

CASS COUNTY HUMAN SERVICE ZONE BOARD MEETING
January 6, 2020

MINUTES

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

Present: Chad Peterson, Mary Scherling (by phone), Brian Hagen, Rick Steen, Glenn Ellingsberg, Ken Pawluk
Absent: Duane Breitling
Presenter: Chip Ammerman, Director; Robert Wilson, County Administrator

I. Approval of Minutes

Mr. Ellingsberg made a motion to approve the December 2, 2019 Board minutes. Mr. Peterson seconded it. Motion carried.

II. Transition from County to Zone Update

Mr. Ammerman reported the State has accepted the Zone Proposal for Cass County and unofficially approved the budget. The budget included the addition of making two temporary Child Protective Service positions and one temporary Case Management position permanent and the addition of an Economic Assistance Office Assistant. These positions have not been assigned numbers, so cannot be posted at this time. There were eight Economic Assistance Eligibility Worker positions requested that have not yet been approved. He reports the State must review other zones who have open Eligibility Worker positions, along with caseload distributions and will reallocate positions as they are able. Home and Community Based Services have transitioned to State employees as of January 1, 2020. Childcare Licensors are now also considered State employees but have not officially been transferred. A supervisor has been hired for Long Term Care and eligibility workers will be hired soon. State benefits will begin in February 2020 for those that have transferred. Caseloads will transfer in March 2020.

The Zonal Director will need to be hired by April 1, 2020 and the official Zonal Plan will be due June 2020. Chair Steen reported the job posting for the Zone Director was posted on the State of North Dakota website on January 3, 2020 with a closing date of January 13, 2020.

Mr. Ellingsberg questioned if the State would reallocate only some of the Economic Assistance staff requested. Mr. Ammerman stated that yes, they could, and that the caseload still needs to be defined.

III. Child Protection – What’s Changed

Mr. Ammerman stated he has made efforts to be more present with workers by assisting with more staffings and reviewing of cases when there are gray areas. He has attended one mapping and intends to continue to increase his attendance. He has held meetings regarding Organizational Trauma with supervisory staff with another one occurring in two weeks. He continues to work on the workforce well-being. He reported Linda Dorff, Sidney Schock, and himself have been interviewed by Pat Monson as her investigation continues. Staff have completed the survey that was sent out in December. Robert Wilson states he has not received much feedback since Ms. Monson has begun her investigation but will be having a with her and Chair Steen on January 7, 2020.

IV. Zone Board Member Recruitment

Mr. Ammerman presented a rough draft of information used to recruit Zonal Board Members. The advertisement will be placed in the Fargo Forum from January 13 – 20, 2020. Potential applicants would also be asked to complete a Survey Monkey, of which a draft was included in the Board packet as well. Chair Steen agreed to the date of the ad, but would like clarification stating that members will not be chosen until April 1, 2020 or later. Mr. Pawluk also thought it would be beneficial to list the per diem amount. Chair Steen asked that the contact information be changed from Mr. Ammerman to Heather Worden, Administrative Assistant, which is historically consistent for other Boards. Mr. Peterson questioned how Lutheran Social Services recruited their board members. Mr. Ammerman explained that the federal funding they receive dictates certain agencies to be board members and then other community agencies were added. Ms. Scherling suggested not filling all positions at this time and questioned if there are specific services or professional areas that should be a focus for recruitment. Mr. Pawluk asked how many are needed for the Zonal Board. Chair Steen explained there can be up to 15 members, but none have been determined yet besides the Commissioners and existing Board members. Chair Steen suggested the advertisement be placed and then review those that have applied. Mr. Peterson suggested if there is a large interest from a variety of applicants, there is an option for a Commissioner to step down as not all five Commissioners are required. Mr. Pawluk agreed with Chair Steen that a large board tends to be unproductive and a quantity should be determined. Mr. Peterson suggested advertising on the radio; however, Chair Steen would prefer to see how many apply from the Forum ad before utilizing other resources.

Mr. Pawluk made a motion to run the advertisement for the Zonal Board Members in the Fargo Forum from January 13-20, 2020 pending changes as discussed above and Chair Steen's approval. On roll call, motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Ammerman asked the Board if there were any changes to be made on the Survey Monkey. Mr. Peterson suggested adding a Legal Services demographic choice. He also suggested changing the wording from "representing" to indicate a person's background as the intention is not to find advocates and "representing" gives that impression of that being their role. Mr. Ellingsberg suggested including a Senior Citizens choice, with Ms. Scherling recommending a Senior Services choice as well. Mr. Ammerman agreed that having someone that is a Senior Citizen and someone involved with Senior Services would be beneficial, as a large amount of services the agency provides includes that population. Chair Steen would also like the wording to be changed so applicants are able to check all demographics that apply.

V. Operations Report

Mr. Ammerman shared a Social Worker III has been hired to fill one of the three vacant Child Protective Service (CPS) positions. This person was previously an Eligibility Worker so there is now a vacant position in Economic Assistance. The other two positions have not been posted due to lack of position numbers. Mr. Ammerman explained the State hiring process has changed and anticipates it to be one month longer than the previous process.

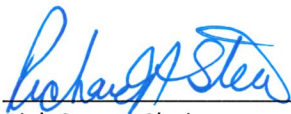
Chair Steen is seeking volunteers to assist in the Zone Director interviews. The process requires at least one Commissioner and two representatives from the State. There is no limit as to who can be present. A hiring decision needs to be made by April 1, 2020. Chair Steen would like a decision to be made by the end of February or early March. Mr. Wilson stated the scoring is

done at the State level and they will provide a ranked roster of all the applicants. Chair Steen explained if there is a candidate they are interested in interviewing that is farther down the list, all candidates ahead of that one will need to be interviewed, so he would like to allow for enough time. Ms. Scherling questioned if this was only posted on the State site and whether it will be advertised anywhere else. Mr. Ammerman stated the State only posts on their website. Anyone interested would need access to a computer and the State website in order to apply. Mr. Pawluk questioned if the posting is specific just to Cass County or if every zone is hiring. Mr. Wilson found that nine out of 19 zones have postings for Zone Directors with closing dates ranging from January 9 – 15, 2020.

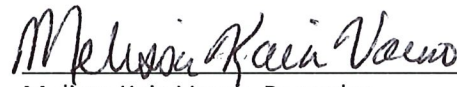
Mr. Hagen questioned the TANF numbers and why they are followed with a double asterisk. Sidney Schock, Economic Assistance Division Manager, explained that since the implementation of the newest SPACES release, it is difficult to identify monthly numbers, so they are approximated. The State is also having difficulties completing their Federal reports because of this issue.

VI. Adjournment

Chair Steen adjourned the meeting at 2:44 p.m.



Rick Steen, Chair
Cass County Human Service Zone Board



Melissa Kain Varno, Recorder