

**CASS COUNTY SOCIAL SERVICES BOARD MEETING  
October 1, 2018**

**MINUTES**

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

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

**Absent:** Mary Scherling

**Presenter:** Chip Ammerman, Director; Linda Dorff, Family Services Manager

**I. Approval of Minutes**

Mr. Rasmussen made a motion to approve the September 4, 2018 Board minutes. Mr. Peterson seconded it. Motion carried.

**II. Case Updates**

Linda Dorff, Family Services Manager, provided an update to the Board members regarding two concerns brought up at the last Board meeting. Ms. Dorff explained corrections were made in processes after a mother contacted local media about not being provided case management after an incident involving her child's father, who is currently serving time for child abuse. Ms. Dorff explained the CPS worker had done approximately four to six weeks of additional follow-up with the mother, who appeared to be doing everything appropriate to ensure her child's safety after the incident. Father was non-cooperative with services during the assessment. He was offered services while in jail but denied the offer. The mother has filed for divorce and requested a Termination of Parental Rights against the father to prevent any further visitations between the child and the father.

The owner of the child care center whose license was revoked, due to supervision concerns, is currently appealing the revocation decision. The owner filed a motion in District Court to allow the facility to stay open until the decision on the appeal is completed; District Court has denied this request. The appeals hearing will be held at the end of this month.

**III. Undocumented Minors**

Mr. Ammerman explained that Lutheran Social Services (LSS) is the main agency that arranges care and services for undocumented minors. He stated the only time the agency would get involved is if the child required services that this agency provides. Sidney Schock, Economic Assistance Manager, clarified that undocumented is defined as being in the U.S. illegally, where unaccompanied are in the U.S. legally, possibly due to refugee status. Mr. Hagen asked if there was any tracking of names or dates of births because this seems to be a concern and frustration for local schools. Mr. Ammerman stated LSS would have that information because they are the ones that place the children in foster homes and coordinates any services the child might need. Many times, when refugees or New Americans enter the country, they do not know their date of birth, so the State department assigns them a birth date, such as 01/01/2001, which can cause some confusion within the schools and other community agencies.

**IV. Social Service Redesign Update**

On September 17, 2018 Child Protective Services (CPS) started a pilot project that is part of the Social Services Redesign. In the two weeks since it has been implemented, there has been a drastic drop in the amount of CPS cases open - from 200 down to less than 140 cases. Mr. Ammerman explained each program within the agency will go through this process of identifying what their critical activities are in order to reduce the number of non-critical activities that prevent a worker from keeping their focus where it needs to be. Child Care Licensing started the process last week and Economic Assistance will begin in two weeks. Starting in November, Mr. Ammerman will provide Board members with metrics from the implementation of the pilot project.

Mr. Ammerman was asked if there is buy-in from the workers. He stated CPS is using a Task Analysis Board (TAB) to document where they are at in their cases. When the worker completes a specific task, they move their tab to track the progress of the case. Because of this, there is more encouragement between workers, as well as, staff offering assistance to others when they see someone needing help. Mr. Ammerman explained these process changes did not happen sooner due to limited available resources. In addition, the State is more open to changing and discontinuing processes that are not efficient.

Mr. Ammerman discussed the goals of the pilot project, explaining they are ambitious with 95% of CPS assessments being completed within 62 days. Currently, 85% of cases are being completed with 182 days. It is the intent of this agency that clients will be served quicker than they previously were, yet provided the same quality of services prior to the pilot project.

Mr. Ammerman gives much of the credit for the change to North Dakota Department of Human Services Director, Chris Jones. He has been open to promoting changes within the State to create more efficient and effective departments throughout North Dakota. Mr. Jones will be presenting the pilot project at the North Dakota Associations of Counties (NDACo) convention next week. Mr. Ammerman will be in Bismarck at the time, but unable to attend the annual convention.

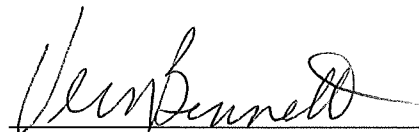
**V. Operations Report**

There was no discussion on the Operations Report.

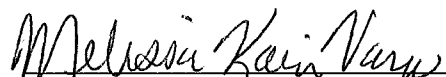
Mr. Peterson made a motion to approve the Operations Report. Mr. Rasmussen seconded it. Motion carried.

**VI. Adjournment**

Mr. Peterson made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 3:08 p.m. Mr. Steen seconded it. Motion carried.



Vern Bennett, Chair  
Cass County Social Services Board



Melissa Kain Varnø, Recorder