

FAMILY POLICY BOARD

Monday, December 5th, 2022

Hybrid Meeting (option to meet in person or via Zoom)

12:01 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Stephany Stordahl, Liz, Ann Kappauf, Hetti Brown, Michael Baroni, Michelle Burchardt, Jason Witt, Isaac Hoffman, Catherine Kohlmeier, Gina Brown, Karolee Behringer, Jenni Morris, Audra Martine, Jodi Widuch, Carla Lundeen, and Lurch (who is Joe Northwood), Dawn Kay.

GUESTS/OTHERS PRESENT

Daryl Ferguson (Goodwill)

CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson Ann Kappauf called the meeting to order at 12:01pm

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

MOTION by Hetti Brown & Catherine Kohlmeier to approve the November 7th, 2022, minutes as presented. **Motion carried unanimously.**

HUMAN SERVICES DEPARTMENT AND BOARD UPDATES

HS Director Update: Jason Witt shared that the 2023 La Crosse County budget was approved unanimously. The budget achieves lower taxes, increased spending on highways, and a decrease in debt. The Human Services budget has a decrease in tax levy of 16 percent, which is the largest decrease in 12+ years and brings the Department to a levy budget that is lower than before 2011. At the same time the budget adds positions to Human Services and actually increases the Department's capacity to serve the community. This is achieved through an increase in state and federal funding.

Jason also had an update on a previous question regarding Opioid dollars possibly being received by La Crosse County. After giving a brief overview of what the opioid settlement dollars are, Jason shared that no determination has been made as to how the dollars will be spent or a process to make that determination. Due to the nature of the dollars, there is no proscribed timeline as to when the funding needs to be used. He will continue to update the Family Policy Board when more information becomes available. Hetti Brown asked if La Crosse County has determined whether it will be taking a lump sum or annual payments. Jason did not know but will check if that determination has been made.

HHS Board Update: None at this time.

FAMILY KEYS HOUSING COLLABORATION

Isaac Hoffman provided an overview of the Family Keys housing initiative. He provided a handout which can be found here: [\(Link to handout\)](#). Family Keys serves families within the child welfare system (child protective services). The goal of Family Keys is to make sure that lack of access to safe and affordable housing is never a reason that a child is separated from their parent(s) and is never an obstacle to reunification. This ties to the overall philosophy of child protective services of keeping families together whenever that can be done safely. Under this two-year initiative, a local team is working to secure three housing options that families can access. There is funding to support this and shorter-term emergency housing needs. La Crosse is one of three counties (the others are Marathon and Wood) that were selected for this initiative. La Crosse was selected at least in part due to its history of collaboration and the relationships that exist among housing stakeholders and prevention programs.

A question was asked about what the other counties are doing under this initiative. Isaac replied that all three counties have similar approaches in that they are securing physical housing options for families.

A question was asked as to how the program will be sustained after the two-years are up. Jason replied that Wisconsin Department of Children and Families is using the initiatives as “proof of concept” that may influence how existing child welfare funds can be spent. Also, prevention separations and achieving more timely reunifications result in cost savings that potentially could be reinvested to maintain the initiative.

UPDATE ON EMERGENCY WINTER SHELTER PLAN FOR FAMILIES

Isaac Hoffman provided an update on how things are going with the emergency winter sheltering plan for families.

-The effort launched on November 1st 2022. It is going well, and the partnership is going amazing.

-Because of Case workers and coordinated entry, families can present, be assessed, and get possible housing same day preferably.

Numbers- 38 families have presented during the month of November, 13 of which had other places, or did not have kids with them. This has been the most difficult to determine. As well as trying to connect and utilize case management if it already exists for families. Nine families were able to be served via motel funding from county dollars. 16 families were served motel funding from WREA.

-The Winter Shelter Plan for Families is running through April 2023.

Hetti added that the La Crosse Community Foundation is contributing funding to help this effort. Hetti is proud of how agencies have come together in this collaboration and made things happen. It's an example of what can be achieved.

FAMILY POLICY BOARD PLAN FOR THE NEW YEAR

There will be no meeting in January. With 2023 being a year where the State will be adopting its biennial budget, we will begin in February with the process of preparing for our Legislative Meeting, which traditionally happens in May or June.

After some discussion, it was determined that the FPB should aim to have its legislative meeting in April or May. Hettie is bringing information about what would be the best timing to the February meeting.

AGENCY CHECK-INS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

Stephany Stordahl shared a flyer with the group regarding Autism Services & Support Informational Sessions, which can be found here: <https://lacrossecounty.org/docs/default-source/human-services/autism-informational-session.pdf>

There are two sessions for families interested in services, that are provided moving forward.

Catherine- Resilient communities wi.com foundation app and register- virtual. 9a-12p
Can do custom presentations as well.

Hetti- Wisconsin help for homeowners, to help with mortgage payments and taxes. They may not be taking new applications after the end of the year. Get in applications by Dec 31st right on the homepage for CouleeCap.

Ann- Housing news at New Horizons. They got funding for a grant to get 12 units for housing.

ADJOURNMENT TO THE NEXT MEETING TO BE HELD MONDAY, FEBRUARY 6th, 2023, AT 12PM.

Chairperson Ann Kappauf adjourned the meeting at 12:45pm

Approved 2/6/2023, Bailey McNamer, Recorder