



Board of Social Services

MINUTES

February 13, 2017

**Commissioners' Conference Room
Second Floor – County Administration Building
10:00 am – 12:00 am**

In Attendance: Commissioner Lew Gaiter; Commissioner Steve Johnson; Commissioner Tom Donnelly; Linda Hoffmann; Laura Walker; Jim Drendel, Laura Sartor, and Ann Marie Grobarek.

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

Introductions & Announcements

Commissioner Gaiter welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order. Director Laura Walker asked if there were any additions to the agenda. There were none.

Child Welfare Recognition for Timeliness

Child Youth and Family Services Division Manager, Jim Drendel, wanted to commend the caseworkers who work hard to be timely in doing home visits. Recently Larimer County's timely visit number dropped below the 90% mark for the first time in five or six years. The entire team worked together to raise the number of timely visits from 84% to 93% in the past month. Jim specifically congratulated five employees and their supervisors on their efforts as they completed 22% of our total assessments for the past month, often taking on cases that should belong to other caseworkers but could not be worked for one reason or another. The five Social Caseworkers include Becka Payne, Wendy Clark, Nikki Troudt, Angela King and Michelle Lorenzen, who was not able to make it to the meeting today. They were supported by Social Caseworker Managers Maggie Edelfelt, Ken Walker, Danielle Hicks, Becky Smith and Sue Statz.

Jim reported that Thad Paul made a presentation at the Child Welfare Allocation hearing which explained how the current allocation formula is a model based on spending and does not consider workload. Jay Moraine, the author of the current allocation formula, said that he initially thought Thad was wrong but has revised his opinion. Jim went on to explain that a workload model is more appropriate since a workload increase may not result in a spending increase. Another subcommittee will be reviewing this information, but the committee chair is the same so there are concerns that nothing will change.

Commissioner Johnson asked if there was any discussion of Susan Beckman's bill, which included the three previous years' spending as one factor in the allocation formula. Jim said that was not discussed. Nancy Sharp recommended the new subcommittee, but Jim is concerned that Thad will not be able to present his information to the new subcommittee, despite Larimer County being one of the most underfunded counties from a workload perspective.

Child Welfare Allocation and CDHS Indirect Cost Distribution

Jim Drendel, Director of Child Youth and Family Services presented on the change in the source of funding for Colorado Department of Human Services' (CDHS) indirect costs. CDHS used to take the money at the end of the fiscal year, but will be taking the money at the beginning of the year instead. Last year, Child Welfare had overspent their budget by seven million dollars, so indirect costs were taken out of money set aside for vocational rehabilitation. These funds are no longer accessible to CDHS, so they have decided to ensure costs are covered at the beginning of the fiscal year. This change will impact Larimer County by \$310,000 to \$350,000. About 5 to 7 workers would have to be laid off (via not filling vacancies as attrition occurs) to cover this, although 3-5 new workers could be hired using workload



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money. Unfortunately, workload funding has outdated restrictions on it that would prevent Larimer County from hiring back workers who had been laid off, losing that experience and training.

Linda Hoffmann asked if there would be enough vacancies through attrition that could be counted as layoffs and then use the workload money to hire replacements, which would sidestep the problem outlined here. Jim replied that would be one of the methods we hope would work to resolve this issue. The State will audit to ensure requirements are being followed, although there was no indication what the penalty would be if they were not. County Administration funds generally cannot be used for Child Protection, so we would not be able to use funds from that source. CCI has taken a position to oppose this, but it is not clear if local legislators are aware of the issue. Commissioner Johnson said he understands the importance of the State obtaining the administrative costs up front, but the ramifications of this should be carefully considered. It was recommended that we contact our local legislators.

LEAP Update

Laura Walker added an agenda item and announced that Larimer County's Low Energy Assistance Program (LEAP), which provides assistance from November through April for heating bills will be contracted out to Goodwill starting in the fall of 2018. The State of Colorado offered to be the contract holder with Goodwill, allowing counties to opt in or opt out. Larimer County LEAP has had very good outcomes, so we had opted out in the past. However, Goodwill has had competitive outcomes, and 40 out of 64 counties have made the choice to go to Goodwill. Larimer County has decided to opt in for next season due to the competitive results from Goodwill, the likelihood that the State may make a decision for the State as a whole since there are so many participating counties, and the additional office space made available. Applications will still be accepted here and forwarded to Goodwill. Information is available for referral.

CBMS Lawsuit Conclusion

Laura Sartor reported that Larimer County was released in January 2017 from the requirements of a lawsuit filed against the State in August of 2004 regarding issues in timely processing of benefits. CBMS was launched in August of 2004, and at that time 70% of families were getting food assistance on a timely basis and 82% of families were getting TANF money on a timely basis. Recently, we have consistently been at 95% or above which allows us to be released from the restrictions of the lawsuit. A number of streamlined business processes and being able to provide county input on CBMS improvements has made a significant difference in processing timelines. CBMS is a very complex tool and the rules engines were not built correctly. This means that technicians need to know as much of the program rules as they can in order to question things when they do not look right.

Child Care Assistance Program – Spending and Waitlist

Laura Walker and Laura Sartor provided an update on CCAP spending and the waitlist. Larimer County currently has 414 children on the waitlist and is projected to be overspent by \$1.1 million over their approximate \$4.1 million allocation. Larimer County tends to get around 5% of statewide amounts. There is a formal acknowledgement that there is a shortage of funding, but new money will not be enough to resolve the issues.

Laura has had preliminary conversations with the fiscal director of Pueblo County regarding the possibility of purchasing his underspent money. Their Human Services Director will be in a better place to make a decision in March or April of this year.



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At this time, we have to continue the waiting list and wait for attrition to reduce costs. At some point we may be forced into categorically taking some children off of the program, but that would be the absolute last resort.

Legislative Review

Laura gave an overview of important legislation using the handouts provided at the beginning of the meeting.

HB17-1087, the Office of the Public Guardianship Pilot Program bill creates a State office within the judicial department to provide legal guardianship to indigent and incapacitated adults. This is hard work for the County and involves difficult decisions, working with people who sometimes have severe mental health issues, including those who have been dismissed from institutions because of difficulties.

The DYC Bill to make 10-12 year old's ineligible for detention for non-violent crimes could be a problem as there is no fiscal note. It could become our responsibility as it will be very difficult to find foster homes for some of these children.

The County Administration budget request would completely close the capacity gap, reducing queue times for phones and wait times in the lobby. The State Director for SNAP led a forum where this was discussed; however, it is important to know that Larimer County is way ahead of the statewide average in processing applications and getting benefits to applicants. Everyone who is eligible for Emergency Food Assistance is processed within the 7 day timeline. Until this gap is addressed, all we can do is provide options to clients and suggestions about other ways to communicate with us.

There has been discussion about the percentage of people who are theoretically eligible for Food Assistance who have not been reached. The discussion mentioned the population of students at CSU who may now be eligible as students who are getting grants or loans from the school do not have to count that as part of their income due to a federal waiver just obtained by the State.

C-Stat Dashboard Review

Laura restated her philosophy on the outcomes measured on this dashboard put out by the State, indicating that this is not the only measure she uses to determine Human Services performance. For example, the Child Support outcome is not a valid reflection of their hard work as the State increased the goal without consulting counties. This report seems to focus more on timeliness of work done in Child Protection rather than focusing on the successes of children who do not come back into contact with our referral and assessment process. Laura wants our county to excel, so it is motivating to see that we have met twelve out of 20 goals when the other large counties have met ten out of 20 goals.

Client Activity Report

Ann Marie Grobarek, Business Operations Coordinator, presented an overview of the department's client activity. Ann Marie reviewed: monthly average caseloads, program activity, complaint totals, and results from the client follow-up survey regarding complaints from October 1, 2016 to December 31, 2016.

During the 4th Quarter of 2016:

- The Food, Medical & Financial Assistance Program caseload has increased by 1.3% to 65,560.
- Child Support collected over \$4,460,266 dollars.
- Children, Youth and Family received 1,757 referrals, and 96% of children with a case plan to remain home did.



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- We received no formal complaints during the 4th Quarter.

Commissioner Gaiter commended the Department saying that zero formal complaints is incredible for an agency that deals with people on some of the worst days of their life. Complaints coming in and being resolved at the informal level show that the managers involved do a good job at explaining the process.

Other business:

Jim Drendel added that we have been working with Colorado State University regarding trauma informed care, and they have created a robust plan that includes seven counties. Now there is a pool of 169 children who have had trauma assessments that can be compared to 200 or so who did not have a trauma assessment. This allows for a better comparison of data and there are better numbers to show that the children who go through trauma assessment are more successful than those who do not. The Human Development group at CSU is really stepping up.

Please make sure to include an update on the Early Childhood Council for the next meeting's agenda.

Meeting adjourned.