

CASS COUNTY SOCIAL SERVICES BOARD MEETING
November 6, 2017

MINUTES

With quorum present, Chair Bennett called the meeting to order at 2:00 pm.

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

Absent: Glenn Ellingsberg

Presenter: Chip Ammerman, Director; Melissa Kain Varno, Administrative Services Division Manager; Sidney Schock, Economic Assistance Division Manager

I. Approval of Minutes

Mr. Steen made a motion to approve the October 2, 2017 Board minutes. Ms. Scherling seconded it. Motion carried.

II. Q-Flow/Web Service Update

Ms. Kain Varno gave a brief history on the implementation of Q-Flow, which is a queuing system currently being utilized in Economic Assistance. Based on the client's selection at the lobby's kiosk, clients are provided a ticket that directs them to different stations within Economic Assistance. This system has allowed the agency to track metrics, as well as streamline processes for staff and clients. This was researched by staff and also included in the recommendations from the Eide Bailly work flow study that was done in 2015. Prior to the implementation in March 2016, the agency had no way of tracking wait times and the amount of clients served. One metric that has been closely tracked is the wait time for scanning, which has gone from 25 minutes in 2016 down to 20 minutes in 2017 due to additional efficiencies put in place and an added support staff position to assist in those job functions.

Mr. Schock presented information concerning the new Web Service currently being utilized by Eligibility Workers and Support Staff that shows real-time results for the different types of financial assistance available through Social Services. The system pulls information from five different programs, allowing staff to get a complete overview of the client's assistance history. This program does not retain documents, but provides information as to the programs the client is receiving or has received and who their worker is. The system was designed for Cass County but it's the intent of the state to make this available to other counties. There have been changes made to the Q-flow kiosk to incorporate clients entering information that will allow the use of the Web Service by staff. This will increase the efficiency by allowing staff to look up information prior to calling the ticket and talking with the client.

The next step for Cass County will be to integrate Outlook Calendars with the Q-Flow system. This integration will streamline the current process by alerting the worker directly that the client is here for their appointment. Reception staff will no longer need to be in the middle between the worker and their clients when checking in for appointments. A work group has been developed to work with the programmer to implement this next phase.

III. Work Plan Review

Mr. Ammerman reviewed the Work Plan previously discussed in March 2017. He stated a common theme among all divisions was the review of a training plan and orientation of new staff. Divisions are currently working on orientation and on-boarding programs to assist new staff in adjusting to the work environment. The agency is currently working with Sagency, a local executive recruitment and leadership consulting firm, to assist in finding the right candidates for open positions within the agency. This process has been used on two positions within Family Services so far. Management, supervisors and Cindy Stoick, Human Resource Director, have attended

training that teach not only how to identify the ideal candidates for the open positions, but also active supervision and developing growth plans around employee's strengths and weaknesses.

Mr. Ammerman was asked if the rate of turnover within the agency has decreased. He stated the reasons previously were mostly because of a high rate of retirements, along with resignation or termination staff that were not appropriately matched for the position or that were inappropriately completing their job functions. Mr. Ammerman estimates the next cycle for retirements would be in approximately five years, but hopes turnover due to other reasons will continue to stay low, especially with the implementation of practices management is learning from Sagency.

Mr. Ammerman shared the implementation of Laserfiche in Economic Assistance has decreased the amount of upload errors from 67% to approximately a 1.8% error rate. Laserfiche discussions will begin in the coming months to implement this with Family Services and the Legal Department.

Ms. Scherling questioned the impact on the agency with the potential cuts at NDSU Extension. Mr. Ammerman stated he was unsure what impact it would have on the agency at this time, but stated the Extension Office's Parenting Resources are used quite a bit in the Family Service division. It is the agency's primary resource for Nurturing Hearts, a relationship-focused method recommended for some families. If that was to be cut, the agency would have to seek outside sources for instruction on this program.

Ms. Scherling also questioned the impact of the new Executive Director of Department of Human Services, Christopher Jones. Mr. Ammerman, who is on the sub-committee for Senate Bill 2206, felt Mr. Jones appears to be open to new opportunities and ideas. Mr. Jones seems to be interested in how the agency works and why the agency does things the way they do. His end goal is finding the best way to get the work done, which Mr. Ammerman felt was most encouraging.

IV. Operations Report

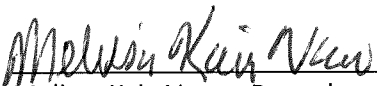
Mr. Hagen asked for clarification on the reported 40,000 individuals that received some sort of assistance in September 2017. He was assured that was a correct amount and that the number reflects individuals and not households. Mr. Ammerman reminded the Board that the vast majority of people receiving benefits are the working poor and the aged and disabled population.

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

V. Adjournment

Mr. Rasmussen made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 3:05 pm. Mr. Peterson seconded it. Motion carried.


Vern Bennett, Chair
Cass County Social Services Board


Melissa Kain Varno, Recorder