increase in October was due to a large number of Zone positions becoming State positions. There were a few more that made the transition in April, but Ms. Collins anticipates that to be the last of the transfers for now.

In April, there were two retirements, two resignations, and four new staff onboarding. Ms. Collins reported there are still 20 positions at various stages in the hiring process.

For future reports, it was requested that Ms. Collins separate out the positions that transitioned to State and the County positions for easier analysis of the trends. Ms. Collins agreed that would be more helpful and will do that moving forward.

V. **Director's Report**

Chair Bollinger provided an additional handout to the Board Members with a Director's Report narrative and a Zone Organizational Chart.

In the Board Meeting packet, Chair Bollinger explained the graphic of the Economic Assistance cases by program from October 2021 to March 2022 as well as the

percentages of clients and the number of programs they are enrolled in. It was requested that Chair Bollinger provide a glossary of terms and acronyms as not all Board members are familiar with the terms. She indicated she would include this in the future. Commissioner Breitling questioned if there has been a change in trends due to the Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service (LIRS). She reports only that of a normal increase due to new community members that would seek or require assistance. Ms. Fry reported the Department of Human Services (DHS) is configuring a redesign of Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) that may increase the numbers for that program in the future.

Chair Bollinger explained Economic Assistance had a state-wide Readiness Town Hall providing information related to the go live date in February 2023. In addition, Cass County had an individual meeting with Steve Bourgois, Director of Office of Transformation, Bianca Bell and Linda Brew to assess the Zone's readiness. The Zone will be implementing ILINX and FileNet.

State partners continue to assist the Family Service Division during the transition with new leadership and staff. While State partners have focused mostly on Child Protection for the last few months, the Case Management Unit will also benefit from Case Management Field Service Specialists being present weekly to aide in coaching and mentoring regarding the Safety Framework Practice Model (SFPM) approach as well as allowing Case Management Supervisors to provide a better onboarding experience for new staff.

Chair Bollinger reviewed potential signage related to service animals and privacy. Ms. Kommer suggested adequate training of Zone team members prior to posting. Chair Bollinger reported training will be provided to all Zone team members prior to implementation.

Chair Bollinger presented a draft Organizational Chart. When Interim Co-Director Kim Jacobson and Lynn Flieth reported on their recommendations for the Zone, made a recommendation for additional assistance for the Zone Director. The Zone was approved to add an HR/Operations Administrator that would oversee certain aspects and divisions within the agency. It also provided the opportunity to adjust other leadership roles to provide a more solid leadership team.

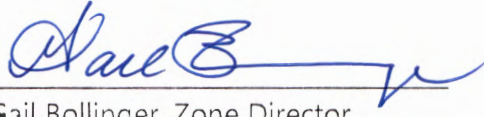
Regarding the updating/remodeling of the Annex building, Chair Bollinger reported she, Robert Wilson, County Administrator, Gene Gartner, Building and Grounds, and Stroh Architects have walked through the Annex to discuss possible projects. Mr. Wilson reported they are focusing on a long-term view of staff and client needs while trying to be cost-effective due to other facility updates that also require attention. Discussions will continue to make the best use of the space and updates.

Chair Bollinger reports she will attend another in-person Zone Director's Meeting in May as well as continue her individual meetings with Board Members. Last Friday, staff and community members were invited to attend a presentation by the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) Family Preservation Program with the opportunity to meet our local

Preservationist that will assist our agency when working with ICWA families. Chair Bollinger continues to meet with community nonprofits and partners.

VI. Adjournment

Commissioner Steen made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 1:35 p.m. Commissioner Breitling seconded. Motion carried.



Gail Bollinger, Zone Director
Cass County Human Service Zone



Blair Hodge, Recorder