

CASS COUNTY SOCIAL SERVICES BOARD MEETING

February 6, 2017

MINUTES

With quorum present, Chair Bennett called the meeting to order at 2:03 p.m.

Present: Vern Bennett, Arland Rasmussen, Chad Peterson, Mary Scherling, Rick Steen, Glenn Ellingsberg, Brian Hagen

Presenter: Chip Ammerman, Director; Sidney Schock, Economic Assistance Manager

I. **Approval of Minutes**

Ms. Scherling made a motion to approve the January 3, 2017 Board minutes. Mr. Rasmussen seconded it. Motion carried.

II. **Legislative Update**

Mr. Ammerman provided updates on three House Bills currently up for discussion in Legislature. House Bill 2206 addresses complete state funding of Social Services. The bill has been moved to Appropriations Committee for additional testimony regarding payment methods for this bill. Mr. Ammerman stated at this time, it appears as if the bill will continue to the House. Smaller counties have concerns of this bill, so there may be more questions to be answered when it does get to the House. It is believed it will go straight through the Senate with little or no question.

Mr. Ammerman discussed two bills regarding drug testing individuals who qualify for Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF). One bill was voted down in the Senate with a second one being approved in the House and will move on to the Senate. Mr. Ammerman explained one issue with the bill is that it would be the eligibility worker's responsibility identify possible drug use by the client in order to hold the client's TANF payment. This is a particular training agency staff do not currently have and would require to accurately assess for potential drug use. Mr. Ammerman states the bill does not identify what happens in the appeals process or to the funding during the time it is being held. If approved, only the cash amount of TANF would be able to be suspended because it would be unlawful to hold any other assistance. Mr. Ammerman felt this bill would also be voted down in the Senate.

III. **Laserfiche Update**

Sidney Schock, Economic Assistance Manager, provided background regarding the move to paperless for Economic Assistance that started in 2013. The original system included a drive created by the IT Department where documents were stored before being uploaded to FileNet. This process created issues with documents being lost or deleted. Through further research, Laserfiche was found to be a potential replacement for this original system. With the assistance and ongoing support from Terry Schmaltz, Matt Stewart, and Tami Hansen from the IT Department and Melissa Kain Varno, Administrative Services Manager, all 63 Economic Assistance eligibility workers are now in some phase of Laserfiche use. As with any change, there were concerns of resistance from some staff, but current staff feedback has been very positive. There have been some technical issues, but those are quickly being resolved with assistance from the IT Department. The next phase will be implementation of Laserfiche in Family Services.

Mr. Schock also explained a new real-time data exchange will be rolling out in the next few months that is integrated with the client log-in system, Q-Flow. A client will log in to the kiosk with the last four digits of their Social Security number or their case number. This information will allow staff to access information before the client appears at the desk such their eligibility worker and programs the client receives through Economic Assistance.

These were suggestions from the Eide Bailly Work Flow Study and part of the review done in 2016. Due to these changes, the Economic Assistance lobby still sees the same number of people, but it is more quiet and efficient than it was in the past.

IV. Review of 2016 Work Plan

Mr. Ammerman reviewed the 2016 Work Plan stating most objectives were completed in the last year. Divisions continued to develop onboarding strategies to use when hiring and training new staff. This enables consistency in training for the position and allows the employee to reach their full potential quicker and more efficiently.

Family Services experienced three significant retirements in 2016 with two of them being supervisors. This allowed for restructuring of the Family Based Case Management unit. All four supervisors are enmeshed in all programs. Mr. Ammerman stated Pat Podoll, Family Services Manager, will be retiring in August. A team is working on to defining position responsibilities and identifying characteristics and skillsets needed for the position. Recruitment for this position will begin the end of April.

V. Review of 2017 Work Plan

Mr. Ammerman reviewed key areas that programs will be focusing on in the upcoming year. An overall theme for 2017 will be reviewing training plans and orientation of new staff.

Education will be provided to HCBS staff through community services in regards to the Somalian and Nepalese cultures due to these groups being the majority population that HCBS currently serves.

Board members can expect additional updates in the upcoming year regarding Economic Assistancess' use of Laserfiche, as well as the effectiveness of the Training Coordinator's efforts to increase staff efficiencies though development of best practices and reducing the time it takes for new staff to be fully trained and taking cases.

Family Services will continue to identify strategies to assist in early intervention by using Signs of Safety and other tools in their daily practice. They will also review Alternative Response strategies that have been used for the last ten years. The use of these strategies has reduced the return rate of families into the child welfare system to 5%, down from 30-50%.

A cross training plan between units will be developed and implemented in Administrative Services in the third quarter of 2017. They will also continue measuring the efficiencies created by Q-Flow and Laserfiche in Economic Assistance with processes being reviewed and revised as needed.

Personnel will focus on updating all job descriptions to be on the state-required JDQ form. They will also continue the integration and expansion of onboarding strategies to ensure all Divisions are actively using these strategies.

Through their use of S Agency, Management will continue the integration of manager/supervisor training, as well as continued integration of leadership coaching strategies within each division. Management will also meet with the County Administrator to define relationships and provide a definition of roles within the agency.

Lastly, Community Networking looks to expand on the Jefferson Neighborhood collaborative. They will collaborate with Madison, Ed Clapp, Lincoln and Clara Barton School Districts to unite families within the school district with early intervention services prior to the family being in crises. This collaborative has reduced Jefferson School District's rate of families moving in and out of their school system from 30-50% to 7-10%, which is more in line with other districts.

VI. Operations Report

Mr. Ellingsberg requested to have previous months' numbers reflected on the Statistical Report for ease of comparison in the future. Mr. Ammerman stated he would make the change for the next Board Meeting. There was no further discussion on the Operations Report.

Mr. Steen made a motion to approve the Operations Report. Mr. Peterson seconded it. Motion carried.

Mr. Rasmussen stated it was nice to hear positive comments regarding the systems and programs used by Economic Assistance.


March's Board Meeting date will need to be changed due to Commissioners being in Bismarck. The Commission Chair will notify Mr. Ammerman of the new date as soon as it has been decided.

VII. Adjournment

Mr. Peterson made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 2:56 pm. Mr. Steen seconded it. Motion carried.



Vern Bennett, Chair
Cass County Social Services Board



Melissa Kain Varno, Recorder