

CASS COUNTY SOCIAL SERVICES BOARD MEETING

April 4, 2016

MINUTES

With quorum present, Chair Rasmussen called the meeting to order at 2:00 p.m.

Present: Arland Rasmussen, Ken Pawluk, Chad Peterson, Rick Steen, Brian Hagen, Mary Scherling

Presenter: Chip Ammerman, Director; Dan Mahli, Fargo Housing; Pat Podoll, Family Services Manager

I. **Approval of Minutes**

Ms. Scherling made a motion to approve the March 7, 2016 Board minutes. Mr. Hagen seconded it. Motion carried.

II. **Fargo Housing Study**

Mr. Mahli distributed handouts with a variety of data collected from the Fargo area. He explained three key points found within the data collected including: the accelerating population, new construction, and the disparity of renting versus buying a home. Fargo's estimated population in 2015 was 118,000. The projection for the year 2020 will increase the population 12%, putting it at approximately 133,000. The majority of Fargo's growth is being led by youth and seniors. Currently, 54% of Fargo's population is rental, with 46% owning their homes. They predict by 2020, those numbers will be 58% renting and 42% owning, respectively. The report showed approximately 50,000 people are earning under \$14 per hour which makes owning their own home difficult. Mr. Ammerman stated a large portion of the population earning less than \$14 per hour will be eligible for Economic Assistance programs. He also indicated housing becomes an issue, at times, with the population due to a number of issues and case management can be effective in helping with self-sufficiency.

Some recommendations coming from the study included developing senior and low-income housing and provide tax credit. The Board shared their appreciation of Mr. Mahli joining the meeting to share the Housing Study results.

A question was raised whether Lutheran Social Services considers the housing/rental market when deciding how many Refugees to bring into the community. Mr. Ammerman states LSS looks more closely at the support networks available to individuals and indicated that New Americans are on services for a short period of time before gaining employment. However, due to the low wage they are often paid, a lot of New Americans are still eligible for services.

III. **Family Services Update**

Ms. Podoll stated there are three programs that Family Services collaborates with in the community: PATH Family Support, The Consortium and Children's Consultation Network. All three groups offer support to families working with Family Services to prevent out-of-home placement of children. These programs consist of services such as mentorship, case management and assisting with stabilization in the community. Shawna Croaker from the Children's Consultation Network has been working with Parent Aides to develop a more formalized training program the Parent Aides can utilize when working with families as well.

A question was raised in regards to the difference between the Nurtured Hearts Approach offered through the Extension Office and what the Parent Aides offer. Ms. Podoll explained the program offered through the Extension Office is the teaching of the program, but does not offer the follow-up and additional assistance that the Parent Aides can offer working directly with families.

When questioned how success is measured with this programs, it was stated there are specific data markers that have been identified, to include length of disruption, length of placement, demographics, etc.

These three programs are contracted programs that were in the 2016 budget with the intent to reduce out-of-home placements.

IV. Adult Protect Services Funding

Mr. Ammerman distributed a handout listing the Benefits and Salaries of the Adult Protective Services Staff, which accounts for 3.25 FTE positions. He explained to the Board the County's fiscal year runs from January 1 to December 31, whereas the State's runs from July 1 through June 30, so there is an overlap between the budgets. Mr. Ammerman asked the Board for direction on whether the agency would be able to continue to fund Adult Protective Services or end the services, which would also result in the elimination or redistribution of three full-time positions.

Sarah Heinle from the Auditor's Office verified there was sufficient funds in the reserve to cover the costs of the program if the Social Welfare Fund account was used. Mr. Ammerman stated the State of North Dakota has applied for a grant through the federal government which would provide funding the program through the end of the biennium. This grant will be submitted by April 15, 2016 and it's hoped a decision will be provided by the end of May, 2016.

Mr. Ammerman reported that NDDHS officials informed him that there have been three other organizations approached by NDDHS to offer Adult Protective Services. One organization stated they would be unable to provide the services as their funding would not be sufficient. If Cass County were to choose to discontinue the service, we are required to give a 30 day notice.

Mr. Steen made a motion to continue the Adult Protective Services funding through December 31, 2016. If the state has not determined another option by that time, the agency would notify the Department of Human Services that this agency will discontinue the services with the required 30 day notice. Mr. Peterson seconded it. On roll call, the motion carried with four votes in favor; two against. Motion carried.

V. Operations Report

Chairman Rasmussen briefly reviewed the Operations Report, stating he has not heard many positives about the SPACES program implemented by the state for Economic Assistance. The process is still taking longer than expected, which is not good considering 160 new households applied for assistance just in the month of February.

The ticketing system, Q-Flow, was also just recently implemented in Economic Assistance to help with the flow of clients to different stations depending on the nature of their visit. Sidney

Schock, Economic Assistance Manager, states the process is working and directing the clients more efficiently.

Chairman Rasmussen concluded with a handout of a potential recommendation for the open Board position. Mr. Glenn Ellingsberg is retired from the Cass County Sheriff's Office but actively involved within the Fargo/West Fargo community. Chairman Rasmussen was advised that if Mr. Ellingsberg is interested in the position, he would need to obtain the application from Heather Worden of the Auditor's Office. Once submitted, the Board of Commissioners would appoint the potential candidate.

VI. Adjournment

Mr. Peterson made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 3:09 pm. Mr. Steen seconded it.

Motion carried.



Arland Rasmussen, Chair
Cass County Social Services Board



Melissa Kain Varho, Recorder