

CASS HUMAN SERVICE ZONE BOARD MEETING

June 3, 2024

MINUTES

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

Present: Commissioner Jim Kapitan; Senator Kyle Davison; Jen Sahr (via Teams); Carey Fry; Brian Hagen; Gail Bollinger

Absent: Julie Haugen; Dan Madler; Rick Steen;

Presenter: Gail Bollinger, Zone Director; Brian Hagen, Vice Chair; Carissa Cowley, Family Service Department Manager

I. **Approval of Minutes**

Mr. Davison made a motion to approve the May 6, 2024 meeting minutes. Mr. Kapitan seconded. Motion carried.

II. **Acceptance/Delivery of Zone Director's Review, Brian Hagen, Vice Chair**

Vice Chair Hagen commended Zone Director Bollinger on her transition and the challenges she faced upon acceptance of the Cass Human Service Zone Director Role. She continues to work on meeting her goals of stabilizing the agency, building trust, and encouraging Team Member participation throughout the process. It was the Zone Advisory Board's decision to give Zone Director Bollinger an Exceeds rating.

Vice Chair Hagen made a motion to accept and file Zone Director Bollinger's Annual Review. Mr. Kapitan seconded. Motion carried.

III. **Program Spotlight: Family Service Department, Carissa Cowley, Manager**

Members of the Family Service Department leadership team were present at today's meeting. Ms. Cowley introduced Case Management Supervisors Megan Dahl and Brad Hassler, and Family Services Operations Supervisor Rebecca Ney. Those unable to be in attendance were Child Protection Supervisors Ashley Lill, Mavis Brown, Jodi Kleven, and Case Management Supervisor Tammy Ressler.

Ms. Cowley shared a PowerPoint presentation that provided an update on the Support and Stabilization plan that was implemented in August 2023. With the internal and external support received, she was happy to report timeliness for submitting cases has increased and caseloads per Team Member have decreased. Both the Child Protection Services (CPS) and Case Management Units are fully staffed. Ms. Cowley reported they are working on recruiting an afternoon shift team to better support after-hour needs. It would include a supervisor, three CPS Assessment Workers, two In-Home/Foster Care Case Managers, a Foster Care Placement Coordinator, and a Parent Aide. Ms. Cowley has researched this option and found that having a non-traditional team increases relationships with families, stabilizes placement options, and decreases burnout amongst staff due to responding to after-hours calls. Chair Bollinger explained the presentation was shared with the Family Service Department to acknowledge the impact their efforts made. Ms. Cowley explained they will continue to work on the support workstream by focusing on developing their own coaching and mentoring structure.

Challenges the Family Service Department continues to see are the need for services, specifically in-patient mental health for youth. Ms. Cowley reported there appears to be a variety of services available, but many are short-staffed and unable to offer the needed assistance. In addition, there continues to be fewer foster homes that are willing and able to provide care for older youth who exhibit behaviors or other issues.

Chair Bollinger commended Ms. Cowley for her continued leadership in the Family Service Department. She took on the role of manager half-way through the Support and Stabilization Plan and because of her years of experience with the Zone, was able to help make it a success.

IV. Operational Report

After the recalculation, the 2024 budget was adjusted to \$11.8 million. Chair Bollinger shared the State did approve the Zone's request to purchase two transport vans, with an additional two budgeted for 2025. The 2025 budget has been approved for \$13.8 million.

Chair Bollinger provided an update that additional funds would be made available to assist the Adult Protective Services (APS) Unit with adult guardianship. At last month's Advisory Board Meeting, it was shared there was no more funding for this service until potentially 2025.

Economic Assistance continues to make strides in application processing timeliness. Chair Bollinger expressed her appreciation of Commissioner of North Dakota's Department of Health and Human Services Wayne Salter for his communication as it relates to that department. Economic Assistance is receiving more specific and frequent information from our State partners, which has not been the practice in the past. She also reported significant changes with the Customer Support Center, which is also showing more improvement and client satisfaction.

Chair Bollinger reminded members there would be no meeting in July due to the holiday. The next Cass Human Service Zone Advisory Board Meeting will be Monday, August 5, 2024.

V. Adjournment

Mr. Davison made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 1:51 p.m. Mr. Hagen seconded. Motion carried.



Gail Bollinger, Zone Director
Cass Human Service Zone



Blair Hodge, Recorder