

**Three Rivers Human Service Zone Board  
Meeting Agenda  
Three Rivers Human Services Board Room  
Mandan  
210 2<sup>nd</sup> Ave NW  
10:00 AM – March 16, 2023**

**Meeting Call to Order:**

- Dennis called meeting to order at 10:00 AM

**Roll Call:**

**Mandan:** Dennis Meier, Jackie Buckley, Rosemary Lawson (Phone), Lori Flaaten

**Carson:** Marty Meyer (Phone), Charlie Steinkuehler (Online)

**Fort Yates:** Ken Snider (Online)

**Others present:** Jodie Leier, Jenny Wetsch, Mandy Garrett

**Approval of Agenda**

- Moved by Lori Flaaten seconded by Ken Snider to approve the agenda as presented. Motion carried.

**Approval of Minutes from February 16, 2023**

- Moved by Charlie Steinkuehler seconded by Jackie Buckley to approve the minutes from February 16, 2023. Motion carried.

**Review and Approval of March 2023 Bills:**

- Jackie Buckley came early to review the bills.
- Moved by Jackie Buckley seconded by Lori Flaaten to approve the bills as presented. With a unanimous roll call vote the bills were approved.

| Name                 | Roll Call  | Bills Approved |
|----------------------|------------|----------------|
| Jackie Buckley       | P          | Y              |
| Lori Flaaten         | P          | Y              |
| Rosemary Lawson      | P (Phone)  | Y              |
| Heidi Peltz          | A          | A              |
| Marty Meyer          | P (Phone)  | Y              |
| Charlie Steinkuehler | P (Online) | Y              |
| Ken Snider           | P (Online) | Y              |
| John Pretty Bear     | A          | A              |
| Dennis Meier         | P          | Y              |

**Budget Review**

- So far CY 2023 we are staying within budget at 14.4% and currently under budget by 2%. Commission approved the transfer of the 90,000 recalc payment at their last meeting.

## Zone Program Stats

Vince - Three Rivers Human Service Zone Tribal Liaison Report for March 2023, presented by Dennis Meier.

- Standing Rock Covid numbers as of March 9. There are 10 active cases on Standing Rock, Morton has 26, Grant has 1 and Burleigh has 69 according to the ND Dept of Health. There are 706 new cases statewide.
- There are 50 ND Active IV-E children and 638 Tribal foster care placements.
- Vince continues to attend the monthly TEAMS meeting with the ND CFS, SD CFS, Tribe, and Zone Staff throughout the state who have tribal foster care placements in their foster homes. There is a separate meeting for Licensure of Foster Homes, Tribal Foster Children placed in Zone Foster Homes, a case management monthly training and a State and Tribal IV E eligibility meeting. Vince helps to facilitate visits for 75 children between Zones and foster facilities. He also answers questions for the foster parents about various topics.
- Vince sits on the planning committee for the yearly ICWA Conference. This year is planned as Face to Face and is being held in the Turtle Mountains in the summer of 2023.
- Vince has been meeting with Dean Sturn, DHS, the State, Federal and Casey Program that provide technical assistance to the tribes. From this meeting TRHSZ has agreed to provide technical assistance to the Native American Training Institute to help train their IV-E Specialist. Their next meeting is March 14<sup>th</sup>.
- Vince did onsite technical assistance for Spirit Lake Social Services on Monday, February 6<sup>th</sup> and for Turtle Mountain on Tuesday, February 7<sup>th</sup>. Two Native American Training Institute staff were at the presentations. Both TMSS and SLTSS requested the onsite training for the IV-E program. They are working on additional dates to have more training.
- Vince has also offered MHA nation help with their FMAP reimbursement but has not heard back.

Mandy Garrett – Income Maintenance/Eligibility Supervisor

- See the attached statistical copies for the complete report on Income Maintenance cases and programs.
  - Call Center Re-cap. During week 1 of the roll out, 5,843 calls were received by the call center. The average wait time is approximately 6 minutes with the average talk time of 5.41 minutes.
  - 78% of mail and documents are indexed by Support Specialists (EW Techs).
  - 14,315 work items were completed statewide in the regions.
  - Each region is processing for the counties within their region.
  - Week 2 Re-cap had 6,321 calls with an average of 9.17 minutes wait time, 6.02 minutes talk time.
  - 80% of mail/documents indexed by Support Specialists
  - 26,588 work items completed statewide.
  - Week 3 Re-cap had 8,659 calls with an average of 8.42 wait time and a 5.58 average talk time.
  - 4,539 documents were indexed by Support Specialists
  - 45,418 work items completed.
  - To address backlog issues, work is being disseminated across the state for other workers to get them caught up.
  - The call center is suffering from stress due to the number of calls they are trying to deal with.
  - Cass County is down so many workers, they may open positions to other zones/offices if they can't get the positions filled. We will need more office space if that occurs here.
  - They are looking at changes in staff schedules to help with retention and recruitment by offering 4/10-hour days or 4/9-hour days with leaving at noon on a different day. There are several other zones that are allowing their staff the option, but that leaves our staff filling in all the gaps. It was discussed that the different areas (swim lanes) would have to rotate days to fill hours as

coverage is a priority. We will need to cooperate with all the zones. One other option that has been used in Roughrider is everybody gets off at noon on Friday. Mandy and Jen have worked on a chart of how it would work and not cause hardship within the region. Vacation would require the use of 10-hour days to make this work.

#### Jenny Wetsch – Child Protection

- See the attached Statistical information which was presented during the meeting.
  - 83 total reports in February. 1 Report in Grant County
    - 43 assigned as Full Assessments
    - 2 ATP Assessments
    - 40 Administratively Assessed or Administrative Referrals
    - 2 Alt Response
    - 2 Child Sex Cases
    - 3 Prenatal Drug Cases
    - 0 Conflict case for another zone
- Parent Aid caseloads were steady at 10. (Jennifer Aguilar starts March 20 to replace Alicia Grimm, we will then be fully staffed in the parent aid area).

#### Natalie Anderson – Foster Care/In Home/FP Licensing—presented by Dennis Meier

- See the attached statistical information which was presented during the meeting.
- Currently we have 66 cases.
  - 50 Foster Care (33 Foster homes/PATH, 2 QRTP/PRTF, 13 Relative Care, 2 in the 18+)
  - 16 In-Home Cases, ICPC, Courtesy Case Management & Home Study's
- Cases have gone down from February 2022 to February 2023. This is in part due to many sibling groups being adopted and kids returning home.
- Sara Moran is starting on March 27<sup>th</sup> to replace Kendra Casavant.

#### Legislative Bills:

- HB 1494 School Meals. It states that a school can't deny a student the meal or provide an alternative meal, nor can they identify or distinguish a child on meal assistance or limit their activity in sports or other extracurriculars or make a child perform duties to pay meal debts or use a collection agency to collect the money. There is no stigmatizing of the child.
- SB 2139 Indigent Burial Bill. Responsibility of disposition with no family members or kin goes to the Human Services Director. It removes the liability of the Zone Director if a family member comes forward later after cremation. The bill allows for \$3,500 for cremation. All burials come from Zone budgets, and we need our future budgets to reflect the change.
- HB 1362 Parental interest in child upbringing with concerns to the Zones as it may cause conflict with duties or the custody of a child. (Parents don't always want to work with the Zones and this would make it difficult to make decisions for the safety of a child). Zones are opposing this bill.
- HB 1036 TANF Bill to increase the Benefit amount.
- SB 2012 Appropriations bill that includes DHS and Zone Budgets.
- SB 2084 Removes the option of childcare payments to go to parents and makes the only option for direct payments to childcare providers.
- HB 1036 Addresses the Benefit Cap for TANF.

- SB 2273 Preserves Grocery Stores in rural areas. The Department wants a pilot project to support these grocery stores.
- SB 2486 Orders the review and study of like positions and years of service, to address pay increases only for those where there are gaps and disparities.
- Sarah Stolt presented to the directors on the Gallagher Equity Study. There are Zones which pay 100% Healthcare and retirement. The state was looking at how to compensate employees who pay a portion of their healthcare insurance. For Example, if an employee paid \$1,100 for health insurance he/she would be compensated with an increase in wages. Would this open the door to a discrimination law suit and how could the process be navigated? Sara stated, the money is available for us to get pay raises July 1<sup>st</sup>, but the legislature must approve the use of the funding for this purpose.

**Other:**

- County Days were held at the Heritage Center last week, Wednesday and Thursday. Jackie Buckley and Dennis Meier attended.
- There are several legislators who support making zone employees state employees. They feel it would be cheaper to make us state employees rather than going through the equity study and making zone employees whole.
- It has been proposed to change zones fiscal year to coincide with the state which is July 1<sup>st</sup> to June 30<sup>th</sup>. This would also give the annual raises July 1 instead of the Zones having to wait another 6 months for their raises on January 1.
- HB 1040 is on the PERS retirement, Defined Benefit and Defined Contribution. The PERS benefit program is in the hole. The PERS System needs the state to pay the retirees, which will most likely come from the Heritage Fund. The Defined Benefit helps with retaining employees, Defined Contribution is by the employee.

**Adjourn:**

- Moved by Jackie Buckley, seconded by Lori Flaaten to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried. Adjourned at 11:29 AM.

**Next Meeting: April 20, 2023 – 10 AM, Mandan**

**Respectfully Submitted,**



**Jodie Leier**

**Fiscal Services**

**Three Rivers Human Service Zone**