

Ward County Social Service Board
Minutes
August 7, 2018 – 8:00 AM
Ward County Commissioner's Chambers

The meeting was called to order by Shelly Wepler, Board Chairperson, at 8:00 am.

PRESENT:

John Fjeldahl	Alan Walter
Larry Louser	Shelly Wepler
Jim Rostad	

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

MOTION:

It was moved by Jim Rostad, seconded by Larry Louser and unanimously carried by the Board approval of the Minutes of the July 3, 2018 Regular Board Meeting.

MOTION:

It was moved by Jim Rostad, seconded by Alan Walter and unanimously carried by the Board approval of the bills for August 7, 2018 and also to check into the contract with Lutheran Social Services regarding their contract with Ward County and how it pertains to attendant care and the bill from that agency.

*Note that the payment to LSS was in the bills from July 17, 2018 which had been approved prior and already paid.

MOTION:

It was moved by Jim Rostad, seconded by John Fjeldahl and unanimously carried by the Board to receive and file the Budget Recap and Revenue Reports for June 2018.

The Board reviewed the General Assistance approvals and denials. No appeals were scheduled.

Director Melissa Bliss updated the Board in regard to recent personnel hiring and vacancies. She indicated that a Direct Care Associate/Parent Aide has been hired and will begin 08/20/18. A Family Service Specialist for Foster Care has also been hired with a start date of 08/21/18. Second interviews will be conducted today for two In Home Family Service Specialists and the FSS-CPS vacancy has just been filled with an internal applicant from another unit within the agency. With pending interviews and job offers, there are currently 5 positions to be filled.

Regarding the subject of Social Service redesign, Melissa verbally highlighted items from a power-point presentation she had received. Some of the proposed items included but were not limited to: Unifying Subsidized Adoption; implementing centralized application processing for Economic Assistance as well as a call center; regionalizing child care licensing, foster care recruitment/retention and foster care licensing; proposal to contract out fuel assistance, county burials and child care assistance; reducing the time to complete CPS assessments from 62

days to 31 days and creating a call center in Bismarck to take CPS reports. The next step would be to develop a formal structure by first developing a plan to support the recommendations and then developing an employment model on how to implement that plan. When asked how she felt about what was being proposed, Melissa indicated that she is ok with some of it but fears that if programs are to be regionalized, some of that may fall on our agency.

Regarding budget information, Melissa indicated that she has requested an estimate of computer costs from IT for 2018 & 2019 purchases. She is also checking into the purchase of computer lockers, per IRS requirements. There was some discussion as to the best type of unit to acquire regarding what would best serve the need as well as safety and convenience for the 16-20 workers which would be needing the locking mechanisms.

In reference to the purchase of a van for the agency as discussed at the last SS Board Meeting, a request was made to the Oppen Foundation for assistance with the purchase of a new van. This request was separate, but in addition to the application for continued grand funding for foster care recruitment and retention, also made to the Oppen Foundation. Board member John Fjeldahl wondered if some of the funds already received from the Oppen Foundation could be used to purchase the van earlier if we knew it was going to be approved, rather than waiting for the funds to be dispersed, to be sure it was paid for this year. Melissa will check on this.

Director Bliss brought the board information not listed on the agenda re: a poll that was done by NDACO as to counties needing financial transfers outside of the grant money received from the state for FY 2018 & 2019. The poll showed that 17 counties responded that they will need money in addition to the grant to finish out FY 2018. 13 counties plan to use Social Service reserves and 8 plan to request money from their county's general fund. The highest financial shortfall General Fund request was reported by Burleigh County at \$500,000. Ward will not be requesting any General Funds this year and we anticipate an over \$500,000 carry-over into 2019. These reserves are due to an increased number of job openings and the receipt of back-taxes we did not anticipate receiving this year. When polled as to whether counties anticipated transfers for FY 2019, 23 counties responded yes, that they anticipated a shortfall with 13 anticipating a need for General Funds. The highest proposed shortfall in 2019 appears to be Cass County, who anticipates a possible General Fund request of \$700,000. Even with a carry-over of \$500,000 in reserve, Ward County anticipates a shortfall of approximately \$178,000 at this time, but given the history of job openings we have had over the years, Melissa anticipates that it will not likely result in a General Fund request as 2019 progresses.

Meeting adjourned at 8:45 am.

Shelly Wepler , Chairperson

Date

Karen Schultz, Recording Secretary