

BENTON COUNTY HUMAN SERVICES BOARD
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
OCTOBER 4, 2016

The Benton County Human Services Board met in regular session on October 4, 2016 in the Benton County Board Room in Foley, MN with Board members Warren Peschl, Jim McMahon, Jake Bauerly, Ed Popp and Spencer Buerkle present. Call to order by Chair Peschl was at 9:36 AM.

Buerkle/Popp unanimous to approve the amended agenda (add Central MN Mental Health Center update by Dr. Richard Lee; postpone MFIP/CCAP presentation to the next meeting).

Consent Agenda item #2 (contract between Benton County and St. Cloud Technical and Community College) was “pulled” for further discussion. Popp/Bauerly unanimous to approve the Regular Meeting Minutes of September 20, 2016 as written (Consent Agenda item #1).

Regarding Consent Agenda item #2 (contract between Benton County and St. Cloud Technical and Community College), McMahon referred to the memo from the County Attorney’s Office which states, in part, “...if the state gets sued for something we may have done, the state can sue us for reimbursement...however, if the state does something wrong and we get sued, we cannot sue the state for reimbursement...suggested language, *“Each party agrees that it will be responsible for its own acts and the results thereof to the extent authorized by law and shall not be responsible for the acts of the other party or results thereof...”* Referring to the wording in the current proposed contract, McMahon commented “...the State of MN is holding us liable for what they can do to us...more as a matter of principle, I am going to bring this up...the State continues to attempt to govern at the local level...sooner or later, I think we need to take a stand that we either are going to accept these things or not...it seems to be one-sided...the State continues to issue conditions that dictate local actions that are contrary to our legal advice...they raise liability concerns for us...I would urge my fellow Commissioners not to accept this item...shoot it back to them and see what happens...” Bob Cornelius, Human Services Director, explained that “...the money would be brought through us to the school and the school will provide CPR training...I fully understand where you are coming from and I think that at some point in time we need to be more cognizant of what we say “yes” and “no” to...” McMahon clarified that it’s not a matter of whether or not this program is worthy; it’s just the contract language as proposed by the State. Following brief discussion, this item was postponed to later in the meeting.

Dr. Rick Lee, Executive Director of the Central MN Mental Health Center, appeared before the Board, noting that he came to the CMMHC in February; prior to that, he was the Executive Director at Woodland Centers in Wilmar. Lee commented that CMMHC “has gone through some tumultuous times, in the last couple of years in particular, and the relationships with the counties have been strained”. He noted that part of CMMHC’s strategic plan for 2016 contemplates taking a look at the Board governance structure and, basically, asking the question—is this still the ideal governance structure for the agency and for its county partners (Benton, Stearns, Sherburne and Wright)? Lee stated his anticipation of “some sort of recommendation” on a governance structure to the CMMHC Board by the end of the year; any proposed changes will have to be approved by all the county partners. Lee stated a goal of the CMMHC, as outlined in the strategic plan, is to be “a recognized leader in community health and recovery efforts”. He spoke of the “very robust response” of the CMMHC staff following the recent tragedy at Crossroads Center in St. Cloud. Lee also reported on the CMMHC service priorities; he noted that Benton County is a fairly high utilizer of Detox services—CMMHC is in the initial stage of developing

a program to target high utilizers and reduce Detox and emergency room visits. Board members thanked Mr. Lee for the informative report.

The Board resumed discussion on the contract item which was postponed earlier in today's meeting (contract between Benton County and St. Cloud Technical and Community College). Cornelius clarified that this contract strictly involves public health training funds (not associated with any grant). Buerkle/Popp to approve the contract between Benton County and St. Cloud Technical and Community College to provide CPR training for specified public health staff, and authorize the Chair to sign. Motion carried with Buerkle, Popp, Peschl and Bauerly voting aye and McMahon voting nay.

Janel Sczublewski, Human Services Supervisor, led discussion on the current county burial policy, noting that Benton County has incurred \$73,000 in burial costs so far this year (\$60,000 is budgeted for the year). She referenced a handout showing that Benton County currently pays \$2,800 toward cremation costs and \$2,800 toward traditional burials; the current average of the nine Region 7 counties is \$1,800 for cremations and \$2,145 for traditional burials, and the current average of the three-county St. Cloud metro area is \$2,050 and \$2,275. Sczublewski stated staff's recommendation to adjust Benton County's county burial rates to reflect the average of the three St. Cloud counties, effective January 1, 2017; staff is also recommending that official Board action on the rates take place at the October 18th Board meeting so that staff may notify the local funeral home directors of the proposed rate changes in the interim, allowing them the opportunity to speak at the October 18th meeting. Sczublewski noted an adjustment to the county burial policy which focuses on cremation as the preferred method, deferring to the traditional burial if that is the family's belief. There was consensus of the Board to support the rates based on the three-county St. Cloud metro area. Cornelius clarified that these rates are "base" rates (Benton County also pays for opening/closing of grave/funeral plot at actual cost). Buerkle inquired of cost data for county burials for previous years; Sczublewski will supply Board members with this information.

Chair Peschl adjourned the meeting at 10:01 AM.

Warren Peschl, Chair
Benton County Human Services Board

ATTEST:

Montgomery Headley
Benton County Administrator