



**MOTION:**

It was moved by Shelly Weppler, seconded by John Fjeldahl and unanimously carried by the Board to receive and file the January 2017 Recap and Revenue Report.

The General Assistance approvals and denials were reviewed without further discussion.

Regarding informational agenda items, Director Melissa Bliss provided information to the Board regarding various Senate Bills and how they may affect our agency, as summarized below:

Senate Bill 2206 is a carryover from the last session with discussion taking place over the takeover of additional programs by the State. Though the County Directors' Association is in favor of this bill, Melissa expressed some concern over the state's takeover of funding given the current economic shortfall the state is experiencing and what that might look like over the long term if the economic situation doesn't change. The agency would still have to manage the county budget but the State would control the funding. The recent Children and Family Services Review will likely bring about mandated improvements, likely without financial payments to back it up.

Senate Bill 2279 regarding drug testing for TANF recipients was defeated in the Senate and a similar bill, House Bill 1308, has been amended to read that TANF recipients will be screened for possible drug issues, rather than tested. That screening would be carried out by agencies providing JOBS program services, rather than county eligibility staff.

Senate Bill 2293 has the backing of the Board of North Dakota Social Work examiners and is a bill that would expand the definition of social work, social workers and case management. This bill could affect our current state-sanctioned practice of hiring Family Services Specialists, who may not have social work degrees or licenses, for child welfare positions if case management is defined as something only licensed social workers can perform. The supervision of social workers could also become an issue, as only licensed social workers with equal or higher degrees would be able to supervise other social workers. Social Services Boards who don't have licensed Social Work members would not be able to supervise Directors if they are social workers. Directors who have eligibility backgrounds or degrees other than social work would not be able to manage/supervise social work staff. This bill is being sold as a way to improve reciprocity between states as there are some agencies experiencing problems with BSW/LSW or non-social workers performing case management/visitation services for children placed in facilities in states where an MSW is required to perform those duties. The CDA opposes this bill and has been working with the Board of Social Work Examiners to amend it. There are not any Minot legislators who are co-sponsors of the bill at this time. Chairman Rostad informed Melissa to let the Board know if there is anything they can do if help is needed regarding this Bill and the affects it could have for our agency.

Senate Bill 1338 is related to indigent burials. The list of relatives who would have the duty of burial would be extended to even include nieces and nephews. The amount of time to make these contacts and arrange for the disposition of the body would be 15 days. It is unclear as to who the responsibility would lie with as far as seeking out these relatives. It is also being proposed that the county social service board may not decrease the county payment due to a nominal amount left by the deceased or contributed by kin or any other party to defray the expenses of burial or cremation.

The Board was provided with a copy of the 2016 Annual Department Report. It was noted that there was a significant decrease in General Assistance applications due to the new policy adopted by the Board for 2016 which limits the guidelines of what GA will assist with. Also noted was the increase in ND Health Tracks cases. CPS cases were also up and Foster Care remained consistent.

In a final note, the new reception windows have been installed on 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> floors which is being well received and has alleviated much of the issues with communicating with clients in these areas.

Meeting adjourned at 8:37 am.

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Jim Rostad, Chairman

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Date

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Karen Schultz, Recording Secretary