

**DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
SOCIAL SERVICES BOARD MEETING
WASHTENAW COUNTY
May 13, 2020**

Board Members Present: JaVon Jason, Ruth Kraut, Lillie Pinder

Staff: Renee Adorjan, Director; Adelia Clark, Services Program Manager; Titicia Rosen, Assistance Payments Program Manager; Alice Seipelt, CRC/Contract Coordinator

1. CALL TO ORDER/APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Ruth Kraut called the meeting to order at 1:06 PM. A motion was made by Lillie Pinder to approve the May 13, 2020 agenda. Motion supported by Ruth Kraut. Motion carried.

2. PUBLIC COMMENTS

No public comments.

3. APPROVAL OF MARCH 11, 2020 MEETING MINUTES

The Board reviewed the minutes from March 11, 2020. A motion was made by Lillie Pinder to approve the meeting minutes. Motion supported by Ruth Kraut. Motion carried.

4. FINANCIAL REPORTS

A. Social Welfare Fund

The Volunteer Services/County Projects April 2020 monthly expenditures were \$0.00, with a balance of \$37,342.90. The Board Account April 2020 monthly expenditures were \$1968.00, leaving a balance of \$13,749.22. No Board Reserve Account monthly expenditures were recorded for February 2020. The balance is \$7,749.08.

It was noted that the Board Account reflects a purchase of 80 Meijer gift cards for emergency usage related to the COVID-19 pandemic, approved via email on April 21, 2020. The total cost of the purchase was \$1,968.00.

B. Child Care Fund

Child Care Fund accounts are tracking well and within allocation. No unusual expenses, questions or concerns were noted.

5. UPDATES/COMMUNICATIONS

A. Director/Management Update

Director Update

- Renee Adorjan shared updates and noted MDHHS is working on contingency plans related to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- All staff are working mobile as much as possible currently. Washtenaw County has transitioned from an in office working staff of over 160 to 15-20 in office staff per day. The team was able to provide VPN tokens for network access and trainings for staff in a 3-day span.
- Work production on the part of the Assistance Payments staff has nearly doubled.
- Child Welfare noted approximately 25% reduction in referrals, most likely due to school closures.

- A “Field Team” ranging from 5 to 7 members based on operational need was formed to complete all face to face contacts. The field team staff have Personal Protection Equipment and receive hazard pay.
- Face to face contact requirements have been reduced/altered under the direction of the Children’s Service Agency. Foster care visitations have moved to an online format unless specific criteria is met to dictate a face to face visit.
- The Washtenaw County court system is still operating albeit at a reduced level. Children in foster care are continuing to be returned home. Several older youth are also aging out of the foster care system and staff are assisting by processing funds for household start up goods.
- Ruth Kraut asked about the announcement of temporary employee layoffs. Renee Adorjan explained that the announcement was made earlier that same day and plans were still being developed. At this time, it is known that all first line staff and management will be on a temporary lay off day, either Monday or Friday of each week until July 25, 2020. Higher level employees will take a pay cut. The State will automatically enroll employees participating in the temporary layoffs for UCB, and they will be eligible to take advantage of federal work share benefits. The Child welfare field team is exempt from the temporary layoffs.
- Ruth Kraut asked what happens when the Stay at Home order ends. Renee Adorjan noted that Washtenaw County would rely on instructions received from the DHHS Administration in Lansing but anticipates a gradual reopening of the building to both employees and customers to occur.

Data Reports

- Assistance Payments Statistics – Statistics were reviewed. It was noted that Washtenaw County had a significant spike in the number of program applications, specifically Cash Assistance and Food Assistance. Staff were able to adapt and process timelier and faster than previous months. The overall SOP for April was 97.93%.
- Children’s Services Statistics – Statistics were reviewed. It was noted that the number of CPS complaints had decreased significantly, however the number of investigations and assignments decreased only slightly.

Staffing Updates

- The entire Department is currently under a hiring freeze.
- Since the March meeting, Washtenaw DHHS has had 1 retirement, 1 resignation, 1 promotion, and there are 5 employees currently on leave.
- Washtenaw DHHS remains overstaffed by 1 clerical employee and 1 non-Child Welfare first line supervisor.

Policy Updates

- A number of policy exceptions related to the COVID-19 pandemic were noted and discussed relating to streamlining processes and waiving of program limits and requirements.
 - Face to face contacts for Child Welfare and Assistance Payments were reduced for many situations.
 - Disability and work requirements for cash applications have been temporarily waived.
 - SER program limits were increased, and verification requirements were reduced to streamline processing.
 - Food Assistance allotments were increased for many individuals, and a Pandemic Electronic Benefit Transfer Program (P-EBT) was created for families with students ages 5-18 who are enrolled in the MDOE's free or reduced lunch program.

Community Involvement Updates

- CPS staff are conducting an outreach program, contacting families that have been recently involved in the child welfare system to provide support and resources. Nearly 400 families have been contacted and offered resources to date.
- Community Resource Coordinator is working with local Barrier Busters staff to assist with an application for additional community funding through FEMA.
- An ongoing effort is being made to develop and share resources to all employees, customers, and members of the community as a whole.

B. Board Member Items

- The Board would like to brainstorm ideas on how to reward/recognize staff for their hard work and dedication to the residents of Washtenaw County not only for Public Service Recognition Week, but also during the COVID-19 crisis. This will be a Board Member Item for the June 10th meeting/agenda.
- It was reconfirmed that translation and interpretation services continue and can accommodate staff working remotely.

6. NEXT MEETING

June 10, 2020 at 1:00 PM

7. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 2:17 PM.

Renee Adorjan

Renee Adorjan, Director