

**Date: December 9, 2024**

**Time: 10:00 AM**

**Location: Commissioners Conference Room Second Floor –County Administration Building**

## BOARD OF SOCIAL SERVICES MINUTES

This meeting was recorded, broadcast online and archived.

### **Introduction and Announcements**

● Commissioner John Kefalas, Commissioner Jody Shadduck-McNally, Commissioner Kristin Stephens, County Manager Lorenda Volker, Assistant County Manager Laurie Kadrich, Human Services Director Heather O’Hayre, Division Managers Gordon Coombes, Vanessa Fewell, Jill Maasch, Lori Metz, and Thad Paul, Deputy Division Manager Katie Stieber, Program Manager Erin Alt, and Business Operations Coordinator Kalene Rowley.

### **Additions to the Agenda**

- Director Heather O'Hayre requested to add a discussion about a draft letter to the agenda.
- Commissioner John Kefalas inquired about updates on the Joint Budget Committee (JBC) hearing regarding Human Services and childcare programs, and the potential implications of Medicaid program changes under the new administration.
- Director Heather O'Hayre acknowledged the questions and suggested addressing them as time allowed, with follow-up information if necessary.

### **Childcare Assistance Program (CCAP) Update - Heather O’Hayre**

- Director Heather O'Hayre reported that the CCAP is currently frozen due to overspending.
- The overspending is estimated to be at least \$1.4 million by the end of the state fiscal year in June, on top of an \$8 million allocation.
- Director Heather O'Hayre explained the difficulties in estimating expenditures due to varying factors such as the age of the child, type of care, provider type, and quality rating.
- The state does not have leftover funds to cover the overspending, which falls on the county.
- Ten counties, mostly metro areas, are currently on a freeze or waitlist.

- The state anticipates that the entire state could be on a waitlist by June.
- The proposed budget submitted to the JBC on November 1st did not include a request for state funding for CCAP.
- Federal funds are being shifted between programs, resulting in a net decrease in CCAP funding despite a surface-level increase.
- Director Heather O'Hayre explained the complexities of the federal funding changes and how they result in a net decrease despite an apparent increase.
- Director Heather O'Hayre proposed sending a letter to the JBC, asking them to shift significant resources from the Universal Pre-Kindergarten (UPK) budget to the CCAP budget.
- The letter would highlight the stark difference in state general fund support between UPK and CCAP and the impact of not having childcare in the community.
- Commissioner Kristin Stevens inquired about the involvement of other counties in similar advocacy efforts.
- Director Heather O'Hayre confirmed that many counties are writing letters and seeking a collective approach.
- Commissioner Kristin Stevens and Commissioner Jody Shadduck-McNally expressed support for sending the letter and including a Cc to the Governor's office.
- Commissioner John Kefalas asked about the turnaround time for the letter and the implications of reallocating funds from UPK to CCAP.
- Director Heather O'Hayre stated that the ideal turnaround time was within the week and acknowledged that reallocating funds would impact UPK services but emphasized the greater priority of CCAP for children 0-13.
- Commissioner John Kefalas offered to call Senator Barbara Kirkmeyer to thank her for her advocacy on this issue.
- Director Heather O'Hayre agreed to revise the letter and send it for signatures.
- Director Heather O'Hayre committed to providing weekly updates on JBC meetings and exploring further advocacy roles for the commissioners.
- Commissioner John Kefalas expressed appreciation for Senator Barbara Kirkmeyer's advocacy and offered to call her to express gratitude.

### **Strategic Plan Update - Group Discussion**

- Division Manager Jill Maasch presented a recap of the 2020-2024 strategic plan and an overview of the 2025-2028 strategic plan.
- Division Manager Jill Maasch highlighted the extensive staff involvement in the 2020-2024 strategic plan, with 23% of Human Services staff participating and investing approximately 3,100 hours collectively.
- 2020-2024 Plan - Five Focus Areas:
  - Facilities Remodel and Hybrid Work - Jill Maasch
    - Division Manager Jill Maasch described the remodeling efforts at all three Human Services locations, focusing on a refreshed look, increased customer access, staff comfort, safety, and security, and support for hybrid work.
    - Division Manager Gordon Coombes elaborated on the changes made to the lobbies, rebranding them as welcome centers and emphasizing a more interactive and welcoming approach.
    - Commissioner John Kefalas inquired about the training provided to security personnel to ensure they are knowledgeable and can serve as a bridge between clients and staff.
    - Division Manager Gordon Coombes responded that security personnel are trained on de-escalation and safety protocols, and work closely with managers to stay informed about potential issues.
    - Division Manager Jill Maasch added that security personnel have close relationships with managers at each location.
  - Community Outreach and Access - Vanessa Fewell
    - Division Manager Vanessa Fewell provided an update on this committee's work, highlighting their community conversations to understand community needs and the development of recommendations for co-location and drop-in services.
    - Division Manager Vanessa Fewell mentioned that this work informed the federal SNAP grant for a mobile unit and will continue in the next strategic plan.
    - Commissioner John Kefalas asked about the possibility of partnering with large employers for co-location and outreach efforts.
    - Division Manager Vanessa Fewell explained that the approach is driven by the needs of each partner and that they are open to various possibilities, including partnerships with large employers.

- Equity, Diversion, Inclusion & Belonging (EDIB) - Thad Paul, Vanessa Fewell
  - Division Manager Thad Paul presented the work of this committee, emphasizing the development of a vision statement, review of policies and procedures through an EDIB lens, expansion of the Disparities Action Committee, implementation of pronoun training and a language access plan, expansion of translation services, addition of gender-neutral bathrooms, support for EDIB legislation in child welfare, and creation of a framework for a DHS Consumer Voice Council.
  - Division Manager Vanessa Fewell added that they are actively working to improve hiring practices and create a more inclusive and welcoming environment for staff and clients.
  - Division Manager Lori Metz congratulated Thad Paul on receiving the Early Childhood Systems Builder award from the Early Childhood Council of Larimer County.
- Internal Safety and External Emergency - Gordon Coombes
  - Division Manager Gordon Coombes described the work of this committee, including the implementation of fob access doors, welcome center security, duress buttons, and the updating and relaunching of the Larimer Prepared program.
  - Division Manager Gordon Coombes highlighted the department's leadership in coordinating mass care response for the community and the establishment of a Department Operations Center.
- PEER and Employee Resources - Lori Metz
  - Division Manager Lori Metz provided an update on this committee's work, emphasizing the expansion of the peer support program, implementation of Science of Hope strategies, expansion of resilience groups department-wide, and exploration of support for staff with lived experience.
  - Division Manager Lori Metz mentioned that the supervisor resilience group, led by Katie Stieber, is the most well-attended group and that they are actively working with County Human Resources to explore support options for staff with lived experience.
  - Commissioner Jody Shadduck-McNally expressed appreciation for the committee's work and emphasized the importance of taking care of each other, especially in the challenging field of Human Services.

- Division Manager Jill Maasch presented a visual representation of the 2025-2028 strategic plan and explained the four main focus areas:
- Equity Diversity Inclusivity and Belonging (EDIB)
  - This area will focus on creating a Client Council structure and developing an accessibility roadmap for internal systems.
  - Management Development and Consistency
    - This area will focus on revamping employee evaluations, improving management consistency, and enhancing communication and change management.
    - Division Manager Jill Maasch explained that the Management Development and Consistency focus area would be facilitated by the Executive Leadership Team and would focus on developing managerial skills and improving consistency in management practices.
    - The first step would be revamping employee evaluations to focus on values, mission, and vision.
    - Other areas of focus would include employee accountability, information sharing, and communication and change management standards.
- Internal Communication and Collaboration
  - This area aims to enhance and standardize internal communication, deepen the use of the intranet, and develop processes for communicating state rule changes and policy and tool communication.
  - This area will also focus on strengthening collaboration and communication across Human Services by developing a client journey map and promoting knowledge sharing.
- Division Goals
  - Each division within Human Services has also developed specific goals that align with the overall strategic plan. These goals address areas such as community support, cultural responsiveness, staff engagement, workforce enhancement, and internal communications.
  - **Aging and Adult Services:** Community support, cultural responsiveness, increased use of internal communication tools.
  - **Administration, Communication, and Excellence:** Develop and maintain key performance indicators, create a dashboard, develop standard operating procedures, communicate and project manage the strategic plan, increase and enhance data around client satisfaction and customer service.

- **Benefits and Community Support:** Deepen investment in staff, expand professional development opportunities, cascading communication, employee engagement and retention.
- **Children Youth and Family:** Staff engagement, workforce enhancement, division enhancement.
- **Operations:** Internal communications, customer service.
- The application process for staff members interested in participating in a committee will be able to apply and rank their top three committee choices.
- The selection of committee members will be completed by January 31st and the committee work will kick off on February 1st.
- Division Manager Jill Maasch also introduced the concept of a Hope Council, an employee-led committee to advise the strategic planning committees and provide opportunities for professional development, particularly for those interested in supervisory or management roles who may not have extensive decision-making experience.
- Director Heather O'Hayre added that the Hope Council would also focus on shifting decision-making down in the department and providing capacity for ongoing strategic planning committees.

### **CSU Research on Aging and Adult Services - Lori Metz, Katie Stieber, Erin Alt**

- Division Manager Lori Metz, Deputy Division Manager Katie Stieber, and Program Manager Erin Alt presented the findings of a community engagement project focused on older adult needs in Larimer County.
- The project was a collaboration between the Larimer County Office on Aging and the Social Work Research Center at Colorado State University in 2023.
- The goal was to build upon existing community strengths to address the needs of older adults in Larimer County.
- The project started by summarizing previous local surveying and engagement efforts, which included input from hundreds of older adults and community members.
- The project team selected four communities for targeted engagement:
  - Red Feather Lakes
    - The initial work will be on building upon the existing framework already in the community.
    - Red Feather Lakes has proven to be filled with strong support systems and their initial objective will include steps in identifying those key community contacts and to share information with.

- There will be opportunities to share potential funding streams that match the needs of the community, provide letters of support and come beside local initiatives. This will include any state or local grants geared towards the needs of this rural area, especially around their transportation needs.
- Commissioner Kristin Stephens asked about transportation in Red Feather Lakes and suggested reaching out to the Metropolitan planning organization, which does regional transportation planning. She also mentioned Ride NoCo and the many grants that have been available for transportation, especially in Weld County.
- Deputy Division Manager Katie Stieber and Program Manager Erin Alt expressed gratitude for the suggestion and said they will be reaching out to formalize transportation in Red Feather.
- Commissioner John Kefalas asked about the zip codes being considered for Red Feather Lakes and if they are referring to the Red Feather Lakes Community or the larger area.
- Deputy Division Manager Katie Stieber and Program Manager Erin Alt responded that they are encompassing all zip codes in the area and that their outreach will be intentional to expand and integrate different views.
- Commissioner John Kefalas then mentioned having recent conversations with folks who are moving forward on community-led solutions and suggested having a conversation about what's happening in the area, including Glacier View Meadows and Livermore. He also mentioned a resource called the Denver Regional Mobility and Access Council (DRMAC), which is looking to expand what they do in Larimer County.
- Estes Park
  - The initial focus will be to build upon existing hubs for underserved communities by connecting key stakeholders and agencies to the community networks that are already in place. They are starting by understanding the asset maps to target new partners and utilizing existing advisory council members and Office on Aging staff to connect with Crossroads Ministries, Estes Park Health and the library during this first round of community relationship building.
  - Commissioner Jody Shadduck-McNally brought up concerns about communication in Estes Park and ensuring that the Estes Park Senior Center is included in the conversation. She also mentioned the importance of including the Estes Park elected town trustees and former mayors in the conversation, as they are wary of anyone disrupting the community.



- Deputy Division Manager Katie Stieber and Program Manager Erin Alt acknowledged these concerns and shared that they have had recent conversations with the town of Estes and have been invited to a town hall meeting.
- Berthoud
  - In Berthoud, they discovered more agencies and relationships and resources than they realized. Their first objective in Berthoud is working with two new partner agencies.
  - Commissioner Jody Shadduck-McNally discussed a large group they met with in Berthoud that has been moved four times.
  - This group wants to formalize and have their own space and is aware of the senior centers in other towns.
  - Commissioner Jody Shadduck-McNally asked if the presenters could join her for a conversation with this group which was agreed and discussed the possibility of the group using the House of Neighborly Services or the recreation center.
- Latina Older Adults and Caregivers
  - The first objective for the Latina community is to enhance cultural responsiveness by educating staff, utilizing more internal services and resources, and building relationships.
  - The Office on Aging recognizes the importance of going out to where folks are and providing targeted outreach to meet the specific needs of this community.
- Key community needs identified included transportation, medical and in-home services, social isolation, lack of service awareness, food insecurity, and disconnect from urban hubs.
- Individual engagement approaches were developed for each community, using in-depth one-on-one conversations and asset mapping.
- Through these conversations, the project team gained a deeper understanding of community-specific context, values, and approaches as they related to aging-related challenges.
- Community members made connections between identified needs, community-specific strategies, and related local partners or resources. These connections became the report's recommendations.



- County Manager Lorenda Volker asked how the strategic plan and this effort tie together.
- Deputy Division Manager Katie Stieber and Program Manager Erin Alt responded that all of this is integrated into the bigger strategic plan and that the Hub concept will be part of the outreach. They also mentioned that they are excited about the collaboration with CSU and curious to see where it goes in the future.
- The Larimer County Office on Aging is currently working with a strategic planning team to prioritize specific action items and timelines.
- Commissioner John Kefalas inquired about Medicaid and the possibility of changing it to a block grant or stopping the waivers that are allowable today.
- Division Manager Lori Metz stated that this would require a complete change in the Affordable Care Act and that there are a lot of unknowns. She assured Commissioner John Kefalas that she will keep the board updated as she knows more.
- The meeting was adjourned.