

BOARD OF SOCIAL SERVICES MEETING MINUTES

A recording of this worksession is available at: http://larimer.org/bcc/list_worksessions.cfm.

Date: May 14, 2018

Location: 200 W. Oak, Commissioners' Conference Room

In Attendance: Commissioner Lew Gaiter; Commissioner Steve Johnson; Commissioner Tom Donnelly; Linda Hoffmann; Lorenda Volker; Laura Walker; Heather O'Hayre; Laura Sartor; Shannon Reiff; Ann Marie Grobarek

INTRODUCTIONS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

Commissioner Steve Johnson welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order.

ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA

Human Services Deputy Director Heather O'Hayre reported on foster parent recruitment at the request of Lorenda Volker. Heather reported that the travelling Heart Gallery, a display of photos and bios for children who were involved with child welfare and are in need of forever homes, will be at the Larimer County Courthouse Offices in the summer. She explained other strategies to promote the need for foster parents including targeted marketing through the social media app "Nextdoor" for neighborhoods with high removal rates and low foster home availability.

CCAP WAITLIST UPDATE

Benefits & Community Support Division Manager Laura Sartor reported that there are currently 167 children on the waitlist for child care assistance after it being in place for two years. Larimer County is currently serving approximately 500 children. This year we spent over 5 million dollars with an allocation of 4.2 million from the State. The remainder of CCAP costs were covered by purchasing 1 million dollars of CCAP allocation money from Pueblo County by paying the required match of County funds to the State.

Our philosophy is that the TANF Reserve Fund balance should only be used as a last resort to cover CCAP funding shortfalls after transfers or additional funds after the State closeout process are applied to the shortage. The waitlist has been in place for two years and about 35% of the people who are on the waitlist are completing the redeterminations in order to stay on it. The rest have decided it is not worth the time to reapply just to be on a waitlist for a benefit they may not receive.

Commissioner Donnelly asked for more information specific to Estes Park due to feedback he had received at a community meeting there. Laura Walker explained that the most urgent need is for





qualified child care providers that accept CCAP in Estes Park, as the number of children exceeds the number of vacancies available.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION WRAP-UP

Human Services Deputy Director Heather O’Hayre reported on the fast-paced 2018 State legislative session. She provided a handout with points regarding eleven bills that passed, three bills that failed which might come back next session, and eight budget requests that affect the Department of Human Services. Important points about legislation that passed included the following:

- HB18-1104 resulted from several advocate groups wanting to align child welfare practice with Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) language. It will change the evidentiary requirements and look at how parents with disabilities are treated in the child welfare process.

Commissioner Donnelly asked if HB18-1104 was a result of families being discriminated against, and Heather responded that it was more a reflection of trying to align the language in the statutes. Current practices in Larimer County Child Youth and Family Services already focus on being respectful, preventing discrimination and providing accommodations when necessary. Larimer County Human Services hopes to be involved in making sure the rules reflect best practice.

- HB18-1306 provides funding to keep children in the child welfare system in the same school they were in before incidents unless the travel is too onerous for the child to provide educational stability.

Commissioner Johnson asked about the funding which will be provided through the block to Child Youth and Family Services, although it is not clear whether or not it will be added to the allocation.

- HB18-1335 sets eligibility rates for CCAP and requires an additional 12 months of services to encourage stability for recipients. Additional federal funds were provided for 2018-2019 and there is a new allocation formula going into effect next year. We may be able to see an end to the waitlist in 2019-2020. Heather reported that Bev Thurber on the Early Childhood Council is working with groups to try to develop interest in the child care provider industry as the need for providers is increasing.

Commissioner Johnson asked about the need for child care for Larimer County employees and expressed an interest in looking at data regarding child care for County employees specifically. County Manager Linda Hoffmann related that employees she has met have expressed an interest in child care, particularly for infants. It might improve employee recruitment and retention. Heather added that the City of Fort Collins has a vacant building and is looking at options for providing child care. Commissioner Johnson suggested that the County could perhaps partner with the City.

- SB18-254 changes the landscape of Child Welfare funding and aligns State practice with the Families First Act. The bill creates specific placements for children in congregate with intellectual or developmental disabilities who need higher level care that is not available in other places. It changes who is appointed to the Child Welfare Allocation Committee by adding two State members. It changed the percentage of County funds provided in foster and adoption care subsidies, decreasing from 20% to 10% and provided 41 million dollars to cover



the additional cost. Requires that counties provide to the State details on their out-of-home placement capacity. Creating more intervention and prevention strategies and their funding.

Commissioner Johnson discussed the new funding model mentioned in the bill and how it is a continuation of the efforts to improve the allocation formula. Laura and Heather explained that Colorado is one of a few states that have asked for an extension of the IV-E Waiver funding which just allows the ability to spend funds already distributed. Laura invited the Commissioners to a session at CCI with Commissioner Jerry Milner from Administration for Children and Families to learn more about the impact of Family First on us.

Failed legislation that might come back next session includes the following:

- HB18-1288 Conflict Free Case Management would significantly change how our Options for Long Term Care (OLTC) group works with HCPF to provide services. Kelly Morrison, Deputy Division Manager, testified and was instrumental in postponing this bill. This bill will make the system more cumbersome and make it more difficult to provide services. HCPF is attempting to put these changes through as part of the rule-making process by the Medical Services Board, so we may request assistance from the Commissioners in protesting proposed rules. Would force participants to go through an independent third-party broker to determine what services would be best for them – which might be services provided by us.
- HB18-1390 Safe Family Option for Families in Crisis allows families to identify someone outside of their family to take care of their child when involved with child welfare, as long as the issue was not a safety-related one. This was postponed because the advocates were working on licensure requirement.

Budget requests included additional funding for Child Welfare, technical assistance with SNAP, aging services like home-delivered meals and transportation to medical appointments, and targeted money to do manual reviews of TANF cases to meet work participation standards. The 4th phase of additional funding for staff in Child Welfare is anticipated. The original study recommended an additional 700 workers across the State, which would result in approximately 49 new workers for Larimer County. The State of Colorado has only added funding for about 250 positions and will add about 70 more this time. Larimer County Child Youth and Family Services has approximately 12 or 13 new employees due to this funding but it is not certain that additional employees will be awarded with the new funds. Other counties may have declined and so might be due additional employees before Larimer.

CAMDRS PROCESS/LOCAL RESULTS

Commissioner Steve Johnson had requested a report on Child Abuse Neglect Dispute and Review Section (CAMDRS) numbers under the Office of Appeals. Laura reported that this is the mechanism for someone who wants to appeal a finding of neglect or abuse in the Child Welfare system. Trails serves as our “central registry” so it can be checked for background checks for employment, volunteer opportunities etc. It is important for there to be an appeal function. There were 868 cases statewide for the year, and 17 requests came from Larimer County. Eight cases were overturned statewide but none of them were from Larimer County.

Commissioner Johnson said this sounded like a good independent evaluation of our work and asked for future annual updates on these statistics. Heather added that this group will also be in charge of responding to appeals for Adult Protection as well.



SYNERGY PROJECT UPDATE

Deputy Director Heather O'Hayre showed a short video explaining the Synergy Project, explaining how this is a coordinated three-year collaborative program between Human Services and Information Technology (IT) to share data that can be useful in our work and improve efficiency.

Commissioner Gaiter asked about Personally Identifiable Information (PII) and if this will impact the requirements we have for security and privacy to keep this information safe. Heather and Laura responded that we are working closely with Mark Pfaffigner, Chief Information Officer, and Tom Iwanski, the Operations & Security Team Lead, to ensure security needs are addressed. We currently have security and access restrictions for all information in OnBase and those restrictions will be in place for Synergy Projects as well. Commissioner Gaiter recommended that we keep it a high priority because there is a real liability to the County in having that information.

C-STAT DASHBOARD REVIEW

Laura explained that Larimer met 19 out of 22 for the month of March and 15 out of 22 for the year. The other large counties were at 13 out of 22 for both the month of March and for the year.

DEPARTMENT PERFORMANCE REPORT

Heather presented an overview of the department's client activity. Heather reviewed: monthly average caseloads, program activity, complaint totals, and results from the client follow-up survey regarding complaints from January 1, 2018 through March 31st, 2018.

During the 1st Quarter of 2018:

- The Food, Medical & Financial Assistance Program caseload has decreased by 1.6% to 65,343.
- Child Support collected over \$5,003,523 dollars due to tax intercepts.
- Children, Youth and Family received 1,808 referrals, and 92% of children with a case plan to remain home did. Will add re-entry metrics now that the State revised how they report on that number.
- We received two formal complaints during the 1st Quarter.

Not sure why but there is a decline in the applications for Food, Medical & Financial Assistance programs. Connect for Health Colorado is no longer going to be using CBMS and will be creating their own eligibility system. This may cause some problems while they still use PEAK for applications but process in their own system. 20% decrease in Adult Protection cases is good to note.

OTHER BUSINESS

Discussion on how to increase collections for child support arrears.

NEXT MEETING

State Administrator for the Child Support program will report on some outreach we did (a call-a-thon) that resulted in successful collections.