

Ward County Human Service Zone Board

Minutes

March 16, 2021 – 7:30 a.m.

Second Floor-Ward County Commissioner's Chambers

PRESENT:

Melissa Bliss, Zone Director
Rich Berg
Mac McLeod
Hiedi Folstad-Miller
John Fjeldahl
John Pietsch
Shelly Weppler

ABSENT: Clayton Fegley

Also present was Karen Schultz, Zone Board Secretary designee.

MOTION:

It was moved by Shelly Weppler, seconded by Mac McLeod and unanimously carried by the Board that the Agenda for March 16, 2021 be approved.

MOTION:

It was moved by Shelly Weppler, seconded by Rich Berg and unanimously carried by the Board that the minutes for the regular board meeting of February 16, 2021 be approved.

MOTION:

It was moved by Shelly Weppler, seconded by Mac McLeod and unanimously carried by the Board to receive and file the February , 2021 Expenditures and bills for March 2nd and March 16th, 2021.

MOTION:

It was moved by Rich Berg, seconded by John Fjeldahl and unanimously carried by the Board to receive and file the February 2021 Budget Recap Expense Reports.

It was noted on the expense report that there was the second payment to Dakota Boys and Girls Ranch for a youth in care as the approval paperwork was delinquent for the child to continue to be in the care of DBGR and be paid through foster care funds. This then caused the Ward County HSZ to be responsible for the cost of care until the appropriate approval paperwork was received.

MOTION:

It was moved by Shelly Weppler, seconded by Hiedi Miller and unanimously carried by the Board that Melissa Bliss oversee an administrative system to appropriately track youth in residential facilities so that appropriate timeliness of paperwork can be completed.

MOTION:

It was moved by Shelly Weppler, seconded by Rich Berg and unanimously carried by the Board to receive and file the February 2021 Budget Revenue Report.

Director Bliss brought forth information regarding the Shelter Care/Safe Bed and the issues that have come up recently. There was some damage that was done to the facility by a youth that was brought over from another county. There was also an issue with youth being brought over to the HSZ shower/bathroom area on 3rd floor and staff not cleaning up the area after it was used.

MOTION:

It was moved by Shelly Weppler, seconded by John Pietsch and unanimously carried by the Board that Director Bliss bring any contracts/documents to the next meeting for review, with the documents being sent ahead of time, and also ask Youth Works to be present. An MOU also needs to be created with the County and Youth Works.

Discussion continued regarding the Shelter Bed which included such topics as who makes the decision as to whether other counties can use the facility, what is the chain of command, a 30 day placement is very lengthy, is there liability with 1:2 YW staff to juvenile ratio, amongst other concerns.

Rich Berg, former DBGR employee, indicated that he anticipates that we will see youth with greater needs and more delinquent behaviors that we will be seeing come through in the system. Director Bliss stated that the program is definitely needed and even though it is not ideal, it works to fill the need for temporary placement at this time.

A new motion was then made at this time to discuss the situation prior to next month's regularly scheduled meeting.

MOTION:

It was moved by Shelly Weppler, seconded by Rich Berg and unanimously carried by the Board to call a Special Meeting for Tuesday, April 6th at 8:00 am and to have Youth Works participate, with the only agenda item being the Youth Works Safe Bed Program.

Melissa Bliss brought forth the Human Service Zone Roles chart which was also provided to the Board prior to the meeting. Melissa indicated that she is on a committee which is working on Zone Board training and she will let the Board know when that training is available.

The Board was informed that all Human Service Zone employees will be moving over to nd.gov email accounts which will be done in phases with administrative staff and management staff being the first to acquire those new accounts. Ward County IT will be working with DHS to implement the change. We will also be moving to Windows Premium 365 per Jason Blowers with IT.

Informational flyers were also provided to the Board regarding CompaCare and The Dwelling Place which are entities wanting to provide support to foster parents, the agency and children. Both entities are affiliated with local churches. The Dwelling Place in particular would provide for a place for children to go in an emergency placement for a brief period of time while awaiting a more permanent placement rather than being up in the Human Service Zone office. It would provide a place to play, have a meal, etc. There would not be a cost associated with this as it would be all volunteers providing the support. Board members did comment that we need to be careful that it is an organized entity before we tie into it and also that we would want it to be State certified. Melissa did indicate that the organizers have been working with the State and that it is not yet finalized at this point.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:56 a.m.

Melissa Bliss, Ward CHSZ Director

Date

Mac McLeod, Ward CSSZ Board Secretary