

Buffalo County Minutes

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

Date of Meeting: Tuesday, May 4, 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. Member's present were Kim Beseler, Larry Grisen, Wendy Kleinschmidt, Carol McDonough, Mary Anne McMillan-Urell, Richard Mueller, and Steve Nelson. Brad Schmidt knecht attended via Zoom.

OTHERS PRESENT FOR ALL OR PART OF THE MEETING

Dave Rynders, Mary Hildebrand, Carri Renchin, Josie Knauber and Felicia Decker were present at the meeting. Molli Eckelberg, Sonya Hansen, and Mylessa Ingli attended meeting 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. Grisen and seconded by Ms. Kleinschmidt to approve the April 5, 2021 minutes as presented. A roll call vote was taken. Motion approved.

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

Ms. Decker presented the monthly Veterans Report highlighting a service project where a ramp was installed for a Veteran that was completed with materials and funds from an anonymous donation. Ms. Decker was approached regarding a donation of \$2500 towards the Veterans memorial fund; she is looking for approval to accept the donation. Ms. McMillan inquired on what the project will cost. Ms. Decker reported the bid has not been received yet, but the estimate is approximately \$12,000. The April stats were reviewed.

5. VETERANS SERVICES MONTHLY VOUCHERS

Ms. Decker presented the monthly vouchers. A motion was made by Ms. Beseler and seconded by Mr. Mueller to approve the vouchers as presented. A roll call vote was taken. Motion approved.

6. REVIEW/DISCUSSION/ACTION – RE-APPOINT VERN LANGHORST TO THE VETERANS COMMISSION

Ms. Decker made a recommendation to have Mr. Vern Langhorst reappointed to the Veterans commission. A motion was made to re-appoint Mr. Langhorst to the Veterans Commission by Mr. Mueller and seconded by Ms. Kleinschmidt. A roll call vote was taken. Motion approved.

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

Ms. Knauber reported the COVID-19 case rates continue to stay low, but surrounding states (Michigan and Minnesota) and other areas of Wisconsin are experiencing high rates. The rates continue to stay low when preventative measures are taken. Vaccination is an important preventative measure but will not provide protection for the whole community (herd immunity) until 80% of the population is vaccinated. The Public Health department continues to host clinics in partnership with UW-Eau Claire Nursing, Winona State Nursing, Wisconsin Emergency Assistance Volunteer Registry (WEAVR) volunteers, and the Wisconsin National Guard to assist with the vaccine clinics. Ms. Knauber explained the pause on the Johnson & Johnson vaccine. A small number of people (7) nationwide who had received the J&J vaccine experienced a rare side effect – a blood clot. One J&J clinic was held in Buffalo County on April 1st. Vaccine recipients were notified as to what they needed to know regarding the Johnson & Johnson vaccine. Currently, individuals age 16+ are eligible for the vaccine. The Health Officer position was filled by Ms. Knauber on April 20th and the Public Health Nurse position is vacant.

Ms. Knauber gave an update on the TNC (Transient Non-Community) Public Water System program which monitors the quality of drinking water served to the public. Ms. McMillan-Urell brought forward information regarding a previous discussion on collecting data from water sampling every 2 square miles. This idea was brought up again at the land use meeting which they would like to explore further. Mr. Rynders will give the committee an update at the June meeting.

8. REVIEW/DISCUSSION/ACTION – RE-APPOINT KIM BESELER, WENDY KLEINSCHMIDT TO THE VETERANS/DHHS COMMITTEE

Mr. Rynders explained there is a 3-year rotation in terms with committee members; both Ms. Kleinschmidt and Ms. Beseler need to be reappointed to the committee. Mr. Grisen made a motion to re-appoint Ms. Kleinschmidt and Ms. Beseler to the Veterans/DHHS committee and Mr. Mueller seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken. Motion approved.

9. REVIEW/DISCUSSION/ACTION – FORMAL TELECOMMUTING PLANS

Mr. Rynders presented a formal telecommuting plan policy for 18 of the 28 workers in the Department of Health & Human Services. Of the 18 individuals who submitted requests to telecommute, 3 are LTE's. Mr. Rynders reported that 7 of the permanent staff would be telecommuting every day and 8 will be in the office a few days a week. A motion was made by Mr. Schmidtkecht and seconded by Ms. Beseler to approve the formal telecommuting plans. There was discussion on what the plans are for monitoring the production of the telecommuters. Mr. Rynders assured the Committee that it is necessary to have in place what the work model looks like with the individuals working from home which includes being monitored by the Supervisors multiple times daily.

Ms. McMillan-Urell questioned who the original 7 potential telecommuters are. Mr. Rynders shared the 7 telecommuters include: 3 Economic Support Specialists, 1 Child Support Financial Specialist, 1 Fiscal Clerk, 1 Community Family Specialist, and 1 Public Health position.

Ms. McMillan-Urell suggested any lead role needs to be in-house every day.

Mr. Mueller brought up the office space issue where individuals are doubling up in offices.

Ms. Beseler questioned if there is an allocation of funds to provide phones, computers, and printers for the telecommuters as well as assuring their workspace is HIPPA compliant. Mr. Rynders confirmed this has been addressed under the informal telecommuting policy. The department converted to laptops vs computers which goes with the employee whether working inhouse or telecommuting. Mr. Rynders confirmed no additional funds are needed towards equipment for telecommuters.

Mr. Nelson asked if a separate policy is needed for the telecommuters. Mr. Rynders explained this is a county wide policy.

Ms. Hansen recommended taking steps slowly and thoughtful in rolling out telecommuting. It was suggested to look at each request individually and identify the measuring tools needed to monitor the telecommuters. Mr. Rynders welcomes the process to study each telecommuting plan and determine if it is a good plan.

Mr. Rynders made a recommendation to authorize the 7 positions proposed a year ago to telecommute starting June 1st to solve the space problem. Mr. Grisen suggested Mr. Rynders identify the positions that will work effectively from home.

Ms. McMillan-Urell made a motion and Mr. Mueller seconded the motion to move the approved formal telecommuting plans to HR with a strong consideration to authorize the 7 positions proposed a year ago to solve the space issue to telecommute starting June 1st, 2021. A roll call vote was taken. Motion approved.

Ms. McDonough inquired about the policy regarding kids at home. Mr. Rynders stated there is policy in place regarding telecommuters with children at home. Alternate arrangements are addressed with each telecommuter as needed to care for the children.

10. REVIEW/DISCUSSION/ACTION – PROPOSAL TO REOPEN MEAL SITES JUNE 1ST

Mr. Rynders introduced Ms. Mylessa Ingli, via ZOOM, the Nutrition Coordinator for Buffalo/Pepin County. Ms. Ingli presented a reopening plan for the congregate meal sites beginning June 1st. The reopening plan has been reviewed and approved by GWAAR, Pepin County and both Buffalo & Pepin County Health Departments. Ms. Ingli reported the carry out meals and the HDM (Home Delivered Meals) will also continue as is for those people not wanting to participate in the congregate meals. A motion was made by Mr. Grisen and seconded by Ms. McDonough to approve the proposal to reopen meal sites June 1st, 2021. A roll call vote was taken. Motion approved.

11. REVIEW/DISCUSSION/ACTION – GENERAL RELIEF POLICY AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE RESIDENTIAL TREATMENT ROOM AND BOARD COSTS

Mr. Rynders reviewed the General Relief policy with the Committee which aids assistance to residents of Buffalo County in need of food, clothing, medical care, or shelter when no other program or natural support is available. These funds are available on a loan basis and a repayment schedule is created and signed by the recipient and the DHHS Director or designee. As of May 10, 2021, general relief loans will also be available to pay for board and lodging costs

for approved Buffalo County Medical Assistance residents entering in-patient residential substance abuse treatment. Mr. Rynders explained that the State of Wisconsin added inpatient AODA treatment to the card benefit for medical assistance but excluded room and board coverage.

Mr. Rynders authorizes general relief approval and then presents to the committee after the fact. Mr. Rynders estimates this proposed action will allow for two in-patient customers at a time as funding any more is dependent on repayment.

Ms. Renchin explained the checks and balances of the AODA policy which includes an assessment, residential treatment, motivation for treatment, purpose, and repayment plan.

Mr. Grisen made a motion and Ms. Beseler seconded the motion to amend the General Relief Policy to include Substance Abuse Residential Treatment Room and Board Costs. A roll call vote was taken. 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 identified the need to add a full-time Public Health Nurse to provide CLTS-W (Children’s Long-Term Support-Waiver) and Public Health services. The CLTS-W referrals continue to increase; the growth has caused our department to not be able to meet the needs of the CLTS-W program with existing staff. DHHS has one Public Health Nurse which would add capacity and depth to the Public Health program as well. Mr. Rynders also shared Buffalo County DHHS is also anticipating beginning to provide reproductive health services in the second half of 2021 which will place a further strain on the current capacity. Mr. Rynders explained the impact of this position would generate revenue enough to cover the cost of the position with no tax levy; the RESCUE act could be used.

Ms. Renchin shared a presentation on the overview and growth of the Children’s Long-Term Support Waiver program.

The CLTS-W program growth dating from 2017 was 14 and expanding in 2021 to 39 children being served with Physical Disability (PD), Developmental Disability (DD), and Severe Emotional Disturbance (SED). Ms. Renchin shared the CLTS-W capacity building efforts and referrals from 2018 to 2021 as well as addressing caseload considerations. Contract exploration was looked into with Lutheran Social Services. LSS is not currently conducting initial assessments and enrollment for new referrals.

Mr. Rynders presented a detailed funding spreadsheet for a Public Health Nurse request and explained the fiscal impact which also affects the Community Educator who is freed up to do more revenue generating.

Mr. Mueller made a motion and Ms. Kleinschmidt seconded the motion to approve the resolution to add a full-time Public Health Nurse in 2021 to provide Children’s Long-Term Services and Health Services. A roll call vote was taken. Motion approved.

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

Mr. Rynders presented the approved application for the 2021-2023 State AODA program grant. The Alma school is represented as the fiscal agent. Mr. Rynders reported we are still waiting to hear if we received the grant. The grant will create tools to engage Parents and provide

education to Teachers to reinforce the Botvin skills for children which reduces drug, alcohol, and tobacco use and aggression. Action taken last month.

14. REVIEW/DISCUSSION/ACTION – DHHS FINANCIAL UPDATE

The DHHS 2020 financial update for Agent of the State and DHHS was presented by Mr. Rynders as well as the 2021 financial update which was presented for review through March.

15. REVIEW/DISCUSSION/ACTION – DHHS MONTHLY VOUCHERS

Mr. Rynders presented the 2021 vouchers for review and approval. Mr. Grisen made a motion and Mr. Nelson seconded the motion to approve the monthly vouchers. A roll call vote was taken. Motion approved.

16. REVIEW/DISCUSSION/ACTION – MONTHLY UNIT REPORTS

The monthly unit reports were reviewed with no discussion.

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

Mr. Nelson reported there was little business, but discussion was held on when to meet face to face again.

Ms. McDonough and Mr. Nelson attended a Jobs and Business Development meeting which provides input and help for the start-up of new businesses which is normally 40-50; this past year it was 6 due to COVID-19. Financial support was received from businesses as well as grants to help existing small businesses continue to thrive.

18. REVIEW/DISCUSSION/ACTION – DHHS DIRECTOR

None

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

None

20. REVIEW/DISCUSSION/ACTION – NEXT MEETING DATE

The next meeting date is scheduled for Tuesday, June 1, 2021 at 6:00 PM.

21. PUBLIC COMMENTS

None

22. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 8:33 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Hildebrand