

## BOARD OF SOCIAL SERVICES MEETING MINUTES

A recording of this worksession is available at: [http://larimer.org/bcc/list\\_worksessions.cfm](http://larimer.org/bcc/list_worksessions.cfm).

**Date:** November 19, 2018

**Location:** 200 W. Oak, Commissioners' Conference Room

**In Attendance:** Commissioner Sean Dougherty; Commissioner Steve Johnson; Commissioner Tom Donnelly; Linda Hoffmann; Lorenda Volker; Laura Walker; Heather O'Hayre; Shannon Reiff; Thad Paul; Ann Marie Grobarek, Deb DeLuca-Forzley, Jennifer Hollohan, student observer Mia

### INTRODUCTIONS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

Commissioner Steve Johnson welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order.

### ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA

No additions to the agenda.

### HUMAN SERVICES OVERVIEW

Human Services Director Laura Walker provided an overview of the department in order to give some context to the student observer regarding the reports discussed in this meeting.

### UPDATE ON HUB/HOTLINE PILOT

Thad Paul, Child Youth and Family Services Division Manager, provided an update on the pilot program outsourcing the answering of referral calls to a call center in Prowers County and reducing the working hours for the Hub from 24/7 to Monday through Friday from 8 AM to 5 PM.

The goal for this pilot was to be more cost effective and reduce the challenges of staffing and managing the concerns of a facility open every hour of every day. Weld County already has a similar structure and El Paso shifted over to a similar model during the pilot. The State Hotline phone center received a flood of phone calls and they had to adjust quickly to the increased volume. They have been open to feedback and as responsive as they can be to Larimer County specific requirements.

General observations of the pilot include:

- Supervisors in charge during "After Hours" had an increased workload because they have to do some additional research when they screen the referral within two hours of the phone call.
- The Hub staff appreciated not having to work overnights, weekends or holidays for both safety and work-life balance reasons.



- There were 681 phone calls a week (on average) that were answered by the call center, 430 of them were received Monday through Friday, mainly between the hours of 5 PM to 7 PM. Community partners reported frustration at the length of time they had to spend on hold and on the phone calls.

The Hub hours will be changed to 8 AM to 7 PM at the first pay period in January in order to be responsive to community needs and to relieve some of the additional workload that had shifted to supervisors.

Commissioner Dougherty asked about the cost savings of this pilot. Thad reported that this shift provides a significant cost savings. It costs approximately \$5,400 for Prowers County to cover for the weekend as opposed to \$13,800 for us to staff the Hub for that time. During the weeknights, the cost to outsource the referrals is approximately \$9,600 as opposed to \$20,625 to staff the Hub overnight. Laura Walker added that these numbers do not capture the cost of frequent turnover and the cost of the learning curve as new staff is trained. We did not hire additional staff after turnover, so no reductions in staff were required. Employees are still on-site for a couple of hours and then “on-call” to come in if a juvenile screening is required.

Commissioner Donnelly asked about reactions from staff and partner agencies. Survey responses and individual responses were favorable. There is a child protection forum where we meet with law enforcement, the District Attorney’s office and community members who have offered useful feedback as well. Commissioner Johnson asked and received clarification on how the juvenile screening process relies upon the partnership with Community Corrections and what resources are available if needed. Laura Walker confirmed that we will proceed and continue to monitor how the community is responding to see if adjustments need to be made. Commissioner Dougherty Commissioner Donnelly applauded the Department having the courage to consider this pilot to save costs and yet always keep children safe.

#### **CCAP WAITLIST UPDATE**

Human Services Deputy Director provided an update for the CCAP program. There are always more working people who need subsidized assistance for child care than we have allocated funds to provide or vacancies for children in existing day care facilities. For the fiscal year starting July 1<sup>st</sup> of 2018 and ending June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2019, there is an allocation of just over \$5 million dollars. Exactly one quarter into the fiscal year, we have spent 26 percent of our allocation. However, spending increases for holidays and summer so we anticipate that we will outpace our allocation for this fiscal year. The wait list for this benefit started in September of 2016, and there were 199 children in 129 families on the wait list as of the beginning of October.

HB18-1335, A supplemental allocation from the Joint Budget Committee in 2018 only addressed some of the amount over budget and will not reduce the wait list. It is anticipated that no families will be added to the program for about another 18 months. Commissioner Johnson asked the breakdown of the children’s ages and Heather said it is approximately half non-school-age children and children who would be in school. A local task force that came out of Talent 2.0 is working at potential strategies to maximize possible options like pairing the Boys and Girls Club who has funding but no facilities and the United Way who has facilities but no funding.



HB18-1335 passed with a request for legislature to revamp the Child Care Assistance Program landscape. This was a request to find more sustainable ways to fund the program. There is a very active allocation committee looking at how this program is funded. Currently, a family must be at or below 185% of the poverty level in order to be eligible for the program. There is a proposal that a family will be eligible for an additional twelve months of CCAP if they make 85% of the state median income which is about 305% of the Federal poverty level. Currently, a family is eligible for an additional six months of CCAP once they meet the state median income.

There are currently two groups working on these proposals. One group is proposing a rule packet and their discussion is focused on the rates for child care providers being set by the state by the market analysis on July 1<sup>st</sup> of this year. The Operations Division Manager, Shannon Reiff, is on the allocation committee which is currently looking at how to get the allocation formula to better capture local data. This will be brought back to the State board of Human Services to promulgate those rules.

Commissioner Dougherty asked if the discussions were considering tailoring allocations and program rules to consider different circumstances required by the difference in cost of living between counties. Shannon Reiff indicated that the allocation committee is proposing a three-tier approach that would attempt to address those concerns. The State estimates we have a little over 3700 children who would be eligible for CCAP, but we are currently only serving 600 in Larimer County with the allocation we have. The Children's Campaign just put out the results of a study that indicate Larimer County has only one licensed child care opening for every two children who need it. Laura Walker committed to partnering with other counties who are underspent in their allocations to cover our overage as she is certain we will have one.

### **C-STAT DASHBOARD REVIEW**

The Colorado Department of Human Services tracks a number of performance indicators to determine how the Larimer Department of Human Services is doing. Laura likes to compare our progress against the other Big Ten counties and to check to ensure the Commissioners have no questions. The most recent report indicates Larimer County met 19 out of 25 performance indicators; whereas the Big Ten counties met 15 out of 25.

Commissioner Johnson asked how we went from 0 errors in 800 cases to 119 errors in 400 cases for the Food Assistance Payment Error Rate. Laura responded that the sample size makes a significant difference in the percentage rates. Laura believes there is a flaw in the automated tracking system, but she commits to having an answer back for the next Board of Social Services.

Commissioner Donnelly asked about the decrease for Department of Child Welfare Timeliness of Initial Response to Abuse Neglect Assessments. Thad Paul explained that this was a result of a few different factors including some data entry errors that were delayed in being corrected due to Trails Modernization and there were 1 or 2 issues that were directly related to staff issues that have been addressed. This is an important factor as it directly relates to safety for children.

### **DEPARTMENT PERFORMANCE REPORT**

Heather presented an overview of the department's client activity. Heather reviewed monthly average caseloads, program activity and complaint totals from August 1, 2018 through October 31, 2018.



During the 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter of 2018:

- The Food, Medical & Financial Assistance Program caseload has decreased by 12% to 60,515.
- Child Support collected over \$4,529,702 dollars this quarter.
- Children, Youth and Family received 1,512 referrals, 482 of which were assigned for assessment.
- We received six formal complaints during the 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter, one of whom was not our employee.

The decrease in Food, Medical & Financial Assistance Programs is 12%. Heather has asked Laura Sartor to provide more detail and she will report on that at the next quarter. There have been slight increases in Options for Long Term Care and Adult Protective Services. There was an increase in complaints this past quarter. One complaint involved the Social Security Administration and another involved a problem with Child Support in a different state. Another complaint came in through the State but it was actually against a caseworker from an outside agency.

### **STATE DATA SYSTEMS**

Laura Walker provided a colorful diagram of computer systems created and used by state agencies. Anything that is a blue dot was either built by or owned by the Colorado Department of Human Services. There are other systems on this diagram, owned by other agencies, that share data or otherwise interact with the blue dot systems.

There are a lot of good intentions on the page, but it is the result of a government structure that includes independent budgets and decision making for the different agencies. Colorado is one of only fourteen states in the country that is state-supervised but county-administered. This results in a completely logical desire for local control but an unfortunate potential to build silos.

This monster of systems is not designed to allow the systems to talk to each other. Counties were not at the table for critical decisions like timing, training and problems with the implementation of a new system. The Denver Post had an article on November 1, 2018 talking about the modernization of Trails. They had time-limited funding that meant they had to implement before the end of this year although they have been working on it for three years. The number of problems reported to the Office of Information Technology has tripled with this change and their response time has been delayed. They are not even done fixing errors in the system rolled out in June and they wanted to roll out the second phase before the end of January.

Laura is on a CHSDA committee that sent a letter expressing their disapproval and requesting to push back the implementation of the second phase. Representative Singer used an analogy saying that it is unacceptable since it is like 9-1-1 being inaccessible for sixteen hours. Hoping for a delay of the implementation of phase two and that a task force resolve outstanding state tickets requesting help with problems. Problems included having to redo work that had already been completed and not being able to find assessments that have been done already.

In the middle of all these problems with Trails, CBMS was transformed using a plan created outside of the existing governance structure of the Executive Steering Committee. Laura Walker testified with Commissioner Sharp from Arapahoe County in front of the Joint Technology Committee saying that there are too many things going on at one time. CHATS, Trails and CBMS modernization all being completed at the same time has caused problems. There are county people willing to be at the table



and be available to help in the decision-making and consider the timing of these major rollouts. OIT is doing a better job of listening since the Joint Technology Committee hearing and have asked for a charter for the Executive Committee. More people are paying attention and listening so the interest is to leverage the structure that is in place.

### **SYNERGY UPDATE**

Heather O'Hayre reported on the local system we are building in order to take into account the frustrations from the state systems that will use the data from those state systems and information in the document management system. Human Services is about one year into the three year agreement. Participants in the first project have provided good feedback and comments that will inform new projects. Currently working on how to define a client at a local level in order to be able to match a client in a program across the department. The program replacing ACT, a workflow tool for the Benefits & Community Support Division, is about halfway through and the first Child Youth and Family Services project is just starting.

Commissioner Johnson asked if other counties would be able to use our system. Commissioner Dougherty asked if other counties were doing something similar. Heather replied that Arapahoe, Douglas and Boulder have similar systems and Mesa is currently building one. Our system is different because of its connection to the document management system. Boulder has an interface but it is only after they have been processed and archived, not as the documents are being received. Laura added that this is a big expense, just under one million dollars for over three years, and since we take this kind of spending seriously we expect to see direct cost savings and want to report on it regularly.

For example, Options for Long Term Care has said they have reduced a day and a half of work for each of the three managers by automating twelve hours of work they used to create a report they sent to HCPF every month. The Commissioners asked about whether or not there is a potential to license or sell the product of this work. Laura said they had looked into it but it was determined that Larimer County would not be able to make a profit on it. We are open to offering the code to other counties but they would have to spend their own development dollars to strengthen the sharing and partnership that exists between Colorado counties already.

### **OTHER BUSINESS**

Commissioner Johnson asked about how Human Services could help or could benefit with Larimer County's entry into additional mental health services. Laura Walker explained that she was at the kick-off meeting with Commissioner Johnson and heard a lot about the gaps in services that affect families and youth. Human Services programs of child welfare, options for long term care and transportation for the elderly were called out as areas that need attention. Laura is hoping we can have a seat at the table for the technical board making recommendations for the priority of the dollars being spent and is trying to make our community partners aware of Human Services programs at issue.

### **NEXT MEETING**

Monday, February 11, 2019