Ward County Social Service Board
Minutes
April 18, 2017 – 8:00 AM
Ward County Commissioner's Chambers

PRESENT:
Jim Rostad, Chairman
Shelly Weppler, Vice Chairperson
John Fjeldahl
Larry Louser
Alan Walter

Also present was Melissa Bliss, Director and Karen Schultz, Recording Secretary

MOTION:
It was moved by Shelly Weppler, seconded by Larry Louser and unanimously carried by the Board approval of the Minutes of the March 21st , 2017 Regular Board Meeting.

MOTION:
It was moved by Alan Walter, seconded by Larry Louser and unanimously carried by the Board to approve the bills according to the attached list and following summary.

Social Welfare Expenditures

GENERAL ASSISTANCE	4,197.26
BOARD MEMBER EXPENDITURES	287.78
ADMINISTRATIVE PAYROLL	320,809.30
ADMINISTRATIVE EXPENSES	6,964.73
TRAVEL & REGISTRATION FEES	8,543.44
UNEMPLOYMENT CLAIM	.00
LIABILITY INSURANCE	.00
EMPLOYEE HEALTH INSURANCE	76,010.36
EMPLOYEE RETIREMENT & LIFE	42,560.38
SOCIAL SECURITY& MEDICARE MATCH	23,780.71
PARENT AIDE EXPENDITURES	5,359.83
WRAPAROUND SW EXPENDITURES	14,801.08
SAFETY PERMANENCY FUNDS	792.65
WELLNESS COMMITTEE	500.00
FC PROGRAM EXPENSE	42.70
FOSTER CARE TRANSPORTATION	300.90
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TOTAL SOCIAL WELFARE EXP	504,451.12

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

The General Assistance approvals and denials were reviewed.

Melissa Bliss provided the Board with an update on SB 2206. The bill is still in Conference Committee, as the bill passed by the House was significantly different than the bill passed by the Senate. Initially, the House changed the bill to a two year study of an implementation plan for state-funded county social services, basically continuing the state's funding of the five programs they took over in 2015 and requires that the following be addressed: options for possible consolidation of county social services offices, including potential reduction in staff and considerations for oversight and chain of command within social services and human services. One Representative was overheard saying there was no point to taking over funding if the employees aren't state employees, which is a concern amongst Directors and employees. After lengthy debate, the House amended their bill to allow the state to fund social services as a two year pilot program, during which time, the study they wanted would commence. The Senate's bill appropriated over $240 million for the takeover, while the House bill authorizes $161 million. The House changed the formula, basing payments on 2015 expenses /caseloads and removing inflators and weighting factors, which is a concern for Directors. They also repealed the 12% property tax buy-down. At this point, it is hard to tell what this bill will look like when it comes out of conference committee, but it is likely going to be significantly different from what was proposed in 2015. Directors are keeping a close eye on this bill.

Melissa Bliss updated the Board on the appeal of the denial of an unemployment claim from a former employee and the fact that the former employee was not present by telephone for the planned hearing, though she was expected to participate in the hearing. Melissa expressed the fact that she feels confident in the outcome of the appeal due to unsubstantiated claims and false information provided by the former employee as to why she left the agency.

Melissa Bliss informed the Board that, while reviewing the county's contract with the ND Insurance Reserve Fund, it was noted that the organization may investigate and settle any claim or "suit" at their discretion. The Board was reminded that the agency is still working with NDIRF on a lawsuit filed in 2015 and that the final decision re: going to court or agreeing to a settlement does not belong to the agency or the county.

Meeting adjourned at 8:25 am.

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Jim Rostad, Chairman   Date

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Karen Schultz, Recording Secretary