

BENTON COUNTY HUMAN SERVICES BOARD  
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES  
OCTOBER 18, 2016

The Benton County Human Services Board met in regular session on October 18, 2016 in the Benton County Board Room in Foley, MN with Board members Jim McMahon, Jake Bauerly, Ed Popp, Spencer Buerkle and Warren Peschl present. Call to order by Chair Peschl was at 9:53 AM.

Buerkle/Popp unanimous to approve the amended agenda (add item: Tri-CAP/MTM Transportation Administrative Fee Analysis).

McMahon/Buerkle unanimous to approve the Consent Agenda: 1) approve the Regular Meeting Minutes of October 4, 2016 as written.

Janel Sczublewski, Human Services Supervisor, led discussion on the current county burial policy, noting that Benton County has incurred \$79,000 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 county pays actual opening and closing costs as well); 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. She also 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. Sczublewski provided a 15-year budget history of county-paid burials. She indicated that staff has notified the local funeral home directors of the proposed rate changes and their opportunity to speak at today's meeting. Doug Dingmann from Williams Dingmann Funeral Home in Sauk Rapids stated his belief that the budget shortfall is due to the fact that there have been more funerals. He stated his recommendation, if the county burial rates are adjusted, that the policy be changed as well (relative to the services the funeral home will provide those families). Greg Wenner from the Foley Funeral Home commented that, ironically, about a month ago he was considering asking his colleagues to join him in requesting an increase in fees, more specifically, consideration of a transportation fee. Wenner noted that a private contractor receives 100% of the grave opening and closing fees from the county. He requested, if the county burial rates are adjusted as proposed, that the policy be changed from a full service memorial service to immediate burial/immediate cremation. Wenner noted that Sherburne County will allow other individuals to contribute to the funeral home costs (in Benton County, the funeral home is not allowed to take any payment above the county burial allowance); Stearns County also allows for the funeral home's transportation costs. He added that oversize casket/vault products also come out of the funeral home's budget. Bauerly stated his belief that "a reasonable process and a reasonable fee need to match". In the discussion that followed, it was noted that the funeral directors can refuse to offer services—they are not mandated to provide a service. Bob Cornelius, Human Services Director, indicated that staff can provide several cost benchmarks/"perks" that each county provides. Popp/McMahon unanimous to table this issue for further information.

Sczublewski introduced staff members of the MFIP (Minnesota Family Investment Program) and DWP (Diversionary Work Program) units—Bev Bowar, Amanda Cediell, Kathy Buzzell, Nina Kutz and Sherry Pohlkamp. Pohlkamp reported on the two cash programs—MFIP and DWP—which often serve "families in crisis". Buzzell reported on her duties in providing family stabilization services; these services include

families who are not making progress in the MFIP or DWP programs due to a variety of barriers in employment.

Cornelius provided a comparison analysis between Tri-CAP and MTM with regard to Benton County Human Services transportation administrative fees. He noted that, currently, Tri-CAP provides the rides but county staff sets up the rides and do the billing; MTM would perform those services in-house. Cornelius noted estimated administrative costs for Tri-CAP total \$40,436.68; estimated administrative costs for MTM total \$22,878.00. He stated his belief that MTM “offers a better package all around”; switching vendors would save about \$18,000 per year and “free up” some county staff time.

Chair Peschl adjourned the meeting at 10:17 AM.

---

Warren Peschl, Chair  
Benton County Human Services Board

ATTEST:

---

Montgomery Headley  
Benton County Administrator