



MINNESOTA PRAIRIE COUNTY ALLIANCE

COMMUNITY SERVICES OF DODGE, STEELE & WASECA COUNTIES

Adopted Minutes of the Joint Powers Board Meeting held January 19, 2021

Due to the declaration of a peacetime emergency effective March 13, 2020 (Executive Order 20-3, et seq.) and associated Minnesota Department of Health guidance to observe social distancing and limit public gatherings to address the COVID-19 health pandemic, and in accordance with Minnesota Statutes, Chapter 13D, the meeting was held through video-conferencing with public access through Microsoft Teams.

I. The Minnesota Prairie County Alliance joint powers board met in regular session on January 19, 2021. Commissioner Rod Peterson called the meeting to order at 3:06 pm. Call to order

II. A quorum was established. Roll call and introductions

Members present: Tim Tjosaas Dodge County Commissioner
 Rod Peterson Dodge County Commissioner
 James Brady Steele County Commissioner
 Rick Gnemi Steele County Commissioner
 Brian Harguth Waseca County Commissioner
 Doug Christopherson Waseca County Commissioner
 DeAnne Malterer Waseca County Commissioner (joined at 3:09 pm)

Members absent: None

Also present: Jane Hardwick MNPrairie Executive Director
 Kevin Venenga MNPrairie Finance Manager
 Heather Johnson MNPrairie Child & Family Social Services Manager
 Tara Reich MNPrairie Adult & Disability Social Services Manager
 Julie Johnson MNPrairie & Steele County Human Resources Director
 Gina McGuire MNPrairie & Steele County Human Resources Assistant Director
 Beth Christesen MNPrairie Office Support Services Supervisor
 Kristin Ferris MNPrairie Executive Assistant
 Michael Johnson Waseca County Administrator (joined at 3:30 pm)
 John Rostad AFSCME Council 65 Representative
 Ashley Chesley MNPrairie employee
 Courtney Pike MNPrairie employee

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- III. Gina McGuire, Steele County and MNPrairie Assistant Human Resources Director introduced the following new staff: Ashley Chesley and Courtney Pike. New Staff introductions

- IV. Motion by Commissioner Rick Gnemi seconded by Commissioner James Brady, to accept the agenda as presented. *Motion adopted unanimously.* Agenda and motion

- V. Jane Hardwick, MNPrairie Executive Director, presented the board with the required actions for the board’s first meeting of the calendar year: 2021 board requirements
 - To elect a chair and vice chair for 2021-22
 - To establish the board’s regular meeting schedule for 2021
 - To review the committee structure and make appointments
 - To establish any preliminary plan for 2021 topics, strategic planning, budget preparation

- VI. Commissioner Peterson called for nominations for chair. Chair election

- Commissioner Gnemi, seconded by Commissioner Doug Christopherson, nominated the former vice chair, Commissioner James Brady, to serve as chair of the joint powers board. There were no further nominations. *Motion adopted unanimously.* Motion

Member	Aye	Nay
James Brady	X	
Rick Gnemi	X	
DeAnne Malterer	X	
Tim Tjosaas	X	
Rodney Peterson	X	
Doug Christopherson	X	

Commissioner Peterson turned over the meeting-chair role to the newly elected chair, Commissioner Brady.

- VII. Commissioner Brady called for nominations for vice chair. Vice-chair election

- A discussion occurred regarding the traditional practice of electing a vice chair who has served on the board in the prior year for continuity and for there to be a general rotation of the elected positions among the three counties.

Commissioner De Malterer nominated Commissioner Doug Christopherson to be the vice chair of the joint powers board and chair of the finance committee. There were no further nominations.

- Motion by Commissioner Malterer, seconded by Commissioner Gnemi, to cease nominations and direct the chair to cast a unanimous ballot for Commissioner Christopherson as vice-chair of the Minnesota Prairie County Alliance joint powers board for 2021-22. *Motion adopted unanimously.* Motion

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Member	Aye	Nay
James Brady	X	
Rick Gnemi	X	
DeAnne Malterer	X	
Tim Tjosaas	X	
Rodney Peterson	X	
Doug Christopherson	X	

- VIII. Commissioner Brady called for nominations for the finance committee. Finance committee appointment

Commissioner Peterson expressed that it would be traditional for the second finance committee appointment to go to a commissioner from the county not represented by the chair and vice-chair positions.

- Motion by Commissioner Gnemi, seconded by Commissioner Peterson, to appoint Commissioner Tjosaas to serve as the second board member on the finance committee. *Motion adopted unanimously.* Motion

Member	Aye	Nay
James Brady	X	
Rick Gnemi	X	
DeAnne Malterer	X	
Tim Tjosaas	X	
Rodney Peterson	X	
Doug Christopherson	X	

- IX. Commissioner Brady called for nominations for the committee appointments. Committee appointments

There was discussion about various approaches. Ms. Hardwick indicated that typically the board chair serves on the personnel committee. After further discussion, the following committee appointments were decided:

Policy committee: Commissioners Malterer and Gnemi
 Personnel: Commissioners Brady and Peterson

- X. Jane Hardwick reviewed the 2021 regular meeting schedule that had been tentatively adopted at the December 2020 meeting. Upon inquiry, there was no opposition to retaining that schedule. Accordingly, the scheduled will continue to be the third Tuesday of each month from 3:00-5:00 pm. Meetings will continue to occur via Microsoft Teams video-conference until further notice, at which time meetings are expected to resume at the Steele County Administration Center in Room 40 except that the June meeting would ordinarily occur in Waseca and the December meeting in Dodge. Regular meeting schedule affirmed

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| XI. | Jane Hardwick indicated that in the late spring she would seek to schedule the annual all-commissioners meeting to coincide with member-county budget-setting processes in July or August 2021, based on feedback from the last all-commissioners meeting. There was support voiced for this approach. | All-Commissioners Meeting schedule |
| XII. | Jane Hardwick informed the board that management’s primary focus in 2021 will be working through recovering after COVID. At the February 2021 meeting, she will brief the board on management’s priorities for the year to provide an opportunity for further discussion and direction-setting. | Planning review |
| XIII. | <p>Motion by Commissioner Gnemi, seconded by Commissioner Peterson, to approve the following items by consent:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. To authorize \$1,053,075.52 in client support bills as presented. ii. To authorize \$544,268.79 in administrative bills as presented. iii. To execute the 2021 purchase of service contracts as written. iv. To accept the Minnesota Department of Human Services, grant for children’s mental health screening for \$131,037. v. To approve the accounts-receivable write off total of \$60,013.78 for the year ending 2020. | Consent agenda and motion |

Motion adopted unanimously.

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| XIV. | Tara Reich, MNPrairie Adult & Disability Social Services Manager, recommended that the board adopt an updated cooperative agreement with other counties in southeast Minnesota for 2021-22 to maintain operation of mobile crisis services available to people with a mental health crisis who are residing within the region. Ms. Reich shared additional information about the collaboration among ten counties. | 2021-2022 Mobile Crisis grant cooperative agreement |
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A discussion occurred regarding the grant levels from the Minnesota Department of Human Services (DHS), and Ms. Hardwick expressed appreciation for the high quality of mobile crisis services provided by South Central Human Relations Center as a result of this collaborative effort.

There was discussion about the Association of Minnesota Counties’ (AMC’s) position that the Legislature should not further reduce mental health funding.

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| Motion by Commissioner Christopherson, seconded by Commissioner Gnemi, to authorize execution of an updated cooperative agreement with seven other counties to continue to jointly maintain a regional crisis program, including a contribution by MNPrairie of \$85,946 for 2021 and \$78,194 for 2022, for calendar years 2021 and 2022. <i>Motion adopted unanimously.</i> | Motion |
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XV. Gina McGuire, Steele County and MNPrairie Assistant Human Resources Director, presented an amended Emergency Operations for COVID-19 policy. Ms. McGuire noted that the federal requirements to provide Emergency Sick Leave (E-Sick) and Expanded Family & Medical Leave Act Leave (E-FMLA) expired December 31, 2020; but the option to extend them through March 31, 2021 was enacted with the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2021.

Amended emergency operations for COVID-19 policy

MNPrairie’s management team recommends extending the availability of E-Sick from January 1, 2021 through March 31, 2021. Extending the availability of E-Sick will encourage employees to continue to follow Centers for Disease Control and Minnesota Department of Health quarantine recommendations which limit workplace exposures to COVID-19 and will also allow employees to retain their sick/vacation/PTO leave balances for non-COVID-19 leaves.

Each eligible employee’s unused E-Sick balance would be carried forward to the extended period; they would not be issued a new 80-hour entitlement.

MNPrairie’s management team is not recommending the extension of E-FMLA.

A discussion occurred regarding staff utilization of leave during the pandemic and a benefit of remote work being that some employees have been able to work through quarantines and mild symptoms.

Motion by Commissioner Gnemi, seconded by Commissioner Tjosaas to adopt the Emergency Operations for COVID-19 policy, as amended, to include language about extended use of Emergency Sick Leave beyond Families First Coronavirus Response Act requirements, effective January 1, 2021 through March 31, 2021.

Motion

Member	Aye	Nay
James Brady	X	
Rick Gnemi	X	
DeAnne Malterer	X	
Tim Tjosaas	X	
Rodney Peterson	X	
Doug Christopherson		X

XVI. Gina McGuire presented the personnel report noting recent hires, vacancies and promotions as of January 11, 2021. Ms. McGuire noted that there are currently 6.5 vacancies, a full-time equivalent (FTE) count of 169.7, and a year-to-date retention rate of 100 percent.

Personnel report

XVII. Tara Reich shared an annual program report about MNPrairie’s administration of MnCHOICES long-term care assessments. Ms. Reich noted staff changes, quantities of assessments, revenues generated through the Social Services Time Study, areas of focus, and accomplishments. She also cited barriers to service delivery in 2020, expected challenges in 2021, and goals going forward.

MnCHOICES annual report

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There were discussions concerning the revenues generated through the time study, staff and client preferences regarding in-person assessments, and changes in services with the establishment of Community First Services and Supports (CFSS).

- XVIII. Jane Hardwick reviewed the key elements of the preliminary 2020 year-end budget report noting that the single most impacting factor was the COVID pandemic. Ms. Hardwick overviewed actual expenditures and revenues that varied in any significant way from the budget.

2020 preliminary budget report

Kevin Venenga, MNPrairie Finance Manager, shared graphs depicting key revenues and program expenditures. Mr. Venenga also stated that 2020 expenditures were \$24.5 million or 92 percent of budget while revenues were \$28.0 million or 105 percent of budget. This resulted in a \$3.4 million improvement in the fund balance, bringing the total balance near to the minimum target. A discussion occurred regarding the impact on the fund balance.

- XIX. Heather Johnson, MNPrairie Child & Family Social Services Manager, presented the child and youth out-of-home placement statistics. Ms. Johnson noted the number of children in placement who are in the care of a relative, trial home visits with their parents, and in the care of a non-custodial parent. Ms. Johnson shared the number of those receiving services in a mental health residential facility or correctional placement.

Child out-of-home placement report

Ms. Johnson also noted the increase in mental health needs for children especially during the pandemic.

- XX. Jane Hardwick referenced the income and health care assistance eligibility report exhibiting the date and number of unprocessed eligibility documents along with data regarding timeliness of phone-call returns for the income & health care assistance (IHCA) unit. The report noted:

Income & health care assistance processing and phone report

- The Long-Term Care team is within MNPrairie’s standards for good customer service. Documents are being process within 2 weeks of receipt.
- The Family, Bank and Cost-Effective teams are is processing documents outside MNPrairie’s standards for good customer service, but still within state and federal program guidelines for timeliness.
- The Health Care team is processing documents outside of state and federal program standards for timeliness.
- Phone calls are being returned within 24 hours by all teams.

A discussion occurred cost-effective insurance.

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| XXI. | Jane Hardwick shared the following topics: Participation with AMC and DHS around healthcare procurement, and budget recommendations, in addition to the development of principles for the Minnesota Association of Social Services Administrators (MACSSA) and AMC to apply in vetting budget proposals. | Executive Director Report |
| XXII. | <p>MNPrairie management reports:</p> <p>Heather Johnson reported on the following topic: personnel updates including the number of applications received; intensive bridging strategies update; System of Care grant; and out of home placements in residential facilities.</p> <p>A discussion occurred regarding the systems of care grant.</p> <p>Tara Reich reported on the following topics: personnel update; EDMS update; Family Involvement Strategies; and some planning in the community related to the West Hills Lodge building.</p> <p>Cathy Skogen, Income & Health Care Manager presented the following topics: SNAP benefit increase from January to June of 2021.</p> | Management Reports |
| XXIII. | Motion by Commissioner Gnemi, seconded by Commissioner Peterson, to accept the meeting minutes as presented from the December 15, 2020 meeting of the Minnesota Prairie County Alliance Joint Powers Board. <i>Motion adopted unanimously.</i> | Minutes and motion |
| XXIV. | No employee had comments. | Employee comments |
| XXV. | The next scheduled regular meeting is February 16, 2021, 3:00 pm to 5:00 pm. | Next regular meeting |
| XXVI. | Motion by Commissioner Gnemi, seconded by Commissioner Christopherson, to adjourn the meeting at 4:42 pm. <i>Motion adopted unanimously.</i> | Adjournment |

X

Jane Hardwick
 MNPrairie Joint Powers Board Clerk