

**BAYFIELD COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
FAMILY SERVICES ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES**

Courthouse Conference Room B
Wednesday, January 9th, 2019 at 4:30 pm

Committee Members Present: Bev Lindell, Bev Patterson and Jeremy Oswald.

Committee Members Excused: Lona Schmidt, Nancy and Dale Johnson.

Committee Members Absent: John Blahnik and Susan Davis.

Others Present: Cheryl Hanson (Family Services Section Manager), Becky Kruit (Child Protective Services Social Worker), Elizabeth Skulan (BCDHS Director) and Nina Bucher (Support Staff).

Call to order: Jeremy acted as the Chairman in Lona's absence and called the meeting to order at 4:33. Introductions were made.

<p><u>Minutes Approval:</u> Due to the lack of a quorum, the minutes were unable to be voted on. Action was tabled until next meeting.</p>

Public Comment Opportunity: No public comment.

Trends, Issues, and Concerns in Child Protective Services Presentation: Becky explained that there is grave concern over the lack of social workers in Wisconsin, particularly in the area of child protective services (CPS). CPS social workers are leaving CPS positions within two years of being hired, and many leave the field of social work entirely. From personal experience and research, Becky concludes it is due to: the high level of requirements for these positions (college degree in social work, internship, extensive initial and ongoing training, long hours, etc.); the work environment which involves going into homes considered unsafe, observing hard issues such as drug/alcohol, physical and sexual abuse, domestic violence and severe neglect; secondary trauma suffered by the social workers from the interactions in this work environment, the stress of making the proper decisions (that a child is unsafe or not) and following proper legal procedure for cases, and the internal stress of not being able to share/vent these work experiences with others due to confidentiality. Support of CPS workers by co-workers, mentors, mental health resources and managers is crucial to their survival with more needing to be done to keep these CPS positions filled. More comparable pay and more time off to help the CPS worker to achieve a balance in their lives are two tangible solutions to attract/keep CPS workers. The increased financial expense of implementing these solutions would far outweigh the cost of turnover (hiring, training expenses, etc.), not to mention the effect on the children/families better served with a familiar constant CPS worker.

Questions and discussion followed the presentation and it was noted that the CPS shortage is part of a Department of Children and Families topic to be presented by the Bayfield and Douglas counties jointly at February's Superior Days in Madison. Also, it was discussed that a

recommendation of action from the FSAC committee to the DHS Board be created/approved at the April FSAC meeting.

Staffing Update: Cheryl said that due to the hiring of Laura Westerlund as Family Specialist who started Dec. 10, 2018, Family Services is fully staffed!

Program reports:

Comprehensive Community Support (CCS): Cheryl relayed that together, Bayfield County and Ashland County are actively working with New Horizons North to reconcile services that are not being arranged/delivered within appropriate timeframes especially with children.

Red Cliff Indian Child Welfare (RCICW): Cheryl informed the Committee that she and Bayfield County Foster Care Coordinator, Stacy Schmidt, will have their monthly meeting with RCICW on January 10th to discuss children in out of home care and the plan to achieve permanency. Since Red Cliff has adopted a customary adoption code where parental rights are not terminated, one child has been adopted and five more are in the process. These customary adoptions allow the child to have a permanent family life that provides stability, love and routine.

Secure Detention Use: 2018 brought 81 days of secured detention in two facilities for four individuals. 69 of these days were for one individual who was stable for Nov/Dec of last year.

Emergency Detentions: 2018 saw 47 emergency detentions, up from 35 in 2017. Many of the 2018 EDs were dropped and never made it to the court system.

Future Meetings: Future meeting dates are quarterly on the second Wednesday of the month at 4:30pm: April 10th, July 10th, and October 9th, 2019.

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 5:22 pm.

Minutes respectfully submitted by,

Nina Bucher

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