

CASS COUNTY SOCIAL SERVICES BOARD MEETING

June 6, 2022

MINUTES

With quorum present, Chair Bollinger called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m.

Present: Commissioner Duane Breitling; Commissioner Rick Steen; Carey Fry; Brian Hagen; Julie Haugen; Dan Madler; Gail Bollinger

Absent: Michelle Kommer;

Presenter: Gail Bollinger, Zone Director; Heather Collins, HR/Operations Manager; Connie Cleveland, Assistant State's Attorney; Bob Henderson, IT Director

I. **Approval of Minutes**

Mr. Steen made a motion to approve the May 2, 2022, Board minutes. Commissioner Breitling seconded it. Motion carried.

II. **Guest Presenter: Ms. Connie Cleveland, Assistant Cass County State's Attorney**

Ms. Cleveland provided a history of the State's Attorney's role with Cass County Human Service Zone dating back to 1997 when they began working with Human Services, formerly known as Social Services. Once the County Social Services became a Human Service Zone in 2020, the team of three attorneys and two paralegals moved over to the courthouse and became part of the State's Attorney budget with Child Welfare continuing to be the team's main focus. The relationship between the Child Welfare State's Attorney team and Human Services continue to build their relationship through collaboration on processes and protocols.

Ms. Cleveland provided Board members with additional handouts that explained the subpoena process. She explained there is a potential for a Board member to be subpoenaed at some point, which is the proper way for outside entities to receive certain documentation developed by Human Services. If this should happen, Ms. Cleveland advised the Board they should get the information to Ms. Bollinger right away so Ms. Cleveland's team can provide a response to the requesting party.

Mr. Hagen questioned if the board were to be sued, would it be covered under the county's Insurance Reserve Fund. Ms. Cleveland believed it would but she stated she would follow up with State's Attorney Birch Burdick for verification.

Ms. Bollinger expressed your appreciation for the continued support Ms. Cleveland and her department provides to the agency.

III. **IT Update regarding State Economic Assistance Redesign: Mr. Bob Henderson, Cass County IT Director**

Economic Assistance's (EA) anticipated redesign live date is planned for February 1, 2023. One of the barriers for this Zone is using the State tenant of Office 365. The State's goal is for all documentation to be available to all workers in one location as employees will be process applications from all over the state. Human Service Zone currently is using both State and County Office 365 on a daily basis to complete their tasks. These two

environments cannot be combined, which means employees are logging in to programs with two different log-ins. As EA moves towards their redesign, this set-up will impact the work they do as there will be communication coming from multiple sources and could cause confusion as to where to find the correct information. There is the potential to separate the EA environment from the Cass County tenant completely, meaning they would no longer receive Cass County Office 365 services (email, Teams, SharePoint, etc.) and instead would utilize the State of North Dakota's services as their primary method. In order for County IT to maintain working with them, IT would set up a separate environment for management specific to EA. It would be a duplicate effort on IT's part as there would be a Cass County environment as well as a Human Service environment. IT would be able to support day-to-day issues such as printer support, connection issues, etc., but the State Service Desk would be responsible for all applications Human Service employees would be using. This would be a drastic change as many employees depend on the County IT for assistance and instead would need to rely on State Service Desk instead. This will also lay the foundation should there be other areas of Human Services that would want to transition using the State tenant solely. County IT would still maintain the computers and the logins to access their computers, but State of North Dakota would have a larger role in the applications they are using.

Commissioner Steen inquired how inter-building communication would be affected. Mr. Henderson explained this would affect the way people communicate through Teams, as staff outside of the County environment would enter users manually versus through the generated list. Also, as EA moves towards a call center using the Teams program for their phone system, they will be provided a non-Cass County phone number, which would require dialing a full ten digit phone number versus just the last four digit extension.

Commissioner Breitling questioned how accessible and reliable State IT is for employees. Mr. Henderson explained they assist to the best of their ability. There are times when there are third party consultants that may assist as well.

It was asked who is responsible for the cost of the resources. Mr. Henderson stated the State would be responsible for the direct costs. Indirect costs would be supported through Cass County Government. As of right now, there is no concrete way of tracking the cost of work between the Zone and County, but Mr. Henderson states there would be duplication of all work on behalf of the County IT department. The shift to the State tenant has been easier for those Zones who did not have their own IT to begin with.

Ms. Fry questioned if the Zone had the option to become State employees. Chair Bollinger stated the ability to opt in is not being supported at this time.

Mr. Hagen inquired about creating interfaces for single and multi-user logins. Mr. Henderson explained staff currently sign in using a County identification but then use a State identification to connect to their programs. Mr. Henderson suggests that the County do a complete split of the environments. He is presenting this information as it will take his staff approximately 180 days to meet the EA redesign deadline of February 2023. His team would need to start their process in September. If other sections of the Zone would want the same set-up, it will take more time. He explained the downside with this is that they did just renew a contract with Microsoft for all Office 365 licenses, so

if everyone with the Human Service Zone were to transfer to the State environment, then there would be unused licenses not being used. Chair Bollinger explained the current way Human Services is set up is not efficient and this is something that will need to be addressed.

IV. Personnel Updates

There are currently 15 opens positions at various stages. There were five new staff that started today, with another starting next week, and one more later in the month. Ms. Collins did provide an updated version of the turnover chart that showed only Human Service Zone staff that was requested at last month's meeting. She plans to provide this on a quarterly basis.

V. Director's Report

We are working closely with Richland-Sargent-Ransom (RSR) Human Service Zone's Economic Assistance on training some programs that will be used with the redesign. It has been very helpful for our employees, and we look forward to continuing collaborating with them through the process. The Economic Assistance team from Cass County also had their first in-person meeting in over two years and everyone from that department was present, including those that telecommute. Chair Bollinger reported it was a joy to see everyone there.

State Field Service Specialists continue to assist Family Services; however, some positions have been vacated, which impacts the amount of assistance they have been able to provide. Because of this change, Family Services is going from weekly to bi-weekly supervision with them.

Adult Protective Services had their first state-wide meeting in May.

Chair Bollinger did request a probationary evaluation as she is approaching her sixth month with the Zone. She asked for a representative from the Board to assist Kirsten Hasbargen in preparing Chair Bollinger's probationary evaluation. Mr. Hagen indicated he would be willing. Chair Bollinger did explain that all Board members would be involved with the process at some point.

On-site training was provided to the leadership team by Alicia Baumann, State Human Resources, regarding progressive discipline. The training was well-received. Ms. Collins has developed a onboarding orientation for new team members to the Zone.

Chair Bollinger added that Cory Pederson, director of Children and Family Services in the State of North Dakota, came to the May Zone Director meeting. There were changes to the law regarding unruly children, known now as Children in Need of Services (CHINS) in July 2021. As of August 1, 2022, CHINS cases will be referred to Zones for intervention or assessment. There was discussion in May as no Zone could internally take on that many cases. There will be a Zone-led CHINS team consisting of eight to ten full-time employees from across the state that will carry this caseload. Richland-Sargent-Ransom Human Service Zone (RSRHSZ) will be leading this group and Cass County Human Service Zone will assist with some administrative tasks, such as hiring and onboarding. The majority of the CHINS cases are found in this area of the state. Commissioner Steen

questioned how these children are different from the rest of the foster kids the Zone has. Chair Bollinger explained these are ones that are coming through Juvenile Court and have not been removed from the home. They may include runaways, drug referrals, school issues, etc. These are more unruly than delinquent. It might take an education component, meeting with the family, and providing resources. Commissioner Steen then questioned the Unaccompanied Refugee Minor (URM) program and the impact that will have on the County. Chair Bollinger explained Agassiz Valley Human Service Zone is in charge of that program. Commissioner Steen stated they have requested an office in this county and is concerned about the impact that will have on the County's resources. He also noted the article reporting the lack of foster homes in the area and questions how these programs will affect local foster homes. Chair Bollinger explains she is not as familiar with the URM program but believes they already have a residence determined when they arrive. The CHINS cases are still with their families, and not foster care placements. Commissioner Steen read an article he had regarding the URM program and stated according to the article they are coming through the foster care system. Chair Bollinger corrected him in stating they are not coming through our foster home system, but stated Kim Jacobson, Agassiz Valley Human Service Zone Director, would provide a better explanation on the URM program. Commissioner Steen is concerned about the additional challenges with no potential solutions. Chair Bollinger stated she would gather more information to present to the Board at a future meeting.

Chair Bollinger asked the Board their preference for a next meeting since it would fall on the July 4, 2022 holiday. It was determined the Board would meet again on July 5, 2022.

VI. Adjournment

Mr. Hagen made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 2:01 p.m. Commissioner Breitling seconded. Motion carried.



Gail Bollinger, Zone Director
Cass County Human Service Zone



Blair Hodge, Recorder