



**AITKIN COUNTY HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES
COUNTY BOARD MEETING MINUTES
February 25, 2020**

Attendance

The Aitkin County Board of Commissioners met this 25th day of February, 2020, at 9:03 a.m. as the Aitkin County Health & Human Services Board, with the following members present: Commissioners Anne Marcotte, J. Mark Wedel, Don Niemi, Laurie Westerlund, and Bill Pratt. Others present included: County Administrator Jessica Seibert, Cynthia Bennett ACH&HS Director, Carli Goble ACH&HS Accounting Supervisor, Jessi Schultz Children's Social Services Supervisor, Julie Herbst Childs Support Supervisor, Erin Melz Public Health Supervisor, Julie Herbst Child Support Supervisor, Stacey Durgin-Smith Public Health Educator, Assistant to the County Administrator Angie Sahr, H&HS Executive Assistant Shawn Speed, and Guests: Joel Hoppe ACH&HS Advisory Committee Member, Kari Paulsen ACH&HS Advisory Committee Member, and Jennifer Eisenbart, Aitkin Independent Age.

Agenda

Motion by Commissioner Westerlund, seconded by Commissioner Niemi and carried, all members voting yes to approve the February 25, 2020 Health & Human Services Board agenda.

Minutes

Motion by Commissioner Wedel, seconded by Commissioner Niemi and carried, all members voting yes to approve the January 28, 2020 Health and Human Services Board minutes.

Bills

Carli noted that was nothing out of the ordinary for the monthly bills.

Motion by Commissioner Wedel, seconded by Commissioner Marcotte 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 noting the start of the legislative session was on February 11 and that in the first two days there were 20 committee hearings. The main topic of five of those hearings was insulin. Both sides support a program to provide low income, uninsured or under insured individuals with access to insulin, however they do not agree on the funding source, how they will distribute it, or the specific people within those populations to distribute it to. The governor has said that if a bill related to insulin reaches his desk he will sign it.

Commissioner Niemi asked what the two funding sources were that they could not agree on and Cynthia offered to look into it for him but he replied he would find it out. She went on to discuss the upcoming AMC conference and noted that she and most of the commissioners would be in attendance. She reviewed the AMC HHS legislative priorities and the MACSSA legislative priorities. Which are again to hold Counties harmless for state agency financial errors, to assure that Counties have a voice in procurement and to support County Based Purchasing, to improve Child Welfare specifically decrease out of home placements and eliminate disproportionality, and lastly to address the Substance Use Disorders and Mental Health reform.

In addition she noted that the LPHA day at the capitol was last week and she shared a handout with the members outlining LPHA's legislative priorities. The first priority was streamlining the state's food safety system which is, right now, monitored by the Department of Agriculture and the Department of Health the hope is to have one department overseeing this for better efficiency. The second is to enhance services for children with asthma with the hopes of reducing symptoms, the third is to prevent youth tobacco and nicotine addiction, and lastly to promote investing in the local public health grant to bring the levels of dollars received in counties back to the original rates established several years ago. This is flexible monies and would reduce the use of tax levy dollars to address community specific needs.

Erin added, as she was in attendance at the capitol, that they met with Representative Lueck and Senator Ruud where they discussed the local public health grant in depth and the tobacco work that public health has been working on locally and that she felt it was a very productive meeting.

Commissioner Wedel, referencing the handout, mentioned that 21% of the inspections were failed when it came to selling tobacco to minors but that it also referenced FDA inspections and that he wondered what those entailed.

Erin explained that those were separate compliance inspections done by the FDA, without anyone else's knowledge, which were basically a duplication of local public health's inspections.

Cynthia added that the state H&HS Policy Committee will hear two bills this week on tobacco restrictions. HF3032 would prohibit the sale of flavored tobacco products and HF3072 would prohibit smoking in a vehicle when there is a child present.

Erin added that the flavored tobacco bill passed by Congress failed to include menthol tobacco products and that the LPHA is asking that the state to include menthol to stop manufacturers from using that loophole to still sell flavored tobacco by simply adding menthol to the flavoring.

Cynthia continued her update by bringing the members up to speed on the H&HS building redesign and relayed that Carli Goble, Shawn Speed, Jim Bright, and she had met with an architect from Architectural Resources Incorporated. A walkthrough of H&HS was conducted with him and further information was shared about functionality needs within HHS and workflow visions in the future.

Lastly she talked about conversations that have begun between H&HS, the Sheriff's Department, Aitkin city Police, and Riverwood Healthcare Center regarding secure transports of individuals with mental health issues. The program currently has many gaps in it. This is a statewide and nationwide problem but we feel the need to address this on a local level now. The group has started to look through the statutes and identify roles and responsibilities. This group is willing to think outside of the box to find solutions and is just laying the groundwork for moving forward.

Commissioner Pratt asked whether there was discussion on the physical characteristics of the transportation to which Cynthia responded that there was and that the ambulances, for instance, are not equipped to do secure transports in a way that would keep the individual from doing harm to themselves or others. She noted that the statute requires that the individuals be transported in a secure, unmarked vehicle with someone who is not in uniform as these people are not criminals they are simply mentally ill. Transporting them in a Sheriff's car is not fair to them.

Commissioner Wedel asked how the situation was being handled currently and Cynthia remarked that the way it works now is that the hospital calls either the Aitkin Police Department, the Sheriff's Office, or General Security Services Corporation (GSSC) and inquires whether any of them can transport the individual to their destination. The problem with GSSC is that they are

several hours away and cannot always get here in a timely fashion, the hospital cannot keep the person for the extended period of time it might take GSSC to transport so it funnels down to the Aitkin Police or Sheriff's Department and that is not an appropriate long term solution.

Commissioner Marcotte inquired as to who pays for these and Cynthia told her that we get a minimum reimbursement from MA for them, but that it does not cover it all.

Approval of Contracts/Agreements/Policies

Motion by Commissioner Westerlund, seconded by Commissioner Marcotte and carried, all members voting yes to approve the contract between Compass Counseling Partners and Aitkin County for January 1, 2020 through December 31, 2020.

Motion by Commissioner Marcotte, seconded by Commissioner Wedel and carried, all members voting yes to approve the contract for Clubhouse management between Northland Counseling Center and Aitkin County for January 1, 2020 through December 31, 2020.

Motion by Commissioner Wedel, seconded by Commissioner Niemi and carried, all members voting yes to approve the contract between the Northeast Minnesota Office of Job Training (NEMOJT) and Aitkin County for January 1, 2020 through December 31, 2020.

Motion by Commissioner Marcotte, seconded by Commissioner Westerlund and carried, all members voting yes to approve the contract between Northern Psychiatric Associates and Aitkin County for January 1, 2020 through December 31, 2020.

Motion by Commissioner Niemi, seconded by Commissioner Westerlund and carried, all members voting yes to approve the contract between the Presbyterian Family Foundation and Aitkin County for January 1, 2020 through December 31, 2020.

Motion by Commissioner Westerlund, seconded by Commissioner Niemi and carried, all members voting yes to approve the Family Planning contract between Riverwood Healthcare Center and Aitkin County for January 1, 2020 through December 31, 2020.

ACEs Presentation, Stacey Durgin-Smith, Public Health Educator

Stacey began by explaining what ACEs, Adverse Childhood Experiences, is and what it is all about.

She then went through presenting the Board members her overview presentation on ACEs of which a copy was provided to the members prior to today's meeting.

Stacey ended her presentation by remarking that the change is up to us and noted that it is interesting to think that the largest public health discovery, probably, of our time is about family, about community, and children. That we can all help affect ACEs.

Commissioner Marcotte inquired what the schools were doing if we know that a child is growing up in that kind of environment and Stacey noted that now we have WIC, Home Visiting, Extended Home Visiting and in the schools when they see things that indicate these items they are mandated to report them to us.

Commissioner Marcotte also asked what are we teaching in the schools to develop those skills, to which Stacey was unsure at this time, but that she would relay what she learns to the commissioner.

Commissioner Niemi added that this is why he has always been a strong advocate for home visits with Headstart.

Commissioner Westerlund added that in the Duluth area they have three mental health professionals on staff with Headstart to deal with all of the mental health issues involving children in that area.

Commissioner Wedel asked Stacey to expand on the predictive versus preventive subject more and Stacey added that if we know, for example, that there is depression in a household and it is affecting a child, that if we treat that depression for whomever it is that we will prevent the disease from affecting that child's ACEs, which will in turn affect the predictive risks later in life.

Commissioner Pratt asked whether there was anything being done to impact younger children at schools versus the older kids who are already getting training on it. Stacey's response was that she was unaware of what exactly was being done in the schools but is planning on coordinating with them soon.

Jessi Schultz added that there are some services in place within the schools, Julie Jenson is a SW and counselor who works with children identified as needing some additional support.

Committee Reports

Tri-County Community Health Services Board Update

Commissioner Westerlund and Erin Melz gave an update on their last meeting.

Commissioner Westerlund started by stating they had received a presentation by Northern Minnesota Suicide Prevention on the Crisis Text Line, that they went through member terms, by-laws, election of officers, the community health improvement plan, financials, and the day at the capitol.

Erin added that the Community Health Plan should be ready soon so they should be looking forward to that coming out.

HHS Advisory Committee Update

Commissioner Wedel noted that this was a very moving meeting prior to yielding to Joel and Kari to give the update.

Joel noted that this was a workgroup meeting dealing with suicide prevention where they viewed a PowerPoint from Brea Hamdorf, Public Health Nurse, which detailed the mental health and suicide stats for the county.

He also added that Stacey Durgin-Smith had presented to them on the upcoming Statewide Medical Countermeasure Exercise that is taking place June 17, 2020 at the Journey North Church and that she was seeking volunteers from the committee to help fill some of the 50 spots she needs for participants.

Kari added that they welcomed Luke Christensen and Pastor Dawn Houser to the group and that Pastor Dawn was a great addition due to all of the experience she has dealing with suicide and suicide prevention.

AEOA Update

Commissioner Westerlund explained that they did a lot of board training at the last meeting.

CARE Board

Commissioner Westerlund stated that they went through some personnel items and were able to add a few staff as full time employees. Also the Community Connection on Aging is going to be held April 18 at the McGregor School and that there is also one planned for the 2nd of May in Aitkin and that the Hill City Health Fair is planned for March 5th at the Hill City School. She noted that finances for CARE are looking great this year.

CJI Update

Jessi Schultz commented that the sole agenda item was focused on the referral process to the visitation program at HOPE.

NEMOJT Update

Commissioner Niemi gave an update on their last meeting noting it was a short meeting where they elected officers and continue to do work with high schools on industrial art classes.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:05 a.m.

Next Meeting – March 24, 2020