

**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, January 25, 2024 in open session at the Manitowoc County Human Services Department, 801 Jay Street, Manitowoc, WI.

Board Members Present: Brey, Bruns, Klein, Naidl, Shimulunas

Board Members Excused: Agnew, Baumann, Burke, Ruggirello

Board Members Absent:

County Board Members Present: None

County Staff Present: Foster, Fure, Huss, Joas, Kubec, Ziegelbauer

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

None

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

A MOTION WAS MADE BY KLEIN, SECONDED BY BRUNS TO APPROVE THE MINUTES FROM THE DECEMBER 7TH AND DECEMBER 14TH MEETINGS. MOTION WAS CARRIED.

EDUCATION TOPIC: Professional Services Group (PSG) Parent Coaches – Jena Foster

Jena Foster and Stacy Rahmlow one of our current PSG workers explained what PSG workers are. In March, 2022 we started contracting with Professional Services Group and currently have 4 workers. The main way we use them is for in-home safety plans. When we have safety concerns in the home, they visit the home sometimes up to 3 times a day to support the family and see what's happening in the household, they are our eyes and ears in the home. They are available early mornings, evenings, and weekends 365 days a year. Stacy has been visiting a family at 6:00 a.m. as that is the most stressful time for them trying to get everyone ready for the day. The PSG workers have assisted with 27 families and we were able to keep the families together. They also provide mentoring, supervised visitation, and sometimes transportation. The PSG workers are currently working with 25 families, six of them have in-home safety plans with 13 children involved.

The outcomes are much better if we can keep the children in their homes with safety plans and monitoring then placements. The cost of placing children is expensive costing between \$375 for Kinship Care up to \$2,000 a month for treatment foster care. Group Homes are \$376 a day and Residential Care is \$613 a day. They gave an example for one family they have been working with since the spring of 2022 with 5 children with many concerns. They worked with them 3 times a day and on weekends and they helped keep the kids out of care, quite a few probably would have been group home placements.

This year they are also doing some mentoring services for kids already placed in out-of-home care that are having behaviors that foster parents are having a hard time handling. Hopefully, it will help to keep the placements going without having to move them to a group home or residential treatment. The PSG workers can also do drug tests, which has been very helpful if workers suspect someone is under the influence during visits or meetings.

We also have parent coaches that work on the parenting education curriculum and supervise visits. Now with the visit center open we are able to have up to 7 families visiting at the same time between 8:00 a.m. – 7:30 p.m. The more visits we can offer the faster children can be returned home. We have also expanded the use of PSG workers on the front end of cases to get kids reunited faster.

REQUEST OF HIRE FOUR PARENT COACHES, CURRENTLY CONTRACTED THROUGH PROFESSIONAL SERVICES GROUP (PSG), AS MANITOWOC COUNTY EMPLOYEES – Lori Fure

The US Dept of Labor published a final rule effective March 11, 2024, revising the department’s guidance on how to determine who is an employee vs. who is an independent contractor under the Fair Labor Standards Act. This change more tightly defines what is a contracted worker vs an employee. The PSG workers use HSD laptops, phones and office space. HDS supervisor, Jena Foster, provides the day to day supervision for these staff. Our corporation counsel advised we make this change. Considering the cost of 4 positions at the current rate of pay vs what it costs for HSD to contract for the positions, there would be a cost savings. It would be more fiscally sound and there would be less chance of exposure to any FLSA penalties if we were to make this change. We hope to hire the current PSG workers as county employees and end the contract with PSG. Jim Brey asked if we can get him the actual numbers on what the savings would be.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY BRUNS, SECONDED BY SHIMULUNAS TO APPROVE THE REQUEST TO HIRE FOUR PARENT COACHES, CURRENTLY CONTRACTED THROUGH PROFESSIONAL SERVICES GROUP (PSG), AS MANITOWOC COUNTY EMPLOYEES. MOTION WAS CARRIED.

A resolution would have to go to the County Board, this can be added to the 02/20/24 meeting.

FINANCIAL PROJECTIONS FOR DECEMBER, 2023 – Jessica Huss

Right now, we are projecting a deficit of \$515,578. We will have a better understanding in February and March as more items will be in. We received \$1.7 million from WIMCR which was a really good projection. Last year we had also received a few smaller payments after the initial amount, so possibly would receive more.

DEPUTY DIRECTOR’S REPORT ON AGENCY OPERATIONS: Lori Fure

It’s been a year since Lori has been Director so she would like to give a year in review. We had 3 new Deputy Directors in 2023, she would like to thank them all for their support, dedication and hard work. In 2023, we added 17 new positions, and 3 employees moved up to supervisory positions. We restarted a safety committee. This led to home visit safety and general office safety training. We also had some staff CPR and AED trained so we have people available in each area of each building who can respond if the need arises. We had two employees develop an informal new employee orientation that has been well received and valuable to new hires. To encourage a culture of psychological safety we developed a Code of Conduct and Conflict Resolution Policy. We purchased the Docu-Sign program to increase efficiency. We started with provider contracts and the Clinical Unit and will be expanding to the Children units.

We moved the CCS unit to the Hamilton Building. It was a lot of work getting setup and moved and we appreciate public works and IT for all their help. Finally, we were also able to open a visitation center at the Hamilton, which has been extremely helpful and increased our capacity to provide supervised visits.

Moving into 2024, we knew we needed help in certain areas, so had to sacrifice in others. One of these areas is child protective services (CPS) intake/assessment/access. We converted a vacant CST position to a CPS position and moved a casual CCS employee to a casual CPS position. Another area of need has been day time crisis. We converted a vacant Community Support Program position to a daytime crisis position. Finally, when our full-time psychiatrist left in early December, we converted the psychiatrist position to an APNP.

We had 21 workers leave employment here in 2023, which is a 12% turnover rate. That seems high and is definitely rough on supervisors and other staff who assist with training. It is lower than the state average. Given the current shortage of any employees in the mental health field and social workers in general, finding qualified candidates has been quite challenging. We have been hiring people without experience, people we probably would not have hired 5 years ago. Sometimes this works out, but not always.

We have 8 new positions approved for 2024. There will be an IT position funded by HSD and housed in our building but supervised by IT. We added a worker to the front desk at the office complex so between that position and the economic support person there should always be coverage. We have 2 dual CLTS/CCS positions, 2 CLTS positions with 1 not filled until midyear. Also 2 CCS facilitator positions that we are not filling immediately.

We currently have openings for 2 after-hours crisis workers, 1 daytime crisis worker, 1 APNP, 1 CPS intake worker, 1 staff accountant (which we are evaluating to consider if that position could be better used in a different financial capacity) and 2 CCS positions. We are looking at efficiency and the best use of positions to be fiscally responsible.

QUESTIONS FROM BOARD MEMBERS ON THE STATUS OF THE HUMAN SERVICES DEPARTMENT: Lori Fure

There was a question on if we have a 5-year or 10-year plan. It is tough to plan for frequently shifting needs. We have expanded a lot in the last three years in an attempt to meet these needs. We need to slow expansion, allow some time for the dust to settle, for everything to mature as we monitor results.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING:

The next regular meeting of the Human Services Department Board will be held on February 22, 2024 at 4:15 p.m. The meeting will be held at Manitowoc County Human Services, 801 Jay Street.

ADJOURNMENT:

A MOTION WAS MADE BY BRUNS, SECONDED BY SHIMULUNAS TO ADJOURN THE MEETING OF THE HUMAN SERVICES DEPARTMENT BOARD AT 5:15 P.M., MOTION CARRIED.