

**WESTERN PRAIRIE HUMAN SERVICES BOARD MEETING**  
**October 4, 2024**

The meeting of the Joint Powers Board for Western Prairie Human Services was held October 4, 2024 at the Western Prairie Human Services Office in Elbow Lake office.

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

Dwight Walvatne  
Paul Gremmels  
Ken Johnson  
Troy Johnson  
Doyle Sperr  
Paul Gerde  
Bill LaValley  
Paul Wildman

**OTHERS PRESENT**

Stacy Hennen, Executive Director  
Crystal Zaviska, Financial Assistance Manager

**MEMBERS ABSENT**

Larry Lindor  
Gordy Wagner

**A. Opening:**

1. Chair Troy Johnson called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.
  2. The Pledge of Allegiance was said.
  3. Introduction of New Employees
    - a. NA
  4. The agenda was reviewed. Commissioner Gerde made a motion to approve the agenda as presented, seconded by Commissioner Wildman, MCU
  5. Approval of the September, 2024 meeting minutes. Commissioner Wildman made a motion to approve the minutes, seconded by Commissioner Gremmels, MCU.
  6. A summary of the September 2024 bills was presented by the director. After discussion, Commissioner Gerde made a motion to approve the bills, seconded by Commissioner Walvatne MCU.
    - a. The executive director reviewed August 2024 financial information. After questions, Commissioner LaValley made a motion to approve the financial reports, seconded by Commissioner Sperr, MCU.
  7. Directors update
- The executive director discussed the update on Traverse county and the projected timeline for 2024.

**B. CONTRACTS/AGREEMENTS**

8. None

**C. OLD BUSINESS**

**9. Out of Home Placement List**

The executive director discussed the out of home placements for the month of August we have 22 children in placement which is three more than we had in July. We have two kids in 18-21 placement, both are age 20 now. We have one child in waived care one who is 16. A sibling's group of three transferred custody in September so this is their last full month on this list. Two children are in reunification but are at 8 months so a permanency decision will have to be made soon. Two children will be transferring custody to the custodial parents of one of them. Four children will move to some form of permanency soon. The remainder are working on reunification with one on a trial home visit and four placed with non-custodial parents. Western Prairie Human Services still have custody of some children and we pay for things like childcare and other things but not a daily rate. The higher cost for this month is because we have three more children in placement than last month.

**10. Case Counts**

The executive director discussed the current case counts. As expected we see our social services numbers going up, largely as intakes go up for child protection. That's normal with the end of summer coming and school gearing up. We also see some variations in developmental disabilities and adult protection, but child protections are the most noticeable

difference. The financial assistance manager discussed the number of applications, programs and reapplications they received this month. Those remain high and the reapplications are twice the amount of work. The General Assistance benefit will increase from \$203 to \$350 starting October 1 and will now have an annual COLA increase yearly associated with this benefit. In Child Support the numbers decreased again after more closures have officially closed. Closures sit for 60 days after supervisor approval before they come off of the reports. As MAXIS HealthCare continues to work year 2 of the unwind specifically related to Asset tests, we are discovering those enrollees negatively impacted are largely impacted and are struggling with this transition.

#### **11. Personnel/Hiring Update**

The executive director discussed the agency has no current openings. Stacy Danielson has been promoted to Lead Eligibility Worker and the new Eligibility Worker began employment on September 12th. The child protection social worker position has been filled and will begin employment on October 7th. Veronica Beecher was promoted to Lead Worker in Adult Services and Disabilities. There are currently two FMLA leaves and three intermittent FMLA leaves.

#### **D. New Business:**

#### **12. MACSSA Legislative Update**

The executive director discussed the AMC Policy Conference was in September and MACSSA always develops their initial legislative priorities to present at that conference. This is an overview both of those legislative priorities that MACSSA presented and a summary of our legislative platform that is developing for the 2025 session.

#### **13. Senior Coordinator Funding**

The executive director discussed our senior coordinators. Western Prairie Human Services currently has two social workers in WPHS assigned senior coordinator for three counties and have used the money from the Area Agency on Aging to fund the time in Traverse completely and to significantly fund our other positions. Having such a substantial cut means we need to rethink our model of delivering senior services. The executive director noted that we will no longer be able to assist with Medicare part D because we do not have access to that system and indicated that she is reassigning one of the social workers to other duties and we will only have one person assigned to senior coordinator duties in Western Prairie. The board had a robust conversation about this and acknowledged it may be hard for some of our seniors but with such significant federal funding cuts our options are limited. We discussed that we may keep things the same in Traverse County since it fits with who we have going over there for adult protection. Those discussions are still being had.

#### **14. Dementia Grant**

The social services supervisor discussed the Dementia Grant, from the Minnesota Board on Aging. Diane Kittelson, Senior Services Social Worker in our Glenwood Office, found this opportunity. Diane wrote the grant and received funding to increase services for dementia in Pope, Grant, Stevens, and Traverse counties. A recent Alzheimer's Association study for the state of Minnesota, showed of these counties have a 10.9- 12.8% rate of dementia for the total population. The state of Minnesota awarded \$23,575 to be used from July 1, 2024 to June 30, 2026.

#### **15. WPHS Goals**

The executive director discussed the goals for Western Prairie Human Services that we wrote and brought to the board over a year ago. The agency created goals to meet for the 2023-2024 year with some goals for beyond that. Western Prairie Human Services has achieved several goals in the two years. We will be updating our goals and talking with the staff again to continue our work on retention.

#### **16. Glenwood Van**

The executive director discussed an agency vehicle that is due for replacement. The vehicle is 2015 van that has 95,000 miles on it and was purchased in 2021 by WPHS from Pope County because we needed a van to transport children and could not get a van from Enterprise at the time. We have not been able to get a van for our Glenwood site until this time. The quote includes a price that has a maintenance plan and one that does not. We do not take the maintenance plan because we have priced it out and we find it to be more cost effective and use our local providers who do not take the

Enterprise maintenance plan. We need approval for this from the board since it is more than \$5,000 and was not initially discussed with the finance committee because we did not know we could get a van. After review and discussion, Commissioner Gerde made a motion to approve purchasing the van and having Enterprise sell our current van, seconded by Commissioner LaValley. MCU

**Report from Board Appointments:**

The meeting was adjourned by Chairman Troy Johnson at 11:01 a.m.

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|---|------------------------------------|
| A. Lakeland Mental Health Center.....         | K. Johnson/Gerde                   |
| B. Horizon Community Health Board.....        | Sperr/Walvatne/Lindor/Wagner       |
| C. Prime West Health CBP.....                 | Wagner/K Johnson/T. Johnson/Lindor |
| D. West Central Communities Action, Inc. .... | K Johnson/Lindor                   |
| E. Agency on Aging.....                       | Lindor/LaValley                    |
| F. Child Protection Pre-Placement.....        | T. Johnson/Gremmels                |
| G. Rainbow Rider .....                        | LaValley/Walvatne/Gerde/           |
| H. R4S Governing and Executive Board.....     | K. Johnson/Wildman                 |
| I. Child and Youth Council.....               | Sperr/Wagner                       |
| J. WPHS Personnel Committee.....              | Lindor/Wildman/Sperr/T. Johnson    |
| K. WPHS Executive Committee.....              | T. Johnson/Walvatne/Gremmels       |
| L. WPHS Finance Committee.....                | Gerde/Lindor/LaValley/K. Johnson   |
| M. WPHS Safety Committee.....                 | Sperr/Wildman                      |

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Board Chair

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Board Secretary