

Ward County Human Service Zone Board

Minutes

August 17th, 2021 – 7:30 a.m.

Second Floor-Ward County Commissioner's Chambers

PRESENT:

Melissa Bliss, Zone Director
Clayton Fegley
Mac McLeod
John Fjeldahl
John Pietsch
Shelly Wepler
Rich Berg

ABSENT: Hiedi Folstad-Miller

Also present was Amy Boyle, Account Budget Specialist and Karen Schultz, Zone Board Secretary designee

MOTION:

It was moved by Mac McLeod, seconded by Shelly Wepler and unanimously carried by the Board that the Agenda for August 17th, 2021 be approved.

MOTION:

It was moved by Rich Berg, seconded by Shelly Wepler and unanimously carried by the Board that the minutes for the regular board meeting of July 20th, 2021 be approved.

MOTION:

It was moved by Mac McLeod, seconded by Rich Berg and unanimously carried by the Board to receive and file the July 2021 Expenditures and bills for August 3rd and August 17th.

MOTION:

It was moved by Rich Berg, seconded by Mac McLeod and unanimously carried by the Board to receive and file the Budget Recap Expense Report for July 2021.

MOTION:

It was moved by Shelly Wepler, seconded by John Fjeldahl and unanimously carried by the Board to receive and file the July 2021 Budget Revenue Report.

MOTION:

It was moved by Mac McLeod, seconded by Rich Berg and unanimously carried by the Board to receive and file the July 2021 Foster Care Recruitment and Retention report .

Old Business:

Melissa informed the Board that she had contacted John Stewart from the Oppen foundation in regards to a request for funding of the shower at the 425 Building, That request was denied but he did state that she could provide pictures after the completion of the project for reconsideration. Melissa suggested using FC R&R funds for the project since it is a way to retain foster care placements. Initially Shelly Wepler made a motion to support this but then retracted her motion after John Fjeldahl indicated that the Ward County Commission had

accepted the cost at the last meeting for the shower being constructed at the bid amount of \$14,224.

Director Bliss provided the Board with a copy of the updated Service Agreement for Shelter Care. Corrections were made under 2. Scope of Services and 3. Compensation, as suggested at the last Ward CHS Zone Board Meeting.

MOTION

It was moved by Shelly Weppler, seconded by Mac McLeod and unanimously carried by the Board to extend the Shelter Care Service Agreement to 50 days, noting that 11 of the days have already been used.

In regards to the Memorandum of Understanding between the Ward County Commission and Youthworks which was also provided to the Board, Melissa indicated this will be presented at the Ward County Commission with Emily Yanish from Youthworks being present for that discussion. It was suggested that prior to that meeting, that Melissa update the MOU with an effective date and indicating that it is to be renewed annually.

Director Bliss informed the Board that she had spoken with the hotel that has been utilized for the Covid shelter and they had indicated they are still willing to serve in that capacity as is Elwood Staffing for security and the cab company. It was previously discussed that we would keep it open through the duration of the ND state fair but due to the rise in covid cases again with Ward County, we will continue to keep it open. FEMA reimburses any expenses related to the shelter.

MOTION:

It was moved by Shelly Weppler, seconded by Rich Berg and unanimously carried by the Board to continue with the Covid shelter due to the uptick in covid related activity.

New Business:

Amy Boyle was present to answer questions by the Board in regards to the 2022 Budget Breakdown which was provided to the Board members. She noted an overall increase to the budget of 4% which included such items as a 23% increase for health insurance, service awards for employees, one additional employee position, as well as budgeting for 2 special meetings if needed. It also included replacement of 26 computers which are budgeted by department.

MOTION

It was moved by Shelly Weppler, seconded by Mac McLeod and passed by the Board to receive and file the 2022 Budget Breakdown document. John Fjeldahl voted no.

Melissa informed the Board that the Department of Human Services had paid out bonuses to DHS staff in the amount of \$500 or more as a Covid related bonus as there was money in their budget to do so. Some of the Ward CHSZ staff were still meeting face-to-face with clients during that time as well and putting themselves at risk. It was a discussion amongst Zone Directors to possibly look at Cares Act dollars for a possible resource to give to those Zone employees as a Covid related bonus. Melissa also suggested that the Board consider looking at our budget near the end of the year to determine if there may be money that could be put towards recognizing those workers who were going out into the public and into homes, as a possible resource for bonus money. There was discussion amongst the Board members as to

whether the excess money from the Zones that went back to the State was used for those bonuses as well as the dynamics of how this was handled. Board member Clayton Fegley, who is also a ND Legislator, defended the process.

Director's Report:

Director Bliss gave an update regarding personnel. The In Home FSS position has been advertised and interviews will take place next week. Interviews for the Foster Care Supervisor position will be conducted this week.

At this time awards for 3 and 5 years of service were presented to Ward County Human Service Zone Employees. There were 6 recipients for a 3 year award and 2 recipients for the 5 year award.

Director Bliss then submitted and read her letter of resignation as Director of the Ward County Human Service Zone with her last day of employment being November 30, 2021. Melissa has worked for the agency for 38 years.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:50 a.m.

Melissa Bliss, Ward CHSZ Director

Date

Mac McLeod, Secretary