

Ward County Human Service Zone Board

Minutes

September 20th, 2022 – 7:30 a.m.

Second Floor-Ward County Commissioner's Chambers

PRESENT:

Kristi Frederick, Zone Director
Rich Berg
Hiedi Folstad-Miller
John Pietsch
Matt Ruby
Shelly Wepler

ABSENT:

Mac McLeod

Also present was Karen Schultz, Zone Board Secretary designee.

MOTION:

It was moved by Rich Berg, seconded by Matt Ruby and unanimously carried by the Board that the Agenda for September 20th, 2022 be approved as presented.

MOTION:

It was moved by John Pietsch, seconded by Shelly Wepler, and unanimously carried by the Board that the minutes for the regular board meeting of August 16th, 2022, be approved.

MOTION:

It was moved by Rich Berg, seconded by Matt Ruby, and unanimously carried by the Board to receive and file the August 2022 Expenditures, bills for September 6th and 20th, 2022, Budget Recap and Budget Revenue for August 2022 and the FC R & R Report.

Administrative Supervisor, Karen Schultz, gave a brief presentation of the Administration Unit in the agency which currently consists of 5 support staff in addition to herself. The Unit consists of two Office Assistants who act as receptionists on 4th floor, taking all incoming calls for the agency as well as receiving and sorting all incoming mail, among other various duties. One Administrative Assistant is at the 3rd floor reception and serves administrative needs for the 3rd floor, mainly for the foster care staff with a variety of paperwork and duties assigned to her position. The Account Technician performs a variety of duties which consist of paying vouchers, billing for Targeted Case Mgmt, ordering supplies and scheduling maintenance for county vehicles and other assigned duties. The Account Budget Specialist provides oversight to fiscal operations and maintains an appropriate accounting system along with many other duties which are overseen by the Director.

An update of personnel included the following: Two Eligibility Worker positions have been filled – 1 vacancy is still pending; 2 CPS-Family Service Specialist positions remain vacant; 3 Foster Care-Family Service Specialists are vacant with the plan to reclassify one of these positions to a Placement Desk Worker as well as 2 In Home Family Service Specialists with an additional position vacancy to be filled as an overall Child Welfare Supervisor in the future.

There was discussion regarding the need to fill vacancies across the State, with Director Frederick indicating that 10-20% of the CPS positions are open at any given time across the State. Since January, 37 vacancies have been posted across 19 zones. The Zones are asking NDACO for a review of salaries. The Zone currently does not get the same raises implemented by the County; raises are legislatively authorized, and salaries are covered by State authorized

funds. Zone employees do not benefit from legislative Specials that provide raises for State employees outside of / separate from annual raises at approved rates. Matt Ruby spoke of past discussions in Legislature where NDACO as well as Zone Directors voiced wanting to stay as County employees; a bill had been sponsored but died on the floor. Director Frederick indicated she has experienced both situations (fully County and fully State) in past employment but feels becoming State employees would bring consistency across the State in administering services and promoting pay equity. Shelly Wepler suggested Director Frederick to draft a resolution; the Director will research this with State partners to determine viability and potential next steps.

Director Frederick stated that the Ward CHSZ was not awarded the St Joseph's Community Health Foundation Grant for the purchase of an additional vehicle. She will work with the State on budgeting for a vehicle in the future.

Ward CHSZ will be part of the Day of Hope resource fair to be held October 4th. The Eligibility Unit will be available to give information on how to access the online portal and assisting with online applications.

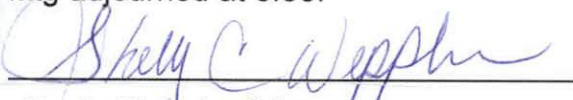
Director Frederick will be attending the NDACO Conference October 2nd – 4th and will then attend the Director's meeting to follow, returning to the office October 6th.

The State Auditor's Report was received by Dir. Frederick; the data was discussed with Child Welfare. The data available was primarily representative of work done during COVID and prior to the Safety Framework Practice Model implementation for child welfare. Current data trends indicate improvement continues to occur regarding timeliness to contact and evaluating safety of children in their homes. Some of the Report data was projection based and not true case counts. Ward County HSZ has made significant improvement in timeliness to contact.

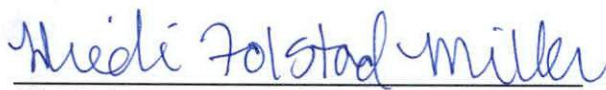
One area of curiosity regarding the Report data and timeliness stems from the data not being able to tell us whether initial contacts were delayed because of reports coming in on open In-Home or Foster Care case management cases. And, whether those staff had the knowledge, skills, and abilities to adequately assess safety regarding the newly reported concerns. Dir. Frederick worked with all units to establish a plan to pair a CPS worker with In-Home/Foster Care to assess new reports and assure safety needs are met.

Youthworks is now fully certified. Dir. Frederick signed the Youthworks contract, which was reviewed by SA Roza Larson and forwarded to Cory Pedersen due to questions about timeliness of rate setting for the Zone. The Zone's rate setting date is likely to impact rate setting dates and budget development for the County and law enforcement when they are responsible for paying the first 24-hours for youth not under Zone custody. Ultimately, the rate is set by the State and information will be relayed to Zones as timely as possible; the Zone will share the information with other entities as soon as possible.

Mtg adjourned at 8:38.


Shelly Wepler, Vice Chair

10-18-2022
Date


Hiedi Folstad-Miller, Secretary