



AITKIN COUNTY HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

204 First Street NW
Aitkin, MN 56431

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COUNTY BOARD MEETING MINUTES March 22, 2022

Attendance

The Aitkin County Board of Commissioners met this 22nd day of March 2022, at 9:01 a.m. as the Aitkin County Health & Human Services Board, with the following members present: Commissioners Anne Marcotte, Brian Napstad, J. Mark Wedel, Don Niemi, and Laurie Westerlund. Others present included: Health & Human Services Director Cynthia Bennett, Administrative Assistant to the H&HS Director Paula Arimborgo, Accounting Supervisor Carli Goble, County Administrator Jessica Seibert, Assistant to the County Administrator Brittany Searle, Public Health Supervisor Erin Melz, Public Health Registered Dietician/Educator Hannah Colby, Public Health Nurse Liz Short, Community Corrections Probation Officer Andy Walsh, Advisory Committee members Cindy Chuhanic & Lynne Jacobs and attending via WebEx: H&HS Financial Supervisor Jessi Goble, AC Economic Development Coordinator Mark Jeffers, and U of M Program Leader, Family Resiliency Mary Jo Katras, PhD.

Agenda

Motion by Commissioner Marcotte, seconded by Commissioner Niemi and carried, all members present voting yes to approve the March 22, 2022 Health & Human Services Board agenda.

Minutes

Motion by Commissioner Westerlund, seconded by Commissioner Niemi and carried, all members present voting yes to approve the March 1, 2022 Health & Human Services Board minutes.

Bills

Motion by Commissioner Napstad, seconded by Commissioner Westerlund and carried, all members present voting yes to approve the bills.

Director Update

Cynthia updated the board on the Legislative Updates to include: Competency Restoration Reform, Development of new Adult Mental Health Initiative formula, a Bill to re-instate COVID waivers, Testimony to support additional dollars for local public health for emergency Preparedness, and no relevant bills related to DHS system modernization. Commissioner Niemi questioned whether anyone had heard anything about a medical bill regarding pharmacies in rural MN. Cynthia will gather information and send an update to the commissioners.



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Making a Change Pilot Program Presentation

Presented by Hannah Colby, Public Health Registered Dietician/Educator; Liz Short Public Health Nurse; and Andy Walsh, AC Community Corrections Probation Officer.

- Funding provided through the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) Grant with the purpose of developing and disseminating training for rural communities to address opioid and substance issues affecting communities like Aitkin County.
- Aitkin County is collaborating with University of Minnesota Extension to strengthen community resources to prevent opioid and substance misuse. Mary Jo Katras, PhD, Family Resiliency Program Leader is the grant writer and has been the liaison with H&HS Public Health.
- Andy Walsh is responsible for the coordination of participants, Hannah Colby teaches Nutrition for Recovery, and Liz Short teaches Financial Capability.
- A 20-week program made up of 6 participants: 3 male and 3 female, offers education in the areas of nutrition and financial capability.
- Designed as a skills development group program to help members develop the necessary tools to break free of addiction to substance or alcohol abuse.
- Individuals involved in this program have responded positively and relay that they are realizing their abilities and successes in these areas, feeling a sense of accomplishment and independence outside of addiction and substance use/misuse.

Committee Updates

H&HS Advisory Committee Update – Cindy Chuhanic, Vice Chairperson briefed the board On the presentation they received at their last meeting from Carli Goble on the Medical Assistance Estate Recovery Program. The board would like a presentation at a future County Board meeting. Lynne Jacobs announced the committee has a new member.

CARE Board Update – Commissioner Westerlund - Discussed financials, Rides for Health, money for transportation services, Powerful Tools for Caregivers book, Aging with Gusto, Community Connect – April 23rd at McGregor High School and April 30th at Aitkin High School.

Lakes & Pines Update – Commissioner Niemi – Talked about the book authored by Michael Lindell, The Pillow Guy, What are the Odds? From Crack Addict to CEO. Discussed The FAIM program – a matched savings project that helps Minnesota resident low-wage Earners build assets in the state through: purchase of a first home, pursuit of Post-secondary education, launch or expansion of a small business, and purchase of a Personal vehicle. Discussed the increased cost of propane and how it will effect Lakes & Pines. Currently the limit for propane assistance is \$600. Executive Director Bob Benes' last day will be September 2, 2022.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:13 a.m.

Next Meeting – April 26, 2022