

## CASS COUNTY SOCIAL SERVICES BOARD MEETING

July 2, 2018

### MINUTES

With quorum present, Vice Chair Peterson called the meeting to order at 2:02 p.m.

**Present:** Mary Scherling, Glenn Ellingsberg, Arland Rasmussen, Rick Steen, Chad Peterson, Brian Hagen (conference call)

Others present: Senator Judy Lee, Representative Kathy Hogan, Representative Gretchen Dobervich

**Absent:** Vern Bennett

**Presenter:** Chip Ammerman, Director

#### I. **Approval of Minutes**

Mr. Ellingsberg made a motion to approve the June 4, 2018 Board minutes. Ms. Scherling seconded it. Motion carried.

#### II. **2019 Budget Proposal**

Mr. Ammerman distributed an updated Board packet due to a decrease in the expected benefit amount. In 2018, the Social Welfare Fund (SWF) was used to spend down the shortage expected in the 2018 Budget. The ending fund balance for 2018 is expected to be \$124,538. In 2017, \$2.2 million was used from the SWF to reduce the county mills distributed to Social Services. Mr. Ammerman and the Auditor's office predict with the current budget proposal, Social Services will see a shortage of \$1.3 million in 2019, after using the remaining SWF to offset costs. The shortage would require an increase in the mills being distributed to Social Services to fund the 2019 Budget.

Mr. Ammerman discussed the changes in the budget from 2018 to 2019. If there were no additions to the budget, it would increase by \$353,759 due to the increase in employee salaries and benefits. One other major expense is for sponsorships in the amount of \$86,000. These are programs that assist in reducing caseloads and the potential placement of children in foster homes. If these sponsorships were to be discontinued, the agency would have to provide the services internally, resulting in an increase in expenses that would outweigh the current proposed amount.

Mr. Ammerman went on to discuss the need for additional positions, referring to the 2019 Budget Justification for Additional Staff handout. These positions include an additional attorney, a Family Services staff trainer and Alternative Response Social Worker for Family Services, the addition of an Eligibility Worker to assist with the Foster Care/Subsidized Adoption cases. There is currently only one person maintaining a case load of over 500 of these types of cases for Family Services. While there is no face-to-face interviews required, there is much more paper and computer work associated with this position and the risk of the work not being completed timely or accurately could cause hardship for foster parents and the children the agency assists.

Along with the new requests, there are additional requests of increasing part-time positions to full, such as the 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor Receptionist position that has been a permanently temporary position through Preference Personnel for the last 18 years.

As mentioned in prior meetings, there is a request for two Jail Navigators within the Social Service's budget proposal. It was stated people are most motivated to make changes at the time they are released from jail and if they had a contact to assist them in finding housing, steady employment, and other resources, it could potentially reduce recidivism. The total amount for all the requested positions, plus the reclassification of proposed positions, is \$768,497.

Mr. Ammerman asked the Board for direction on the 2019 Budget and whether he could move forward presenting the proposal to the Commissioners. Vice Chair Peterson suggested the proposal be presented to the Commissioners and then looked at holistically afterwards to determine what would stay and what would be eliminated.

Mr. Ellingsberg made a motion to approve the 2019 Budget as written. In discussion, Mr. Steen stated he, Chair Bennett, and Vice Chair Peterson were present for the preliminary budget discussions and are aware of other proposals that were created. Mr. Steen would like those to be presented to the Commissioners as well, due to the amount of work that went in to creating the proposals. Doing so would decrease the additional work this Board would be tasked with if the current proposal was approved.

Glenn Ellingsberg made a motion to allow Mr. Ammerman to present the 2019 Budget to the Commissioners as written. Arland Rasmussen seconded it. Mr. Steen made a follow-up to the motion stating the sub-committee did a lot of work in preparation of the budget presentation and he is requesting that Mr. Ammerman give a brief presentation of the additional 2019 Budgets created during the preliminary budget meetings. On roll call, five approved; one opposed. Motion carried.

**III. Operations Report**

The report was distributed prior to the meeting; however, due to time constraints was not discussed.

**IV. Adjournment**

Mr. Rasmussen made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 3:13 p.m. Ms. Scherling seconded it. Motion carried.



Vern Bennett, Chair  
Cass County Social Services Board



Melissa Kain Varno, Recorder