

Ward County Social Service Board
Minutes
 May 16, 2017 – 8:00 AM
 Ward County Commissioner's Chambers

PRESENT:

Jim Rostad, Chairman
 Shelly Wepler, Vice Chairperson
 John Fjeldahl
 Larry Louser
 Alan Walter

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

MOTION:

It was moved by Alan Walter, seconded by Shelly Wepler and unanimously carried by the Board approval of the Minutes of the April 18th , 2017 Regular Board Meeting.

MOTION:

It was moved by Shelly Wepler, seconded by John Fjeldahl and unanimously carried by the Board to approve the bills according to the attached list and following summary.

Social Welfare Expenditures

GENERAL ASSISTANCE	2,381.46
BOARD MEMBER EXPENDITURES	287.78
ADMINISTRATIVE PAYROLL	323,318.94
ADMINISTRATIVE EXPENSES	6,488.50
TRAVEL & REGISTRATION FEES	4,183.19
UNEMPLOYMENT CLAIM	7,917.50
LIABILITY INSURANCE	.00
EMPLOYEE HEALTH INSURANCE	77,415.20
EMPLOYEE RETIREMENT & LIFE	42,893.43
SOCIAL SECURITY& MEDICARE MATCH	23,986.19
PARENT AIDE EXPENDITURES	5,267.40
WRAPAROUND SW EXPENDITURES	14,736.34
SAFETY PERMANENCY FUNDS	1,640.22
WELLNESS COMMITTEE	.00
FC PROGRAM EXPENSE	28.00
FOSTER CARE TRANSPORTATION	2,383.30
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TOTAL SOCIAL WELFARE EXP	513,830.73

MOTION:

It was moved by Shelly Weppler, seconded by Larry Louser and unanimously carried by the Board to receive and file the April 2017 Recap and Revenue Report.

The General Assistance approvals and denials were reviewed.

Melissa Bliss updated the Board on the County Directors' Association's discussion re: SB 2206. The Board was provided with a copy of the Power Point presentation that was used for the Legislative Wrap-Up. Terry Traynor from NDACo and Steve Reiser, Dakota Central Social Services Director led the discussion. The biggest issue for CSS is our being held at CY2015 as a based year with no inflators through 2019. The unofficial/preliminary estimates for Ward County's allocation are \$6,010,820 for 2018 and \$6,455,573 for 2019. The allocations would be distributed in two installments, one in January and the other in June. Adjustments would occur if a county's caseload increases or decreases by more than 5%. The adjustment will be the amount above or below the 5% mark. For example, if our caseload were to increase 7% in the first half of the year, our second reimbursement would increase by 2%. On January 1, 2018, our Human Service fund balance can't exceed \$500,000. Any carryover beyond that amount will go into the County's General Fund. In the 2018 tax year, the counties shall decrease the general fund by the equivalent amount for 2019. If there is no ending balance and the payments from the state are not sufficient to meet expenses, the County Commissioners can vote to transfer money from the County's General Fund. If the fund balance exceeds limitations at the end of 2018, the 2019 payments will be reduced in that year's June payment. Director Bliss gave the Board a copy of the Social Service fund ending balance survey that was given out at the meeting. This survey showed that WCSS carried over \$1,624,406 at the end of 2015 and \$598,713 at the end of 2016. It was expected that there would be a larger carryover at the end of 2015 than 2016 because of the number of open positions we had all year long. In 2016, we also began paying full healthcare benefits and received approval for an additional \$100,000 contract from DHS to help fund our child welfare In-Home program. Director Bliss feels that the 2015 carryover amount is significantly higher than she remembered and she will check on this. The result won't likely make a difference in funding, but it would give us a better idea what we could hope to see for our 2017 carryover. There was discussion about General Assistance, which is fully funded by county dollars and not a program taken over by SB 2206. If GA were to fit in the budget set by the state, we could use that money to fund the program. Otherwise, the County will have to fund it through their General Fund. Considering the fact that our 2017 budget is \$6.7 million and we are looking at a \$6 million budget for 2018, it is not likely that the Social Services budget will be able to cover GA expenses after this year. Director Bliss anticipates requesting that the Commissioners use the General Fund to pay for General Assistance needs, which is mainly county burials and has offered for Social Services to continue to take the applications, determine eligibility and make arrangements as always. Since this funding plan is considered a pilot project, SB 2206 requires DHS to appoint a committee to complete a study of the operation of the pilot, analyze options for efficiency and aggregations and make recommendations. The committee is to consider the possibility of consolidating Social Services offices, reduction in staff, and making county staff state employees. Chris Jones is the new head of DHS. He comes with a hospital administration background and has much to learn about our service delivery system while putting together this committee and completing a good and thorough study. Mr. Jones met with the Directors and he is open to all possibilities. Director Bliss informed the Board that she will keep them informed as things progress and noted that this is going to be an interesting and different year for budgeting.

Melissa informed the Board that we are currently full staffed in all units within the agency. There are anticipated resignations this summer with employees moving out of the area, however, those resignations have not yet been formally received.

Melissa Bliss updated the Board that the former employee who had appealed an unemployment claim but was not present for the telephone hearing, has been granted a request for another hearing. The status of that hearing is unknown at this time.

Meeting adjourned at 8:50 am.

Jim Rostad, Chairman

Date

Karen Schultz, Recording Secretary