

**MEETING OF THE
WINNEBAGO COUNTY
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES BOARD**

Minutes

DATE: Monday, June 23rd, 2025

TIME: 2:00 p.m.

PLACE: Oshkosh Human Services Building Room 33

MEMBERS PRESENT: Ralph Harrison, Chris Kniep, Larry Lautenschlager, Karen Powers, Harold Singstock, Mark Weisensel, KristL Laux, and Walt Ulbricht

STAFF PRESENT: Bill Topel, Renee Soroko, Annette Beattie, Heather Foust, Ann Kriegel, Janet Rohloff, Melissa Hoodie, Elizabeth Wagner and Julie Kotajarvi

OTHERS PRESENT: Paul Kaiser, Steve Binder, Kelly Hinz (virtual), Angela Stueck (virtual)

Chairman Larry Lautenschlager called the meeting to order at 2:20 p.m. There was a slight delay due to technical issues.

AGENDA ITEM B: PUBLIC HEARING ON AGENDA ITEMS

Chairman Larry Lautenschlager opened the hearing by welcoming those present in the room and virtually via video or phone. Larry explained the intent of the public hearing is to provide an opportunity for public comment on programs, services and budget for Winnebago County Department of Human Services. Larry reviewed guidelines.

The following Public Comments were made:

Angela Stueck of Family Services expressed her gratitude for financial support and collaboration over the years. Kelly Hinz, also from Family Services, is the program manager of the Parent Connection Program in Oshkosh. Parent Connection is a voluntary learning program that strengthens and supports families. Kelly highlighted two different programs: 1) Parents as Teachers and 2) Families First. Parents as Teachers provides home based support for families with young children from prenatal to kindergarten. Families First focuses on support and resources for positive parenting. In 2024, both programs assisted over 100 families, completed 1,800 home visits and conducted over 250 developments screenings. Kelly thanked the department for their continued financial support.

There were no additional public comments. The public portion remained open until 3:21pm.

AGENDA ITEM C: PUBLIC COMMENTS ON AGENDA ITEMS

There were no comments.

AGENDA ITEM D1: APPROVE MINUTES OF THE MAY 28TH, 2025 HUMAN SERVICES BOARD MEETING

Ralph Harrison moved for approval of these minutes; seconded by Karen Powers and carried unanimously. (8-0)

AGENDA ITEM D2: ACCEPT THE MINUTES OF THE MAY 12TH, 2025 ADRC COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Harold Singstock moved for acceptance of these minutes; seconded by Mark Weisensel and carried unanimously. (8-0)

AGENDA ITEM E1: 2024 ANNUAL REPORT

Each board member received the 2024 annual report. Certain pages were reviewed as a group starting on page 6. Bill Topel reviewed cases by Target Group and where they originate. The largest cases are Economic Support FoodShare and Economic Support Badger Care. Bill shared each division describes goals and accomplishments. Bill highlighted, page 27, Child Welfare Division Placement types. A large accomplishment is the percentage of children placed with a relative or like kin. Very few children are placed in traditional foster care. Please contact Bill Topel directly with questions or further discussion.

AGENDA ITEM E2: BUSINESS ITEMS REVIEW, DISCUSS, AND RECOMMEND 2025 HUMAN SERVICES BUDGET TO COUNTY EXECUTIVE

Director Bill Topel explained the budget process; each division manager will review significant changes for next year's projections. Every line item is included so please ask questions as we move through. After board review, budget is presented to the County Executive. The County Executive may revise at his discretion. This budget is a first rough draft since there will likely be further changes at the Federal and State levels that may impact current funding. Each department Division Manager (Administrative Services, Behavioral Health, Child Welfare, Economic Support, and Long-Term Support) highlighted changes and explained new position requests.

Administrative Services Division: Janet Rohloff explained 2026 includes a new van purchase and maintenance/repair expenses for the department fleet of 13 vans. The oldest van is 13 years old. There was a question whether county vehicles are identifiable to build trust in the community. Due to client confidentiality, county vehicles are unmarked. Annette Beattie added we are continuously building trust with our families as well as building relationships with everyone we interact with.

Behavioral Health Division: Heather Foust explained one position is reallocated to a different program area since it was no longer needed in the other program. Part time crisis center positions have been converted which results in less position time overall, hence an expense reduction.

Child Welfare Division: Annette Beattie stated all services are state mandated. Overall, there aren't options to bill state or private health insurance for service provision. Safety Supports expense line item keeps kids safe at home preventing removal. Services to families keeps kids safe. It is more costly to remove them. Currently, this division has several open positions. The work must be done which causes overtime though is often inevitable especially at Shelter Care and the Crisis Center (24-hour residential facilities).

Economic Support Division: Ann Kriegel said that the budget is uncertain due to changes at the federal level. The state is saying they do not want to cut staff or services. Currently, most funding cuts and eligibility changes involve Medicaid programs and SNAP benefits (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program also known as Food Share).

Long Term Support Division: Elizabeth Wagner highlighted budget changes. There was a discussion regarding HELP Program staff (Homeless, Eviction and Loss Prevention). Current staff are project employees through December 31st, 2025. Request to maintain program and staff adding as regular full time positions as of January 1st, 2026. Due to program growth and increased service provision, an additional position is requested for next year. Program provides services to prevent homelessness working in partnership with other community programs. Children's Long-Term Support is a mandated service to children with long term physical and developmental disabilities currently 100% funded through Medicaid. Program has grown exponentially the last few years.

Bill Topel asked board to review, discuss, and motion with modifications and/or approval. Mark Weisensel motioned the board submit the budget as presented with a second by Karen Powers. Harold Singstock stated he would like to amend the motion reducing tax levy increase from 18.3% to 12.3%. The amendment was not seconded. Initial motion carried 7-1.

AGENDA ITEM F: BOARD MEMBER REPORTS

Chris Kniep said she is willing to discuss budget changes as they occur and thanked the department for their hard work. Ralph Harrison is concerned the public is not more involved in the Public Hearing. He also thanked everyone for their hard work. KristL Laux expressed her support for the HELP Program (Homeless, Eviction and Loss Prevention). Karen Powers reminded everyone that the Sheriff will be reading the Declaration of Independence on July 4th at 8:00 am on the Courthouse steps. Larry Lautenschlager announced he and Supervisor Binder plan to attend the NACO (National Association of Counties) conference in Philadelphia next month.

AGENDA ITEM G: NEXT MEETING DATE

Current meeting schedule has no meeting next month. Larry asked members if they would like to skip or meet. Mixed responses. Larry decided to tentatively plan to meet next month. Larry will poll the board mid-month, pending new budget information and decide. With no further business, Karen Powers moved for adjournment; seconded by Ralph Harrison and carried at 4:46 pm. The next meeting (tentatively) will be held on **Monday, July 28th, at 2:00 p.m. in the Oshkosh Human Services Building in Room 33.**

Respectfully submitted by Julie Kotajarvi, Human Services Department/jk