

**CASS COUNTY HUMAN SERVICE ZONE BOARD MEETING
MARCH 01, 2021**

MINUTES

With quorum present, Director Mell called the meeting to order 2:02 at p.m.

Present: Mary Scherling, Rick Steen, Duane Breitling, Jim Kapitan, Chad Peterson
Guest: Robert Wilson, County Administrator; Linda Dorff, Family Services; Sidney Schock, Economic Assistance
Absent: Brian Hagen
Presenter: Pearl Mell, Human Services Zone Director
(all present via Teams Meeting)

I. Approval of Minutes

Ms. Mell proposed to delay the approval of minutes from the January 19, 2021 Special Meeting and February 01, 2021 meeting minutes. They were sent late and should have the proper time to review and approve. Will delay approval until the April meeting.

Mr. Steen asked if there had been any questions or feedback from the state for Ms. Mell's review from the Special Meeting in January. She stated she had no feedback reported to her but the evaluation will be filed with Human Resources.

Discussion on meeting minutes going forward and a report Ms. McIntyre and Ms. Mell will try to meet with Ms. Worden to gain training on the minutes to focus the details to topic, summary of discussion, and action.

II. Addressing past questions

Ms. Mell addressed questions from the January meeting.

1. Mr. Hagen noticed traditional Medicaid has decreased but ACA (Affordable Care Act) has increased substantially. Did the Medicaid transfer to ACA or was there another change?
Ms. Mell stated the programs have not changed but the third update of SPACES changed how the information is tracked in the system. This has effected the reporting process.
2. Mr. Hagen asked to see the rules around TANF and eligibility. How are you eligible and what do they provide for assistance (childcare, educational assistance, schooling)?
 - Ms. Mell provided links to help answer the question for the board members.
Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) and Job Opportunities and Basic Skills (JOBS) Programs: <https://www.nd.gov/dhs/services/financialhelp/tanfjobs.html>
 - The amount of the benefit is based on the number of eligible household members, income available to the household members, allowable work expenses and childcare expenses, and the current level of payment. More FAQs can be found here:
<https://www.nd.gov/dhs/services/financialhelp/tanfjobsfaq.html>
 - Ms. Mell also suggested Mr. Schock could present information and answer questions for the board if they would like additional information. Mr. Steen stated he would like this added to a future agenda.

III. Survey of Perceived Organizational Support

Ms. Mell included an article "Optimizing Perceived Organization Support to Enhance Employee Engagement published by SHRM and SIOP as a resource for the Board to review. The Agency can utilize information from this article to further future employee engagement.

Ms. Mell then review the Survey of Perceived Organizational Support results. The survey was completed by the Cass County Human Service Zone employees on February 9, 2021. Of the 135 employees, 110 employees participated in the survey for a total of 81.48% participation.

Divisional breakdown:

Administrative Support and Adult Services, 14/23 staff or 60.86% participation rate.

Economic Assistance, 53/64 staff or 82.81% participation rate.

Family Services, 43/48 staff or 89.58% participation rate.

The questions were answered by the employees with choices between strongly disagree to strongly agree, using a 7-point Likert Scale. Ms. Mell concentrated on the total employees' ratings of Moderately and Strongly Agree which totaled 32% - 53% on each question. The goal is to reduce the percent of Moderately and Strongly Disagree and improve the Moderately and Strongly Agree responses each year going forward.

The survey also allowed for open ended questions so the staff to have the opportunity to share their perceptions and suggestions. Those answers were analyzed for trending words and ideas with the highest response level included the words: ask, feedback, hear, listen, recognize, acknowledge, mental health, conversation/communication, and compensation. The staff comments will be implemented in the future action plan to assure their concerns are addressed.

The next step in the process is to continue to work with managers, supervisors, and employees to develop action plans, follow the action plans, and report on the progress as the year progresses. The final step in this year's plan is to provide the opportunity to survey the staff again January 2022 with the goal of achieving the moderately and strongly agree response rate to be equal to or more than 50% of the results.

Mr. Steen asked who the employees identify as the organization. The organization can be fellow employees, supervisors, managers, and the agency. This will need to be narrowed down to better understand where to start and how to properly address the issues affecting employees. Ms. Mell agreed the issues could be broadly looked at but we will address overall policies to assure the employees understand their rights, and to enhance the supervisors and managers communication to assure the employees feel engaged.

Mr. Peterson added his experience with staff needs and has learned often time the frustrations stem from a lack of as to how the organization exists and how processes and policies are

developed. To make sure the staff understand the workings of the agency can help overcome negative perceptions. Ms. Mell agreed. There is an opportunity to discuss and share how the agency operates to ensure staff equity.

Ms. Scherling wanted to assure we are not setting bar is set too low at 50%. She would like to assure the right question are being asked so the staff are clear in their understanding and can better answer the questions. Ms. Mell stated much of this is employee perceptions, so it is not realistic to expect 100% consensus amongst staff. However, the information can be used to enhance the policies and procedures of the agency with regards to staff.

Ms. Mell anticipates lots of work with Action Plans in the coming months.

IV. Operational Report

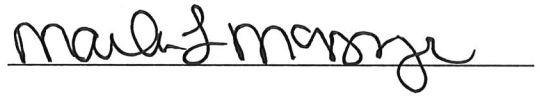
No report.

V. Adjournment

Mr. Peterson made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 3:03 p.m. Mr. Kapitan seconded. Motion carried.



Pearl Mell, Zone Director
Cass County Human Services Zone Board



Marla McIntyre, Recorder