

Wednesday, November 15, 2023, 2:30 – 4:00, Loon Room 2302 (2ndF), Government Center

Attendees:

Members (marked box indicates *Present*):

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| ☐ Nibbe, Vickie | ☒ Holland, Jeanne |
| ☐ Besse, Kelsey (Excused) | ☐ Murray, Vanessa |
| ☒ Antl, Linda (Chair) | ☒ Carl Harju |
| ☐ Dahlman, Tammi | ☐ Ray-Mader, Jennifer |
| ☒ Eskridge, Lashale (Remote) | ☒ Tyler, Jeremy (Remote) |
| ☒ Goodrum, Jami | ☐ White, Lisa |
| ☐ Gangnon, Bradley (Vice Chair) | |

HHS Staff Attendees: Tarynn Anderson, Joel Torkelson, James O'Dell, Diane Erkens, Jill Pooler, Michelle Miller (remote), Sarah Grosshuesch

1. The meeting was called to order at 2:33 p.m.
2. Approve 2023-07-26 Minutes
ACTION: Quorum not met. Minutes not approved
3. Mental Health Update (Carl Harju, Diane Erkens, Tarynn Anderson)
 - a. Suicide Prevention Grant update; Wright County did not receive the grant
 - b. Discussed Unmet Needs. MHAC will present to the HHS Board in May to coincide with May as Mental Health Month recognition; discussed potential resources:
 - i. Laundry gift cards to supplement the Medica-sponsored Laundry Care Services grant
 - ii. Ways to boost enrollment in the mental health field to meet community needs:
 1. Example, there are limited free therapy sessions currently offered through the Wright County Area United Way, Bridging Hope, Thumbs Up grants
 - c. The Co-responder initiative led by Social Worker II Kaylyn Sayen is underway. Sayen will be joining deputies in the field when law enforcement deems it appropriate
 - d. Information on CAMHI training schedules
4. Public Health Task Force Update (~~Dr. Jennifer Ray-Mader~~, Sarah Grosshuesch)
 - a. Discussion on cannabis and licensing expectations
 - b. Introduction of two new staff from AmeriCorps
 - c. MEADA (Mentorship, Education and Drug Awareness) discussion: tobacco, alcohol and marijuana
 - d. Community Dental Center open house on October 27 was a success; flyer handout
5. Open Forum:
 - a. Homelessness Task Force (Joel Torkelson)

- i. The subcommittee met in October and November – meetings are preliminary and exploratory; looking at timelines and goals
 - ii. Salvation Army contacted Joel yesterday; Joel is also collaborating with Tom Fedema from Court Services
- b. Board Update (Jami Goodrum)
 - i. Debt Collection Process (Jim O'Dell)
 - 1. Acknowledged the significant role of the Revenue & Debt Collection staff
 - a. HHS collected \$1.8M for 2023
 - 2. Presented the rules and process on debt garnishment, types of collectible and uncollectible debts and resolutions through the courts and the Agency and County policies. Wright County aims to balance the collection processes, ensuring that clients who are financially indigent have avenues to debt relief.
 - ii. [Adoption Trend](#) (Michelle Miller)
 - 1. Miller reported that despite the recent article in the Star Tribune casting a negative shadow on the State's handling the child protection program, Wright County's adoption cases are faring well, recognizing the Child Protection/Child Welfare team's hard work
 - 2. The Parent Mentor Program grant will launch in 2024
 - a. Eskridge would like more information when the grant opens for mentorship participation; offered positive feedback on the favorable adoption/child protection report but stressed that the Child Care policy is still difficult for struggling parents who, in some cases, would not benefit from working full time as child care benefits would be reduced, rendering them ineligible for child care services. She also called for boosting support for the kinship program and the foster care homes to keep families together
 - i. Pooler stated that HHS is looking into all avenues where services can be enhanced
- c. Personnel Requests
 - i. On November 7, the Board approved the following position requests effective 1/1/2024:
 - 1. Three Eligibility Specialists and one Lead Eligibility Specialist – these are over complement positions to mitigate high caseload due to the unwinding of the Medical Assistance program. Said positions are expected to sunset by June 2025 through attrition
 - 2. Reclassified one vacant Lead Eligibility Specialist to Social Worker – this position will lead the Integrated Services initiative, triaging with Public Health and Social Services
 - 3. Converted a full-time Social Worker position to two part-time positions in Children's Mental Health
- d. HHS Legislative Priorities
 - i. WCHHS supported five priorities for the upcoming legislation
 - 1. System Modernization
 - 2. Development of an accessible and reliable behavioral health continuum of care and infrastructure
 - 3. Increased flexible Public Health funding

4. Effective and enhanced MnCHOICES system tool to provide accurate and timely services
 5. Statutory change identifying educational neglect from being a mandatory child protection response to a child welfare response
 - ii. The new proposal delegating counties to provide housing to clients, did not pass in the last legislation but is expected to be taken up at the next legislation
 1. Under consideration is the source of funding – the Minnesota Family Investment Program was considered as a source, but the program is already allocated for the County Crisis Fund, and toward Workforce Development programs and services
 - iii. Eskridge suggested that the real way to get the real statewide homelessness data is to see it in person, such as visiting the metro areas where homelessness is rampant. She suggested that Wright County “main street” will not yield visible signs of homelessness, instead, they are in the woods, in the parks, concluding that homelessness data is under-representing the real scenario
6. Items for Next Meeting
- a. Homelessness Task Force

Holland moved, Harju second, to adjourn at 4:01 p.m.

Submitted by Naomi Blomberg, Administrative Specialist