



**AITKIN COUNTY HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES
COUNTY BOARD MEETING MINUTES
October 22, 2019**

Attendance

The Aitkin County Board of Commissioners met this 22nd day of October, 2019, at 9:02 a.m. as the Aitkin County Health & Human Services Board, with the following members present: Commissioners J. Mark Wedel, Don Niemi, and Bill Pratt. Commissioner Westerlund was absent. Others present included: County Administrator Jessica Seibert, Cynthia Bennett ACH&HS Director, Accounting Supervisor Carli Goble, Kim Larson Adult Social Services Supervisor, Assistant to the County Administrator Sue Bingham, H&HS Executive Assistant Shawn Speed, and Guests: Carole Holten/HHS Advisory Board Member, Terri Mathis/HHS Advisory Board Member, and /Aitkin Independent Age.

Agenda

Motion by Commissioner Wedel, seconded by Commissioner Pratt and carried, all members voting yes to approve the October 22, 2019 Health & Human Services Board agenda as presented.

Minutes

Motion by Commissioner Niemi, seconded by Commissioner Pratt and carried, all members voting yes to approve the September 24, 2019 Health and Human Services Board minutes.

Bills

Carli noted that there was nothing notable on the bills this month.

Motion by Commissioner Wedel, seconded by Commissioner Niemi and carried, all members voting yes to approve the bills.

Health & Human Services Director Report, Cynthia Bennett, ACH&HS Director

Directors Update

Cynthia began by giving an update on her attendance of the Association of Minnesota Counties (AMC) district meeting and relayed there was a presentation on “Bridging the Divide” which was about reaching consensus when there are opposing opinions, values, or beliefs. This preceded a conversation on the Transportation funding gap and how we might to come to consensus over how to close the \$200 million gap between what the state pays to the counties and what it actually costs the counties for transportation

The format utilized was a new approach and the attending Commissioners worked in small groups to do some brainstorming, problem solving, and then reach consensus about how we move forward to develop a plan to fill the funding gap for transportation. Commissioners commented that this was very valuable to listen to varying opinions and solutions and work together to find consensus.

The group also voted on the proposed legislative platform issues. The group selected three priorities which were:

1. To promote legislation that preserves the tax base in response to increased property tax appeals, utility tax refunds, and potential dark store assessing practices. This priority relates to our county by the impact of the Enbridge Utility Company refund that we could have to

- pay.
2. To promote a sustainable approach to payment of PILP funds that includes proposals to address instability in PILP payments and acquired acres land. Payments to PILP have been stagnant in recent years and have not had any increases along with the cost of living and inflation and counties have lost tax base because of that. AMC's proposal asks for an increase in revenues to figure out a way to make it consistent so we are not losing money in that area.
 3. AMC supports a comprehensive and sustainable transportation funding package that includes new revenues for roads, bridges, and transit. This involves asking for sustainable investment options from the legislature to help counties plan for future projects and address the growing needs at the local level.

Commissioner Marcotte remarked that she thought the conversation was very open and the willingness to participate was beyond what she had expected.

Commissioner Pratt added that the meeting showed that if you are willing to listen to others viewpoints it will greatly increase the probability of coming to a consensus.

Commissioner Marcotte added that conversations at the AMC board meeting the HHS Policy Committee Chair indicated that there are a great deal of hot issues to discuss within HHS that have not necessarily been settled yet. AMC is including the Sunday night before the conference in December for extra time for that group to meet and further discuss.

Lastly Commissioner Marcotte talked about her discussion with the Minnesota Attorney General about the prices of Insulin and that he was making it one of his top priorities to work on but there is a potential for legislation or a special session relating to the Insulin prices specifically. She state that AMC supports anything that can be done related to this issue.

Approval of Out-of-State Travel

Motion by Commissioner Wedel, seconded by Commissioner Pratt and carried, all members voting yes to approve the travel of Nick Anderson for the Police, Treatment, and Community Collaborative (PTACC) Conference in Ponte??? Or Point Verde Beach, Florida November 10-13, 2019.

Approval of Contracts/Agreements/Policies

Motion by Commissioner Pratt, seconded by Commissioner Niemi and carried, all members voting yes to approve the Memorandum of Understanding between Aitkin County and Nystrom and Associates to provide onsite substance use disorder assessments.

Financial Update, Carli Goble, Accounting Supervisor

Carli started by talking about the five year trend in HHS's fund balance and that it has gone down for the last five years as we have been using it to reduce the levy costs that we have asked for each year.

Commissioner Marcotte inquired about at how much of a percentage does HHS have to keep their fund balance and Carli responded that the State Auditor recommends anywhere from 35-50% be kept in fund balance but that the County Fund Balance policy indicates between 40-50% for HHS. Right now we are slightly above 50%, but foster care costs can fluctuate \$100-200 thousand in a matter of a month so it is nice to keep a safe amount in there.

Carli noted that foster care costs, this year, are still below what they have traditionally been.

Out-of-Home placement costs are right around \$64,000 below where they were at the same time last year.

Carli continued her report by going through the 2019 Q3 Financial Reports, which are included.

There was a discussion about the cost differences between a State Regional Treatment Center and a State operated Community Behavioral Health Hospital. Commissioner Wedel inquired what percentage of the total cost per day we are paying for the clients in St. Peter and Cynthia responded that she would get that information and forward it onto the Board members.

Commissioner Wedel then added that he would like to see what services we are getting for our costs at any of the facilities. There was also discussion about transparency and accountability with costs associated with these placements.

Carli ended her budget with letting the Board members know where we were, budget wise, right now. At the end of the third quarter we should be at around 75% of our expenditures and we are at 70-71% and revenues are at 68%, revenues are typically posted twice a year in June and November so those November numbers will be coming soon.

Committee Reports

Tri-County Community Health Services Board (CHS) Update

Cynthia briefed the Board that The CHS board of directors voted that the Tri-County alliance would submit a separate grant application for the SHIP Grant. Previously the Tri-County applied jointly with the Quad-Counties (Carlton, Cook, Lake and St Louis) and were listed as a sub-contractor to the Quad-Counties. This created some restrictions on decision making within the Tri-county and to create more autonomy and flexibility it was determined to be in the best interest of the Tri-County to apply for the SHIP grant separately. For that grant and they did not feel that was a fair representation of the merging of the seven counties and that they were having to ask the Quad-Counties for permission to do things.

HHS Advisory Committee Update

Carole Holten, Advisory Committee Chairperson, was in attendance and briefed the Board members on the October 2nd meeting. Minutes from that meeting were included in the Board packet given to the members prior to the meeting.

Commissioner Wedel encouraged the other Board members to pay particular attention to Item V of the minutes for the committee and to see that there is a lot involved in giving the elevator speeches about Suicide Awareness.

NEMOJT Update

Commissioner Niemi briefed that they had a phone conference instead of meeting and the primary conversation was that the NEMOJT director who was leaving to take another job at a school is being allowed to do both duties.

Commissioner Wedel added that he wanted to applaud the Career Force Center in Aitkin with helping a few people, who had contacted him, with finding employment.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:01 a.m.

Next Meeting – November 26, 2019