

**MANITOWOC COUNTY HUMAN SERVICES DEPARTMENT
BOARD MEETING MINUTES**

CALL TO ORDER:

The Manitowoc County Human Services Department Board met at 4:15 p.m. on Thursday, October 26, 2023 in open session at the Manitowoc County Human Services Department, 801 Jay Street, Manitowoc, WI.

Board Members Present: Agnew, Baumann, Brey, Bruns, Burke, Klein, Naidl, Shimulunas

Board Members Excused: Ruggirello

Board Members Absent:

County Board Members Present: None

County Staff Present: Ader, Huss, Joas, Johnson, Kortens, Kubec, McCulley, Torrison, Zahn, Ziegelbauer

PUBLIC COMMENT ON ANY MATTER PERTAINING TO THE HUMAN SERVICES DEPARTMENT:

None

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

A MOTION WAS MADE BY BAUMANN, SECONDED BY SHIMULUNAS TO APPROVE THE MINUTES FROM THE SEPTEMBER 28TH MEETING. MOTION WAS CARRIED.

EDUCATION TOPIC: Child Protective Service (CPS) Ongoing Unit – Christy Torrison

Christy Torrison introduced herself and the foster care team. We currently have 11 CPS on-going workers, 5 workers in foster care and an intern from UWGB. Our goal in working with families is safe, stable, permanence for the family. With open cases we are consistently addressing for safety. We work with the courts, CASA, out-of-care providers and meet at least once a month. We check to see if the parents are working on their conditions. We find placements when children have to be removed and really stress placing them with family members, if none are suitable, they would go into foster care. We try to work together as a team. Reunification is the goal, but if not possible a guardianship or Termination of Parental Rights may occur.

We consistently try to recruit foster parents, and have many events during the year. We currently have an advertisement on a bus, coffee sleeves at different restaurants and we participated in the Trunk or Treat event last week. We currently have 8 people in the licensing process for general foster care and 6 families for Kinship Care.

The biggest challenges our families are currently facing are drug issues, no daycare available and no affordable housing. Kids can stay in care until they are 18 years old or finished with school.

There was a question on if we still have the Respite House. Yes, it is a nice family setting so it is used to see if a parent can handle making a meal and meeting the needs of the kids at the same time. It is also used when a family member may not be safe to be with other families in the visit center. We have begun moving some of the visits to the visitation center.

FINANCIAL PROJECTIONS FOR SEPTEMBER, 2023 – Jessica Huss

As of right now, we have a deficit of approximately \$132,000, but we are expecting to see this improve. Deputy Director Huss said she projected the revenues conservatively, especially in the CCS program and WIMCR. We had submitted \$1.9 million to WIMCR and projected we would receive about \$1.6 million so we might receive more there. 2023 has been challenging for many of our providers, they like many others are struggling to hire and keep staff. As a result, we saw some contract costs rise, but we tried to offset this by ending contracts that weren't meeting our needs. This last quarter of the year we have really been looking at wants vs. needs and tightening expenses to make budget. All the staff have been supportive and mindful of this, which we truly appreciate.

QUESTIONS AND INPUT FROM BOARD MEMBERS ON THE STATUS OF THE HUMAN SERVICES DEPARTMENT:

Is the Hamilton Building completely set up now? Yes, and there will be an Open House October 27th from 11:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

SATISTICAL REPORTS FOR SEPTEMBER, 2023 – Jessica Huss

Most areas have been pretty stable. Child Protective Services added a column for Drug Related Accepted Cases. We just started to track this last month, there were 10 cases accepted in August and 3 in September.

After-Hours Crisis calls for children has increased significantly, normally we have about 20 calls per month, last month there were 40 and 52 calls in September. Betsy Johnson commented that some of this may just be a spike for children going back to school. Betsy also added that hospitalizations are way down due to our workers doing more safety plans, she added that it is usually easier for individuals to work through their mental health issues at home. More people have been getting help so more are calling.

Sue Ader noted there is also a definite increase in Youth Justice cases.

DEPUTY DIRECTOR'S REPORT ON AGENCY OPERATIONS: Jessica Huss

We hired a new financial services supervisor in September. She is learning quickly, and she fits in well. She has been doing some training with an external auditor from CLA to build her expertise in Human Services. Our Benefit Specialist will be retiring in December so we will also be filling that position. We hired a CCS Service Facilitator in October, but one of the CLTS/CCS workers resigned shortly after. One of our After-Hours Crisis workers accepted the Crisis Supervisor position, so we are looking for a replacement for the After-Hours Crisis position. We also have openings for a CCS Service Facilitator, and one CPS On-going worker.

There was a question on what type of applicants we normally get for these positions. Jessica Huss said the positions in the business division are normally filled by internal candidates. Sue Ader shared that we haven't gotten any applicants for the CPS Ongoing position. Colleges are kind of discouraging students from these positions. We have been getting students right out of college that do not have a social work degree yet, so they have to continue their education once they are hired. Betsy Johnson responded that most hires in Clinical have been right out of college, although we've had a few employees leave that have now come back, so that is good. Lori Joas said Economic Support gets many local applicants when they have openings.

There have been more employee related safety concerns recently that involved law enforcement. The staff's safety continues to be our top priority. For this reason, we have included several safety items in the 2024 budget. We are requesting fob access to the elevator in the downtown building so no one can get

on the elevator without a staff person. We have also requested door locking mechanisms for each office so every employee has the ability to lock their door should we ever have to go into lock down. We will have additional safety requests in future budgets, but just these two items will help make the staff feel much more secure. We would appreciate your support on this in November.

Other safety updates, Lori arranged CPR and AED training with the Health Department, it's been quite a few years since staff had training. We have one group being trained in November and one in December. We will also have a group trained in 2024 so the staff have different CPR expiration dates. We are grateful to the Health Department for collaborating with us on this initiative.

Morale in the agency continues to be good. The staff continue to have employee engagement events to encourage team building. The YFS team recently spearheaded a scavenger hunt which included items such as locating fire extinguishers in the building, but also fun challenges like taking a picture with their feet up on their manager's desk. The staff had fun with it and the results were entertaining. Upcoming events are trick or treating in the downtown building on Halloween. Everyone in the building puts treats outside their office and the staff go around during their break to collect their goodies. There is also wreath building scheduled for a lunch hour in November. These activities are driven by the staff. They do all the planning, and have a lot of fun with it. Despite the heaviness of the important work at Human Services the culture here is good.

Deputy Director Huss also thanked the Department of Public Works and Information Technology Department for all their hard work getting the Hamilton Street building setup. They strategically coordinated their schedules to efficiently move the staff and setup their work spaces, with most of this work occurring over the weekend. Human Services has asked a lot of them this year, and we want them to know how much we appreciate them. Deputy Director Huss also expressed gratitude toward the Comptroller's office, and DPW's Business Manager for their assistance in figuring out the funding for the building. Human Services would also like to thank the County Board, especially the Human Services Board, and County Executive Bob Ziegelbauer for their support in acquiring the new property. We hope you are all able to attend the open house tomorrow from 11:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. to see the result of all this hard work for yourselves. Eleanor Agnew requested a formal acknowledgement of the Department of Public Works (which includes Information Technology). Supervisor Brey agreed and proposed a letter of appreciation be drafted on behalf of the Human Services Board.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY BURKE, SECONDED BY AGNEW TO WRITE A LETTER OF APPRECIATION OF PUBLIC WORKS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY DEPARTMENTS. MOTION WAS CARRIED.

There was a question on if there are Narcan vending machines in the area. Those have not been approved yet. Betsy can bring in numbers of how much our nurse has supplied and the results of how many people have been revived. She has been getting it for free and supplies the jail, local police departments, Kiel, etc.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING:

The next regular meeting of the Human Services Department Board will be held on December 7, 2023 at 4:15 p.m. The meeting will be held at Manitowoc County Human Services, 801 Jay Street.

ADJOURNMENT:

A MOTION WAS MADE BY BAUMANN, SECONDED BY AGNEW TO ADJOURN THE MEETING OF THE HUMAN SERVICES DEPARTMENT BOARD AT 4:57 P.M., MOTION CARRIED.