

CASS COUNTY SOCIAL SERVICES BOARD MEETING

August 1, 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; Dan Madler; Michelle Kommer; Gail Bollinger

Absent:

Presenter: Gail Bollinger, Zone Director; Heather Collins, HR/Operations Manager; Matthew Gebhardt, Child Welfare Consultant & Technical Support for Family Services

I. **Approval of Minutes**

Commissioner Steen made a motion to approve the July 5, 2022, Board minutes. Commissioner Breitling seconded it. Motion carried.

II. **Role of the Board – Handout**

In the Board Packet, members were provided a handout with a chart outlining the roles of Human Service Zone Board, County Commissioners, Zone Director, and DHS. This is follow-up to the presentation Kristen Hasbargen, DHS Director of Zone Operations, gave in January to the board. Chair Bollinger felt it would be a great resource for all Board members to have. Board members stated this was a helpful tool and clarifies everyone's roles well.

III. **Guest: Mr. Matthew Gebhardt – Child Welfare Consultant & Technical Support - Family Services**

Chair Bollinger briefly introduced Matthew Gebhardt. It was explained that Mr. Gebhardt is assisting the Cass County Human Service Zone on a contractual basis. He has 25 years of professional experience in Child Welfare. Mr. Gebhardt assisted with the implementation of the Safety Framework Practice Model in North Dakota. Focus areas for Mr. Gebhardt is to provide review, evaluation and training related to child welfare and enhancement of knowledge of the practice model, and coach department supervisors. Mr. Gebhardt shared that his focus is to assist the agency in providing a more consistent practice, continue to assist in developing the leadership team, and build a solid system to ensure the safety of all children in the community. He will focus on training workers to help strengthen their skills and assist with case backlog. It is anticipated that Mr. Gebhardt's will assist with the onboarding of the Family Service Manager in mid-September

IV. **Personnel Update**

Ms. Collins provided the Board with 2nd quarter turnover data. In the month of July, the Zone welcomed five new staff, there was one internal promotion, and received eight resignations. There are currently five new employees scheduled to start in August, the majority in Economic Assistance, and there are 16 other positions in various stages.

It was asked if employees have been completing the exit interviews. Ms. Collins explained employees are offered the chance, but it is not required. From her understanding, the departures are in part to advancing careers and more compensation. The new exit survey created by the statewide workgroup that Ms. Collins was a member of will be implemented

in the next month or two which will assist in compiling better data that can be reported to the Board in the future.

V. Update on Director's Review

Ms. Collins and Mr. Hagen continue to work with the Board members to develop Chair Bollinger's probationary review. Ms. Collins reports an ad hoc meeting via Teams will be called before the September Board Meeting to formally receive and accept Ms. Bollinger's review.

VI. Director's Report

Chair Bollinger reported attending the July Zone Director's meeting in Bismarck. Holly Triska-Dally, the North Dakota Refugee Coordinator, provided a presentation on the current Ukrainian resettlement. Zones are to encourage resettled Ukrainian to contact the Office of Refugee Resettlement and Support Services as they are not notified. As of Ms. Triska-Dally's report, there have been 54 that have arrived in Bismarck and 12 in Fargo. Board members questioned how many more will be resettling in Cass County and how this will impact the current staffing situation in the Zone. Chair Bollinger explained this program is a sponsorship program. This means any person, church, or group could take in a Ukrainian individual or family. She explained that at this time, a concrete number would be difficult to report.

A financial report provided by the Zone's accounting specialist reflects that as of the end of July, the Zone is under budget by \$900,000. This is in part due to departures of long-term staff.

The Economic Assistance Department has been working with the Richland-Sargent-Ransom (RSR) Human Service Zone in anticipation of the February 2023 redesign. RSR will be providing training to a Cass County pilot group this week with some of the processes and procedures to begin August 15, 2022. Once the redesign is implemented, there will be a customer care center that will assist anyone calling regarding their Economic Assistance benefits. It was asked how this will work and if there will be employees familiar with the local programs to assist Cass County residents. Chair Bollinger explained those in the customer care centers will be located all over North Dakota. There has been some interest shown from current Cass County Zone employees who would like to be a part of this unit. The intent of the unit is to answer the caller's questions without having to transfer to someone else. Staffing needs for this unit will be determined by the region and not zone-specific.

As of August 1, 2022, changes were made in addressing Children in Need of Services (CHINS) within the Family Service Department. These are cases dealing with truancy, using/possessing tobacco, running away and disobeying parents. School and law enforcement officials will make a referral to the CHINS unit, which is staffed by professionals around the State who will connect the family with services in their community.

Chair Bollinger reported some statistics from the Family Service Department were included with today's Board packet. She will continue to work on obtaining additional information to share with Board members regarding that unit.

Commissioner Steen asked Chair Bollinger if she could identify areas she felt were being underserved in the community. She responded that there are more needs for in-home services for vulnerable or elderly adults in the rural areas.

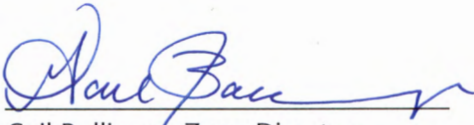
VII. October Board Meeting Date Discussion

Chair Bollinger stated the North Dakota Association of Counties Conference will occur over the October Zone Board Meeting. She is seeking the Board's input as to whether the next meeting should be held October 10, October 17, or wait until November with the option to call an emergency meeting if there is a need. Board members agreed to forego the October meeting and resume in November.

September's Teams invite will be re-sent to reflect the adjusted date of September 6, 2022 due to the Labor Day holiday.

VIII. Adjournment

Ms. Kommer made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 1:49 p.m. Commissioner Steen seconded. Motion carried.



Gail Bollinger, Zone Director
Cass County Human Service Zone



Blair Hodge, Recorder