

Buffalo County Minutes

Committee/Board: Health and Human Services and Veterans Service Committee

Date of Meeting: Monday, April 5, 2021

Electronic and Hard Copy Filing Date:

Location: Department of Health and Human Services
Buffalo County Courthouse
2nd Floor Conference Room
407 S 2nd Street, Alma, Wisconsin

1. ROLL CALL/BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT

Roll call was taken. Members present were Larry Grisen, Wendy Kleinschmidt, Carol McDonough, Mary Anne McMillan-Urell, Steve Nelson, Brad Schmidtkecht, Richard Mueller and Kim Beseler.

OTHERS PRESENT FOR ALL OR PART OF THE MEETING

Dave Rynders, Felicia Decker, Mary Hildebrand, and Amy Dahl were present at the meeting. Mickey Rice, Josie Knauber, and Carri Renchin attended via ZOOM.

2. PUBLIC COMMENT REGARDING ANY MATTERS THAT WILL BE TAKEN UP BY THE COMMITTEE AT THIS MEETING

None

3. REVIEW/DISCUSSION/ACTION – MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

A motion was made by Mr. Mueller and seconded by Ms. Kleinschmidt to approve the March 2, 2021 minutes as presented. Motion approved.

4. REVIEW/DISCUSSION/ACTION – VETERANS SERVICES MONTHLY REPORT

Ms. Decker attended a meeting in March with the tribal counties and other county CVSO's that discussed possible misappropriations of grant funds last year during COVID. Ms. Decker shared information regarding the stipulations of the CVSO, and mandates regarding the transportation grant for Buffalo/Pepin County and the Wisconsin Department of Affairs grant.

Ms. Decker also reported that in tribal counties they have a lower PTSD rate; methods were shared on what is done to achieve this.

An update was given on the Veterans re-entry planning program. 189 Veterans surveys have been received with input on taking care of Veterans, their dependents, and families. A presentation is being put together with information from the surveys to educate community members and help Veterans transition and adjust to being back home.

Pictures were shared of the Veterans brick memorial and the water damage that has affected the structural integrity of the memorial. The Veteran Memorial committee will be holding a meeting on April 15th at 2:00 PM to address the project. Stats were shared.

5. VETERANS SERVICES MONTHLY VOUCHERS

Ms. Decker presented the vouchers highlighting the monthly expenses, sharing that Mr. Steve Schiffli will be trained and accredited with the CVSO association which will affect the Veterans budget. A motion was made by Mr. Grisen and seconded by Mr. Schmidt knecht to approve the monthly vouchers as presented. Motion approved.

6. REVIEW/DISCUSSION/ACTION – RECOMMENDATION FOR FILLING HEALTH OFFICER VACANCY

Mr. Rynders introduced Ms. Josie Knauber via Zoom, who has accepted the Health Officer position which has been approved by the State. Ms. McMillan-Urell made a motion to move this recommendation for filling the Health Officer position forward to the County Board for approval which was seconded by Ms. Beseler. Motion approved. Mr. Rynders shared the effective date for Ms. Knauber stepping into this position is April 19th, 2021.

7. REVIEW/DISCUSSION/ACTION – REFILL OF PUBLIC HEALTH NURSE VACANCY

Mr. Rynders requested action to refill the Public Health Nurse vacancy. A motion was made by Mr. Mueller and seconded by Ms. McDonough to refill the Public Health Nurse vacancy. Motion approved.

8. REVIEW/DISCUSSION/ACTION – PUBLIC HEALTH UNIT REPORT

Ms. Mickey Rice reviewed the monthly investigation/case reports with the Committee. A vaccination update was shared highlighting statistics as of 3/22/2021:

- 27.7% of the Buffalo County population have received their first dose of vaccine.
- 17.5% of the Buffalo County population have completed their vaccine series.
- 71.8% of the 65+ population have received their first vaccine dose.

Ms. Rice shared information on the population that is currently eligible for the vaccine. Vaccines are now open to anyone 16+. Buffalo County has received the Johnson & Johnson vaccine for the first time.

There was discussion on advertising to make the public more aware of who is eligible for the vaccine. Mr. Rynders shared he spoke with the Winona Post who will be publishing information on the different vaccination options and how to sign up for the vaccine. Ms. McMillan-Urell also recommended putting the information in the Buffalo County newspaper for public awareness.

Mr. Mueller questioned the reinfection case from last month and if it was the same strain. Mr. Rynders provided an update that there have been three reinfections reported. All three reinfections were more than 3 months after the first infection. We do not have information on whether or not it was a variant strain.

9. REVIEW/DISCUSSION/ACTION – CLOSURE OF MODENA MEAL SITE

Mr. Rynders addressed the closing of the Modena meal site sharing that Ms. Mylessa Inqli, the Nutrition Program Coordinator surveyed all the Nutrition Advisory Committee members in December of 2020 as well as contacting the seven participants who utilized the Modena meal site with the following results:

- 2 Advisory committee members supported closing the site.

- 1 Advisory committee member was neutral.
- 3 Advisory committee members did not return calls.
- 3 meal site participants supported closing the site.
- 3 meal site participants were neutral on closing the site.

A recommendation was made to close the site because it has not been used in over a year and when it was open, it was used twice a month and closed during the winter months.

A motion was made by Mr. Schmidtkecht and seconded by Ms. McDonough to close the Modena meal site. Motion approved.

10. REVIEW/DISCUSSION/ACTION – WERA WHEAP PRESENTATION

Ms. Amy Dahl, Energy Assistance Coordinator shared an informative presentation on the Wisconsin Emergency Rental Assistance (WERA) program and the Wisconsin Home Energy Assistance Program (WHEAP). WERA is a financial assistance program administered by the State of Wisconsin Department of Administration who also oversees the WHEAP program. The main purpose of the WERA program is to keep Wisconsinites in their homes and help relieve the burden due to COVID-19. The program can assist with current/past due rent, current/past due lot rent, security deposits and can additionally help with heat and utility costs.

Clients are eligible if they first meet the WHEAP requirements and then meet the following:

- Qualify for unemployment, experienced a reduction in household income, experienced major costs, or financial struggles due to COVID-19.
- Risk of being evicted or losing their home.
- Household income at or below 80% below the county median.

Western Dairyland is handling the applications for the WERA program. Ms. Dahl reported that \$31,247 in WERA benefits have been paid to 13 Buffalo County residents as of 4-5-2021.

Ms. McMillan-Urell inquired where the funds for this program are coming from. Mr. Rynders thought the funds were available through the original CARES act.

Ms. Dahl shared a short video on the benefits of the Wisconsin Home Energy Assistance Program (WHEAP). This program provides a one-time payment during the heating season to assist low-income people with help paying their heating and electric bills.

Crisis benefit assistance is available to clients that are in immediate danger of being disconnected by their fuel/electric vendors, free furnace repair, and a one-time weatherization audit which is a free service.

11. REVIEW/DISCUSSION/ACTION – REFILL FAMILY & COMMUNITY SPECIALIST VACANCY

Mr. Rynders shared the job description for the Family & Community Specialist which supervises visitations and family education duties in the Social Services unit. This position is vacant due to Ms. Shelley Place accepting the Child Protective Services/Case Manager position. Mr. Rynders requested the Family & Community Specialist be refilled. A motion was made by Mr. Schmidtkecht and seconded by Mr. Nelson to refill the vacant Family & Community Specialist position. Motion approved.

12. REVIEW/DISCUSSION/ACTION – RESOLUTION TO ADD A FULL TIME PUBLIC HEALTH NURSE IN 2021 TO PROVIDE CHILDRENS LONG TERM SERVICES AND HEALTH SERVICES

Mr. Rynders explained this is an introductory concept; sharing goals for creating this position which will be a mid-year request.

Ms. Renchin gave an overview of the Children’s Long-Term Support (CLTS) waiver program. Eligible children are those with development disabilities, severe emotional disturbances and physical disabilities that meet functional and financial criteria. The waiver program is funded by medical assistance.

The State is focusing on wait list elimination; although Buffalo County has never had a waitlist, the County applied for waitlist funds in order to enroll more children. Ms. Renchin shared a CLTS-W growth chart showing enrollment in 2017 at 14 children and in 2021 at 37 children and 4 pending referrals. Ms. Renchin presented a chart showing the CLTS-W capacity building efforts. With the increased growth in CLTS-W referrals, we are proposing adding a .75 FTE in 2021. Ms. Beseler questioned where the referrals come from; Ms. Renchin reported the resources include the Birth to 3 (B-3) program, Schools, Parents, and CPS.

Mr. Rynders proposed tying together the Children’s Waiver expansion and the upcoming reproductive health services by using a Public Health Nurse to provide multi- disciplinary services. Mr. Rynders shared the fiscal impact of tax levy for the Public Health Nurse position. Mr. Rynders reported that Buffalo County is receiving \$2 1/2 million from the Rescue Bill that can help offset the costs. This will be revisited in May.

13. REVIEW/DISCUSSION/ACTION – DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION 2021-2023 STATE AODA PROGRAM GRANT

Mr. Rynders is seeking approval to write an AODA program grant that needs to be submitted by April 19th, 2021. We are looking to use the grant to further establish and expand providing Botvin Life Skills services for youth. The grant would provide \$16,000 to the program which \$4000 would be awarded to each of the four Buffalo County school districts. A motion was made by Ms. Beseler and seconded by Mr. Mueller to approve the writing of a Department of Public Instruction 2021-2023 State AODA program grant. Motion approved.

14. REVIEW/DISCUSSION/ACTION – CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS PLANNING

Ms. McMillan-Urell asked Mr. Rynders if any updates have been received from Ms. Hansen regarding the Capital Improvements planning. Mr. Rynders shared information on two ideas for the capital improvements:

*Tyler Technologies made a presentation on a fiscal software program that was previewed by Pepin, Trempealeau, and Buffalo County. The cost of the program is estimated at \$100,000.

*The installation of a cabinet in a bathroom that would allow access from the other side for reproductive health purposes.

Ms. McMillan-Urell will present the two ideas to Ms. Hansen.

Mr. Rynders is also working on a policy for telecommuting which will avoid any capital improvement needs.

15. REVIEW/DISCUSSION/ACTION – RECOMMENDATION OF ELIZABETH HOFFMASTER, RN FOR VETERANS/DHHS COMMITTEE VACANCY

Mr. Rynders shared Ms. Hoffmaster’s resume with the Committee who is the school nurse at C-FC schools since 2002, an EMT, a Red Cross instructor, and an adjunct faculty member at WSU. Ms. Hoffmaster is interested in making a commitment to join the Veterans/DHHS committee. Ms. McMillan-Urell made a motion and Ms. Kleinschmidt seconded it to recommend Ms. Hoffmaster to fill the Veterans/DHHS committee vacancy as a health professional. Motion approved.

Mr. Rynders will inform Ms. Hoffmaster that she has been approved to fill the vacancy on the Veterans/DHHS committee, contingent on County Board approval April 20th.

16. REVIEW/DISCUSSION/ACTION – DHHS FINANCIAL UPDATE

Mr. Rynders presented the financial update for 2020/2021 projecting there will be a surplus for 2020.

17. REVIEW/DISCUSSION/ACTION – DHHS MONTHLY VOUCHERS

Mr. Rynders shared the 2020/2021 monthly vouchers. A motion was made by Ms. McDonough and seconded by Ms. Kleinschmidt to approve the monthly vouchers as presented. Motion approved.

18. REVIEW/DISCUSSION/ACTION – MONTHLY UNIT REPORTS

Ms. McMillan-Urell asked if there were any questions on the monthly unit reports. The question was asked if someone were in arrears, could Child Support intercept the stimulus checks? *A text answer from Ms. Weiss: Child Support was only able to intercept the first stimulus check, not the 2nd or 3rd ones. People can choose to self-submit their 2nd/3rd stimulus monies, but they cannot be automatically intercepted by Child Support.*

19. REVIEW/DISCUSSION/ACTION – WESTERN DAIRYLAND COMMUNITY ACTION

Mr. Nelson reiterated that Ms. Dahl covered information regarding Western Dairyland taking the lead on the Wisconsin Emergency Rental Assistance (WERA) program.

20. REVIEW/DISCUSSION/ACTION – DHHS DIRECTOR – TELECOMMUTING PLANNING

Mr. Rynders and Sonya Hansen drafted language in the current telecommuting policy to expand and create positions that would be primarily telecommuting. Draft policy will go before the Human Resources Committee on 4/12/21. By broadening telecommuting, we would retain more workers, such as the field workers seeing clients.

21. REVIEW/DISCUSSION/ACTION – CHAIRPERSON’S REPORT

None

22. REVIEW/DISCUSSION/ACTION – NEXT MEETING DATE AND TIME

The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, May 4, 2021 at 6:00 PM

23. PUBLIC COMMENT NOT RELATED TO AGENDA ITEMS

None

24. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 8:30 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary A Hildebrand

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