

CASS COUNTY SOCIAL SERVICES BOARD MEETING
August 5, 2019

MINUTES

With quorum present, Commissioner Peterson called the meeting to order at 2:01 p.m.

Present: Chad Peterson, Glenn Ellingsberg, Duane Breitling, Mary Scherling, Brian Hagen, Vern Bennett
Absent: Rick Steen
Presenter: Chip Ammerman, Director; Birch Burdick, State Attorney

I. Approval of Minutes

Ms. Scherling made a motion to approve the July 1, 2019 Board minutes and the July 22, 2019 Special Session minutes. Mr. Ellingsberg seconded it. Motion carried.

II. Zone Proposal

Mr. Ammerman presented the Board with the Zone Agreement Template to review. There are two different phases for the Zone Agreement. The first, due on December 1, 2019, focuses on the make-up of the Human Service Zone Board and Letter of Explanation. The second phase, due in June 2020, focuses on the zone details, such as program collaboration.

Mr. Ammerman explained the first two pages of the packet is the Formal Motion. It states the Zone Name along with the members of the Zone Board. He proposed the Zone Name be Cass and that all members of the current Social Service Board be listed as part of the Zone Board. Mr. Ammerman explained there is a potential for this to change as the State will review all motions submitted. At this time, there have been no other counties that have expressed interest in collaborating with Cass and Cass has had no formal discussions with any other counties per direction from the Social Services Board. Mr. Ammerman explained there may be some program collaboration, such as Long Term Care and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), which Cass may assist other counties with. Other counties have offered to assist Cass, such as Traill County offering assistance with Child Protection Assessments in Northern Cass School District. While this would reduce the need for Cass County staff to travel to Northern Cass area, there are very few cases assessed in that area annually and this collaboration would have little impact to caseloads.

Mr. Ammerman went on to explain that each zone board is required to have one county commissioner, per county, in a zone and that the Social Service Board should represent the zone. Each zone is allowed up to 15 members on their Zone Board. Mr. Peterson suggested having at least one Senator and one House Representative on the Zone Board as well. Mr. Ammerman explained in order to submit the Formal Motion, the County must list specific names and include a short biography on that person to the State. He has not reached out to any legislators as of this date, but in discussion, the Board determined two Senators and two Representatives would be contacted. From the Senate, Gary Lee and Judy Lee will be contacted. Ruth Buffalo and Ben Koppelman will be contacted from the Representatives. If any of the aforementioned individuals are unable to participate, Tim Mathern and Merrill Piepkorn from the Senate and Representatives Joshua Boschee, Jim Kasper, and Austen Schauer will be contacted.

Mr. Ammerman provided a summary of the letter that will be included with the Formal Motion. There is a section outlining the board members which requires specific names, their qualifications and justification as to how they will represent the Zone's needs and interest of the community. The letter will request that Cass County remain and single county zone. It explains the organization of management, as well as, the programs and number of cases Cass County oversees. Mr. Ammerman stated once the Zone Board members have been determined, he will send out the formalized Motion for review.

When asked, Mr. Ammerman reported he has not received any feedback from the State on the additional position requests for the 2020 Budget, which was approved by the Board at the July 1, 2019 meeting. He stated the State acknowledged the request was received and being reviewed; however, there was no specific timeline from the State as to when Mr. Ammerman would be notified of approval or denial of the request.

III. **Operations Report**

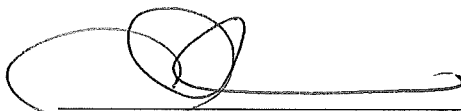
Mr. Ammerman explained that even though Child Protection Services (CPS) cases are historically lower in June, July, and August, they continues to be 20% higher than typical. The unit is currently down four workers due to maternity leave and resignations. Despite the increased number of cases, Mr. Ammerman reports the number of children in foster care has gone from 132 in 2018 to 75 in 2019. This is due to front-ending intensive case management services and the increased availability of kinship placement.

Mr. Ellingsberg questioned the accuracy of the data in Economic Assistance section of the report. Mr. Ammerman explained there currently are issues with the second release of SPACES when it comes to reporting data. Sidney Schock, Economic Assistance Manager, retrieves the data from three to four different programs and has to estimate the numbers. Mr. Ellingsberg asked that if this is not corrected, he would like it to be addressed in a future meeting.

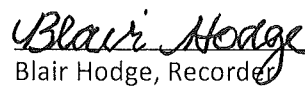
Birch Burdick, State Attorney, requested Mr. Ammerman to update the Social Service's organizational chart to reflect the Social Service Legal Department no longer being a part of Social Services as they will be part of the State Attorney's budget. Mr. Ammerman explained a memorandum should be provided to indicate when the Legal Department intends to make the shift from Social Services to the State Attorney budget. If this is not received, they will automatically be removed from the chart when the budgetary year ends. He also explained that in 2020, the Legal Department would be permanently removed from the organizational chart. Mr. Burdick requested additional discussion at a later time for clarification of the shift.

IV. **Adjournment**

Ms. Scherling made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 3:13 p.m. Mr. Ellingsberg seconded it. Meeting adjourned.



Chad Peterson, Chair
Cass County Social Services Board



Blair Hodge, Recorder