

BENTON COUNTY HUMAN SERVICES BOARD
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
JUNE 21, 2022

The Benton County Human Services Board met in regular session on June 21, 2022 in the Benton County Board Room in Foley, MN with Board members Beth Schlangen, Scott Johnson, Ed Popp, Jared Gapinski and Steve Heinen present. Call to order by Human Services Board Chair Johnson was at 9:39 AM.

Motion by Heinen and seconded by Gapinski to approve the agenda as written. Motion carried unanimously.

Gapinski/Popp to approve Consent Agenda items 1 - 3: 1) approve the Human Services Regular Meeting Minutes of June 7, 2022 and authorize the Chair to sign; 2) approve the contract extension for the Children's Mental Health respite grant and authorize the Chair to sign; 3) approve the Public Health Emergency Preparedness (PHEP) Contract Amendment for Budget Period 4 between the MDH and Benton County Human Services Board. Motion carried unanimously.

Next, Social Services Supervisor Nikki Knowles requested County Board to consider the contract for Lighthouse Family Services to complete Benton County's required Qualified Individual Assessments. Knowles stated that this is a new contract for the Qualified Individual (QI) Assessment to be completed by Lighthouse. The Families First Prevention Act is requiring that prior to children entering a Qualified Residential Treatment Program (QRTP) a QI assessment be completed to ensure the placement is appropriate and least restrictive. The contract rate is \$50 per hour with assessments averaging 10 – 15 hours for each assessment. The total annual estimated cost for this contract is \$6,000. Motion by Popp and seconded by Gapinski to approve the contract for Lighthouse Family Services to complete Benton County's required Qualified Individual Assessments. Motion carried unanimously.

Next, Knowles requested the County Board to consider the contract for Community Living Infrastructure Grant Program. Knowles stated that this is a new contract that is stemming from a grant that was received from the Department of Human Services for the Community Living Infrastructure Grant Program. This grant will be used to help fund our Homeless Outreach Worker and also allows for money for direct assistance to homeless clients to help with housing needs. Benton County was awarded \$161,800 from June 1, 2022 to March 21, 2024. Motion by Popp and seconded by Gapinski to approve the contract for the Community Living Infrastructure Grant Program. Motion carried unanimously.

Next, Human Services Director Robert Cornelius requested the County Board to consider dedicating up to \$50,000 of American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds for the recruitment/support of Benton County Family Childcare providers. Benton County has experienced a decrease in the number of licensed family day care homes. At one time, Benton County had about 160 providers but are now at 125 providers. The COVID pandemic has had a large impact on the decrease in the number of homes – although the downward trend has been noticeable for years. The industry saw large child enrollment declines, resulting in financial challenges that led to providers leaving the business for more stable employment elsewhere. Benton County's licensing team would like to make the following recommendations for consideration for the period of June 15, 2022 to December 30, 2024 or until the funds are exhausted, whichever comes first:

1. Waive all agency collection fees (currently \$50 fee for initial license and \$100 fee for re-license).

2. Upon licensing completion, new providers will receive a \$500 stipend for the cost of items purchased or reimbursement for fire marshal or background study fees.
3. Existing license holders may be reimbursed for the registration fee for required CPR and First Aid training, up to \$75.00 per training.

Motion by Gapinski and seconded by Popp to dedicate up to \$50,000 of ARPA Funds for recruitment and support of Benton County Family Childcare Providers. Motion carried unanimously.

Chair Johnson adjourned the meeting at 9:48 AM.

Scott Johnson, Chair
Benton County Human Services Board

ATTEST:

Montgomery Headley
Benton County Administrator