

**Three Rivers Human Service Zone Board
Meeting Minutes
Three Rivers Human Service Zone 1st Floor Conference Room
Mandan Office
210 2nd Ave NW, Mandan, ND
10:00 AM – February 17, 2022**

Meeting Called to Order:

Chairman, Dennis Meier, called the meeting to order

Roll Call:

Mandan: Jackie Buckley, Heidi Peltz, Rosemary Lawson, Edgar Olivera, Dennis Meier

Carson: John Reinhardt, Charlie Steinkuehler

Fort Yates: Ken Snider, John Pretty Bear

Staff Present: Vince Gillette, Brenda Peterson, Jodie Leier, Natalie Anderson, Jenny Wetsch, Dawn Rhone

Approval of Agenda:

Moved by Heidi, seconded by John Reinhardt to approve the agenda as presented.

Motion Carried.

Approval of Minutes from the January 20, 2022, Meeting:

Moved by Edgar and seconded by John Reinhardt

Motion Carried.

Review and Approval of February 2022 Bills:

Jackie reviewed the bills prior to the meeting. Jodie mentioned a charge on the credit card that is being handled by Chase Bank as a fraudulent charge. A one-night stay was approved and pre-paid within the SPF guidelines to help a child and parent receiving child services in our CPS unit in a crisis situation.

Jodie had contacted the Chase Bank Fraud department, Dawn Rhone in the Auditor's Office and has been making attempts to speak to a manager at the hotel. Chase Bank is now handling this incident.

Dennis explained the latest billing from Redmann Law for GAL services.

Moved by Jackie, seconded by Charlie to approve the February bills. Roll Call Vote: Jackie, Rose Mary, Edgar, Ken, Charlie, John R, Heidi, Dennis all voted in favor. (John P had lost his online connection during vote.

Motion Carried.

Budget Review:

Dennis explained that we are awaiting the final financials for 2021 and January of 2022 to be presented at the March meeting due to year-end adjustments. Dennis informed the group that based on the October and November financials we will have ended the 2021 year under budget.

Zone Stats:

CPS:

CPS had a slower January with 67 Reports. 31 of these were assigned to be worked, 26 were Administratively Assessed, 10 were Administrative Referrals and 5 were Assessments Terminated in Progress.

January had no reports from Grant or Sioux Counties.

We did have one Alternative Response. A question was posed by Edgar for Jenny to explain an Alternative Response Report. Jenny explained that is a report where there is a substance exposed newborn. We then assign a worker to contact the parent to see if they will work with us to obtain a drug/alcohol evaluation, work with 3 safety supports in their life that are clean and have no criminal record, who will check in on the mom and baby for the next 30 days and report back to the social worker on the progress of the mom and baby. After the 30 days, it goes to the Child Protection Team for review who will decide if they can close this case successfully or if there is a need to go further to move to a protection service. If it closes successfully, the parent has no record against them, if unsuccessful, you will be placed on the child abuse and neglect registry.

Foster Care/In Home:

This past month we had 103 Cases with 68 Foster Children, 64 In-Home. We closed a few cases in December due to adoptions. We received our first Sioux County Case. Currently we have a full case load in Grant County. There are 39 Licensed Foster Care Homes in the Zone. Our Foster Care Licensing will be moving to the State as of April 1. A brief discussion was held on the Stigmas that Foster Care Children Face. Also, the Foster Care Adoption Process was explained as there were some questions.

Tribal Liaison:

SD had 30 kids in care that need an ICPC. Vince has been providing assistance to workers to obtain information for the forms. Example: Birth Certificates, Social Security Cards, etc. Transferring Medicaid between states has been a challenge as the ICPC needs to be in place. Bismarck area is one of the few places in ND that will accept the SD Medicaid. There are SD children all over the state of ND in placement. Standing Rock has recently hired 4 new case workers.

Vince has arranged for 70 visits in the last month with him doing 11 Face to Face visits. Vince has been working with a gentleman from SD who is doing the same job as Vince to get some of these needs and visits addressed.

*See the attached Covid Statistics

Income Maintenance:

Our Carson office had one staff go part time. We advertised for a half time position of which we had 2 local applications. We are waiting to hear if she will accept the offer. The total case load increased by 57 in the last month to 4,609 cases. Pandemic Medicaid will run thru June due to the 60 day notice requirement instead of March. We have had lots of return mail from clients, but if we have a working phone number for them we will contact them for the correct address and any documents needed to keep their cases open instead of just closing them.

TANF has seen a decrease due to applicants not following through with the application process. SNAP cases, Mandan hasn't had over 1,000 active cases since 2017. Approximately 1/7th of North Dakotans are on Medicaid. Compared to 1 year ago the average person has \$270 more a month in expenses due to inflation. Turnover in our Zone has slowed way down.

Construction Update:

We have received an extension of moving the FC/IH Offices downstairs until March 4. Construction is beginning in the next few days to add the 3 offices. Due to the reduction of Offices needed as we have several staff alternating days in the office in IM which has freed up a few more offices. The Eligibility unit will stay in the East Hallway, CPS are staying where they are at, with the Parent Aides moving into the Veterans Services Office once that becomes available around March 4. The staff upstairs will be moving downstairs and filling in the open offices in the CPS area and down the South hallway. Dennis will be assigning the offices and has received the Wendy's and the board's support in doing so. It is felt

that one seasoned staff will be in the South Hallway, along with Supervisor Anderson and the 3 newer staff so that mentoring and training will be better accessible. We also need to keep in mind more workers may need to go home in the future or we will need to find space for them as the population is up by 1800 people in Mandan alone in one year's time.

Zone Plan Update:

The Zone Plan is due in March. Dawn Rhone, Morton County Auditor, was invited down to go over a section that is proposed for changes to the Indirect Funding and how it is paid to the counties within the zone. In Section 3 of the Financial, it was proposed that the funding be disseminated to the counties within the zone and then bill them for the indirect costs. Dawn explained, due to some smaller counties not having things departmentalized like the larger counties, more items that are not generally in the indirect cost pools are now in those cost pools. Morton County had things previously in line items for direct costs, but now they are in the indirect cost pool for social services based on the smaller counties having a lot more items in their indirect cost pools that should be direct. Dawn explained the "Soft Indirect Costs" are the costs of the Auditor's Time, HR Time and Payroll needs. Other indirect costs include items such as insurance. The way we do the cost allocation for the counties now is the host county keeps back a certain percentage for the soft indirect costs and sends the remaining balances to the other 2 counties. It is more cost effective for us to do it this way than waste money on billing each county every month. Sioux County is allocated \$80,000 but after true indirect costs are held back by the host county receives \$66,000. Grant County receives \$21,000 but after true indirect costs are held back by the host county receives \$12,600. Dawn is currently on a Legislative Sub-committee to try to form the actual indirect costs for the cost plans. The goal is to be able to move more indirect costs back to the direct costs for doing business. After this portion of the discussion the board felt that this section of the Zone Plan would remain the same and no changes would be made at this time.

Dennis went on to explain the rest of the updates regarding the Zone Plan included changes to staffing, moving the outlying offices to the main server or VPN system, the policy on client grievances (adopting the state policy) and the policy on general assistance and indigent burial (adopting the statewide policy) It was moved by Edgar and seconded by Rose Mary to approve the Zone Plan. A Roll call vote was held with Jackie, RoseMary, Edgar, John R, Charlie, Heidi and Dennis all voting yes. John Pretty Bear and Ken Snider had to leave the meeting early and were not present for the vote.

Other Business:

Discussion was held on reaching out to other Zones for help with supervision on the Foster Care/In-Home Unit. It is becoming increasingly difficult for the supervisor to give each individual staff and case the time and attention required to meet the needs of the unit. Dennis has reached out to other zones across the state for assistance. Other zones responded stating they did not have capacity to assist or the assistance would not be a good match with the TRHSZ. Dennis has a Teams meeting later today with Kristen Hasbargen to determine if someone from the Field Service Specialist (FSS) Unit would have capacity to assist. If the FSS unit cannot assist, Dennis will seek the approval for a lead worker on the unit.

ADJOURN:

Motion by Jackie and seconded by Charlie to adjourn. All members voted aye, motion carried.

Next Meeting: March 17, 2022 – 10:00 AM, Mandan

Respectfully Submitted,
Jodie Leier

