

CASS HUMAN SERVICE ZONE BOARD MEETING

February 5, 2024

MINUTES

With quorum present, Chair Bollinger called the meeting to order at 12:57 p.m.

Present: Commissioner Jim Kapitan, Julie Haugen (via Teams); Carey Fry (via Teams); Dan Madler; Senator Kyle Davison; Jen Sahr; Gail Bollinger

Absent: Rick Steen; Brian Hagen;

Presenter: Gail Bollinger, Zone Director; Samantha Duitsman, HR and Operations Administrator; Carissa Cowley, Family Service Department Manager; Tammy Ressler, Family Service Case Management Supervisor; Brad Hassler, Family Services Case Management Supervisor

I. **Approval of Minutes**

Mr. Davison made a motion to approve the January 2, 2024 Meeting minutes. Mr. Madler seconded. Motion carried.

II. **New Member Introduction**

Jennifer 'Jen' Sahr provided her background in education and involvement with the Fargo community. She is the newest member of the Cass Human Service Zone Advisory Board.

III. **Future Meeting Discussion**

Chair Bollinger opened up discussion to adjust meeting dates for April 1, 2024 and September 3, 2024, which are Mondays after a three-day holiday weekend.

Mr. Kapitan made a motion to change the April 1, 2024 meeting to April 8, 2024 and September 3, 2024 meeting to September 9, 2024. Mr. Madler seconded. Motion carried.

The schedule invites will be updated to reflect the new dates.

IV. **Program Spotlight – Carissa Cowley, Family Services Manager**

Carissa Cowley provided an overview of Family Services, touching on the process of when a report comes in and is assigned to Child Protective Services (CPS) for investigation and explaining situations when Case Management gets involved after a CPS investigation has been completed.

The department has experienced many barriers since the approval of the Families First Act in 2020, primarily the loss of facilities that can assist with children that are not able to remain in the family home and where a higher level of care is needed to keep a child safe. Some communities have opened certified shelters for situations like this, but there are limitations for these types of shelters, such as behaviors and lengths of stays. Fargo does not have a certified shelter; however, Minot, Dickinson, and Grand Forks do currently operate certified shelters. Cass Human Service Zone has utilized these shelters in the past for youth within their custody. These facilities are different from a juvenile detention center and the two cannot be housed together.

Challenges faced in opening a certified shelter in the Fargo area include funding, space, and staffing. Currently, Cass Human Service Zone team members have been putting in

extra hours to staff approximately five children at hotels in the last six months because of not having an appropriate placement for the youth. A certified shelter would eliminate that need.

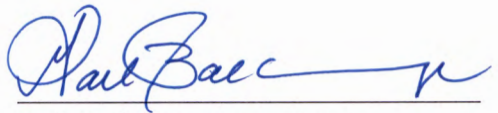
It was suggested by Board members to identify a model for a certified shelter regarding certification, funding, etc. should the Zone seek assistance during the next legislative session.

V. Operational Report

The Operational Report was provided to the board members in their packet for review. Due to time constraints, there was no discussion.

VI. Adjournment

Mr. Davison made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 2:02 p.m. Mr. Kapitan seconded. Motion carried.



Gail Bollinger, Zone Director
Cass Human Service Zone



Blair Hodge, Recorder