

CASS COUNTY SOCIAL SERVICES BOARD MEETING

January 9, 2023

MINUTES

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

Present: Commissioner Tony Grindberg; Rick Steen (via Teams); Carey Fry; Brian Hagen; Julie Haugen; Michelle Kommer (via Teams); Dan Madler; Gail Bollinger (via Teams)

Absent:

Presenter: Gail Bollinger, Zone Director; Heather Collins, HR and Operations Administrator

I. Approval of Minutes

Ms. Haugen made a motion to approve the December 5, 2022, Board minutes. Mr. Madler seconded. Motion carried.

II. Zone Board Member Elections – Vice Chair & Secretary

The Cass County Human Service Zone Board welcomed Commissioner Tony Grindberg, and community member, Rick Steen, to the Zone Board. There was a call for motion to elect a new Vice Chair and Secretary.

Mr. Steen made a motion to approve Mr. Hagen as Vice Chair of the Cass County Human Service Zone Board. Ms. Kommer seconded. Motion carried.

Ms. Haugen volunteered to be Secretary. Clarification was sought regarding the Secretary's duties. Chair Bollinger explained an Administrative Staff from the Zone would be assigned tasks as needed to assist the Secretary but according to Zone Policy, a Board Member is required to be named Secretary.

Ms. Kommer made a motion to approve Ms. Haugen as Secretary of the Cass County Human Service Zone Board. Vice Chair Hagen seconded. Motion carried.

III. Zone Board Meeting Date, Time, and Frequency

A proposal was presented regarding the Zone Board meeting date and time. The meeting currently is the first Monday of the month at 1:00 p.m. On dates where there is a holiday, the meeting date is adjusted. Chair Bollinger proposed meeting every other month with the ability to schedule ad hoc meetings if needed. Due to North Dakota Legislature being in session through March, Board members felt it would be important to receive updates throughout the session. It was decided the Board would continue to meet monthly at the same time until March and then reassess the date and time.

IV. Human Service Zone Policy Addendum Update

An update to the Addendum Policy was proposed to include the presentation of Service Awards. Any employee meeting a service milestone will be presented an award in the first quarter of the following year. If the employee retires or leaves employment prior to the service awards presentation, they will be provided with their award upon their departure.

Vice Chair Hagen made a motion to approve the addition of the Service Awards policy to the Cass County Human Service Zone Addendum Policy Manual. Ms. Haugen seconded. Motion carried.

V. Cass Annex Building Update

Chair Bollinger reported having meetings with Gene Gartner, Cass County Building and Grounds Director, Robert Wilson, Cass County Administrator, and representatives from T.L. Stroh Architects in 2022 to discuss possible renovations that could be done in the Cass County Annex Building. Funds have been allotted in the 2023 budget with intentions to update flooring, paint, refine spaces and create efficiencies. The next meeting has not yet been scheduled, but it is anticipated that T. L. Stroh will present their estimate and then determine the phases of the project.

VI. Director's Report

On December 29, 2022, Chair Bollinger hosted local legislators for coffee and discussion about the upcoming legislative session. She prepared key talking points that included Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) and workforce equity. Commissioner Grindberg and Mr. Steen both attended Chair Bollinger's event and agreed it was good discussion and felt the talking points resonated well with the group.

Chair Bollinger reported staff were offered a retention bonus at the end of 2022. This was a voluntary bonus. The majority of the staff accepted the bonus, agreeing to remain employed with Cass County Human Service Zone through June 2023. If they choose to leave before the six months are over, they would be responsible to pay the remaining portion of the funds back.

A sample of Cass County Human Service Zone's new logo was provided in the Board packet. Chair Bollinger hopes to debut it in early 2023. The Zone has entered in an agreement with Jason Matthews, JM Strategies to facility development of Zone Mission, Vision, and Values.

VII. Program Updates

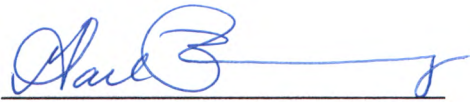
Year-to-date the Zone is reporting approximately 49% turnover in staffing. There are currently 114 active employees and 22 vacancies. Administration continues to see barriers with the hiring practice due to barriers with the Merit System process, inadequate compensation, as well as unrealistic position requirements. An example would be the five years of experience needed to be an Economic Assistance Supervisor. There are few Eligibility Workers that would meet that requirement due to most having only been with the Zone for a short period. Ms. Collins and Chair Bollinger are working with the State to review and update some requirements to allow those with other experience that aligns with the position to qualify.

Ms. Collins explained the Economic Assistance Department has received favorable response to the request of assistance in application backlog. A blitz is in development to get through the backlog prior to the redesign implementation.

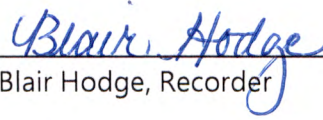
The Economic Assistance Department continues to prepare for the redesign implementation on February 13, 2023. There will also be a state-wide Customer Care Center for clients to call when they have questions regarding the process or their benefits.

VIII. Adjournment

Ms. Haugen made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 2:03 p.m. Ms. Fry seconded. Motion carried.



Gail Bollinger, Zone Director
Cass County Human Service Zone



Blair Hodge, Recorder