

CASS COUNTY SOCIAL SERVICES BOARD MEETING

November 7, 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; Dan Madler; Gail Bollinger; Michelle Kommer; Brian Hagen;

Absent: Julie Haugen

Presenter: Gail Bollinger, Zone Director;

I. **Approval of Minutes**

Commissioner Steen made a motion to approve the September 6, 2022, Board minutes. Commissioner Breitling seconded. Motion carried.

II. **Data Summary**

Board members were provided current statistics regarding staff turnover, which is currently at 37% for the year. Economic Assistance and Family Services have the highest rate. Adult Protective Services is comprised of four staff with the most recent staff being hired over a year ago. October was the highest month for hiring. Chair Bollinger explained they have taken on some emergency temporary workers who have done some of the work in the past and are willing to assist under contract. This is beneficial as there is little to no training involved as they have done the work before. Currently, both the Family Services and Economic Assistance Departments are each down ten employees, for a total of 20 for the Zone. Chair Bollinger explained other Zones are having similar struggles. She plans to discuss this further with legislators when she meets with them in December.

The Zone Board was provided a Family Services Recruitment and Retention Plan handout. Chair Bollinger reported Zone Administration's new approach to recruitment, including revamping postings and making them more visible in online searches. Samantha Duitsman, Executive Staff Officer, and Heather Collins, HR & Operations Administrator, have been working on the new hire orientation meeting as well as making the onboarding process more efficient and streamlined. Changes to the process will continue to be made as needed.

III. **Program Updates**

Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) began accepting applications for the season on October 1, 2022. Board members questioned what the limit was to qualify for this program. Chair Bollinger stated each program has different criteria for eligibility and would be willing to provide that information at the next meeting. Chair Bollinger reported there will be an increase in the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, which has not changed in many years. Ms. Fry explained this will put the program in a better position to assist more families that qualify.

Chair Bollinger reports having provided the Family Service Retention and Recruitment Plan to North Dakota Department of Health and Human Services (NDDHHS) for the request of eight additional full-time equivalent (FTE) employees for Family Services. Some of these new FTEs would include an additional Child Protection Services (CPS) Supervisor, two CPS staff, and two trainers for the department. It was asked if the Zone brings on interns and

how they are utilized. Chair Bollinger reported that is part of the current recruitment strategy as well. They have been working with local colleges with social work programs to recruit potential case aides and interns. Family Services recently brought in two case aides in a social worker program. The hope is they will apply for the paid internship program when they are eligible and upon graduation would be interested in employment in Child Welfare. In addition to the two case aides, two interns will be joining the Family Services Department in January 2023.

Mr. Hagen questioned the removal of 117 children through September 2022 and the difficulties the Zone had in finding placement for them. Matt Gebhardt, Child Welfare Consultant & Technical Support for Family Services, explained most of those children were fortunate enough to be placed in a kinship home. However, there continues to be a struggle recruiting and retaining foster homes. The Zone has taken steps to coordinate Foster Parent Collaborations to talk about situations that arise and get feedback from current foster parents. There has also been a shift in duties for a Case Manager whose main responsibilities will be assisting with placements and being a foster parent liaison for the Zone.

IV. Director's Report

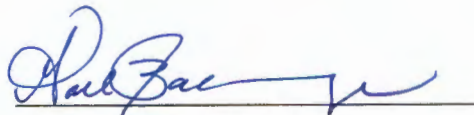
Chair Bollinger recently attended Richland, Sargent, Ransom (RSR) and Agassiz Valley's Human Service Zone's Board meetings to acknowledge the assistance that Zone Directors Kim Jacobson and Lynn Flieth provided Cass County Human Service Zone prior to Chair Bollinger's arrival as well as transitioning and onboarding her in her role as Zone Director.

The Administration team is working with state partners on proposals relating to equity adjustment for Zone employees. Chair Bollinger continues to pursue options related to retention and compensation with state partners with the goal of retention. She will keep the Board updated on any progress. Chair Bollinger also reported employees that have met employment milestones in 2022 will be recognized in January 2023 for their contributions. She will be asking the Board to be apart of this recognition and will have more details in the future.

The next Cass County Human Service Zone Board Meeting will be held Monday, December 5, 2022, at 1:00 p.m. in the Commission Room.

V. Adjournment

Commissioner Steen made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 1:49 p.m. Mr. Hagen seconded. Motion carried.



Gail Bollinger, Zone Director
Cass County Human Service Zone



Blair Hodge, Recorder