

Ward County Social Service Board
Minutes
 April 19, 2016 – 8:00 AM
 Ward County Commissioner's Chambers

PRESENT:

John Fjeldahl
 Larry Louser
 Jack Nybakken
 Shelly Wepler
 Alan Walter

Also present were Melissa Bliss, Director and Karen Schultz, Recording Secretary.

MOTION:

It was moved by Shelly Wepler, seconded by Larry Louser and unanimously carried by the Board approval of the Minutes of the March 15, 2016 Regular Board Meeting.

MOTION:

It was moved by John Fjeldahl, seconded by Jack Nybakken and unanimously carried by the Board approval of the bills according to the attached list and following summary,

Social Welfare Expenditures

GENERAL ASSISTANCE	9,250.00
BOARD MEMBER EXPENDITURES	271.39
ADMINISTRATIVE PAYROLL	296,701.97
ADMINISTRATIVE EXPENSES	9,938.71
TRAVEL & REGISTRATION FEES	5,044.99
WORKERS COMP PREMIUM	401.70
LIABILITY INSURANCE	.00
EMPLOYEE HEALTH INSURANCE	71,160.61
EMPLOYEE RETIREMENT & LIFE	40,397.08
SOCIAL SECURITY& MEDICARE MATCH	21,725.36
PARENT AIDE EXPENDITURES	4,987.21
WRAPAROUND SW EXPENDITURES	6,388.36
SAFETY PERMANENCY FUNDS	154.50
WELLNESS COMMITTEE	270.00
FC PROGRAM EXPENSE	14.00
FOSTER CARE TRANSPORTATION	812.01
TECS./VISION/SAMS OPERATIONAL COSTS	.00
EBT FOOD STAMP COSTS	.00
TOTAL SOCIAL WELFARE EXP	468,063.85

The Board reviewed the General Assistance approvals and denials.

MOTION:

It was moved by John Fjeldahl, seconded by Shelly Wepler and unanimously carried by the Board the approval to receive and file the March, 2016 Budget Recap and Revenue report.

Director Melissa Bliss addressed the issue with the Board of the new SPACES system which has been implemented for the eligibility programs and the frustration with the system not working appropriately. She provided the Board with a documented list of concerns which was composed by Eligibility Supervisor, Amy Clouse, which will be presented at the Directors Meeting this week in Bismarck. The issues have been discussed in the past at the Directors Meetings and all counties are experiencing issues. This is ultimately affecting the clients and in some medical professions such as dentistry, the clients aren't allowed to be seen if they are in the system as there is delayed payment to the medical entities. This has also been expressed to Board Member Shelly Wepler, by a member of the medical community, as there is a misconception that it is the inefficiency of the agency in processing the applications which in actuality, is a problem with the SPACES system which is just one of many issues that needs to be addressed. Melissa will keep the Board updated at future meetings as to the progress of working through the issues in the SPACES system.

Director Bliss provided an update, as requested, as to purchasing personal alarm/panic button devices. There are not any feasible options at this time through SRT and it also does not appear that cell phone applications would be acceptable as most devices need wi-fi or data in order to be operable. This cannot always be relied upon when going into the homes of individuals in the county. Therefore, Director Bliss is requesting approval for the Vestige system through Verizon and allowing the purchase of the Bundle Purchase package at a price of \$299.99 each. Melissa is requesting four of these packages for a cost of \$1,199.96 as she would like one for each social work unit in the agency. Melissa indicated that these would be in the possession of the Supervisor for each unit and would need to be checked out with them when needed. Melissa informed the board that there is money in the budget to cover the cost as an anticipated expense for polycoms which is in the budget, will not be utilized.

The concept of the device is to send an alert to 3 numbers/people which will indicate the need for help as well as their GPS coordinates. The alert is activated with the push of a button. Board Member John Fjeldahl had concerns that the message would be going to co-workers who may not be trained to assist a dangerous situation or the length of time it would take to get to the person in danger from the agency and questioned why it wouldn't be more appropriate to directly dial 911. Melissa indicated that it actually could be set to go to an emergency number and that pushing a button is quicker than having to engage a cell phone to dial 911. Mr. Fjeldahl also expressed concern for the workers having a false sense of security if help cannot get to them in a reasonable amount of time to avert danger.

MOTION:

It was moved by Shelly Wepler, seconded by Alan Walter and unanimously carried by the Board, to approve the purchase of four units of the Vestige emergency alert system through Verizon at a cost of \$1200.

Mr. Fjeldahl asked that there be a report in the future on the usage of the buttons and the situations that warranted their use, if any.

Director Bliss indicated that the security doors from the lobby areas of 3rd and 4th floor are still not in use as we have not received any information as to when they will be worked on so that they will be in compliance for agency security. Chairman Alan Walter indicated that he will check with JLG Architects as this is a change/repair that has been approved.

Director Bliss informed the Board members that interviews will be conducted for one of the currently vacant CPS Family Service Specialist Positions and interviews for the HSPA IV will be set up this week. Additional remaining vacancies with the agency include one more CPS position and two eligibility worker positions.

Director Bliss informed that Board that at future Board Meetings when the Agenda is minimal for discussion, that she may periodically bring in staff members to give mini-tutorials on the work conducted in the Units of our agency as well as any other pertinent information which the Board may find informational.

Additional information presented to the Board was that Melissa had received the Abacus report for cost allocation, Specifically, she wanted to note that the plan was for the year ending 2014 for use in 2016, indicating that it is approximately 2 years behind. This indicates that it will be approximately two more years before we have a cost allocation for the space in lieu of rent cost estimate.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:55 am.

Alan Walter, Chairman

Date

Karen Schultz, Recording Secretary