

**Marathon County Social Services Board Minutes
Wednesday, October 21, 2020, 4:00 p.m.**

Attendance:	Present	Absent
Julie Bollmann	X	
William Harris	X	
Christy Keele	X	
Yee Leng Xiong		X

All board members present attended the meeting virtually via Webex.

Also Present: Vicki Tylka, Kelly Gross, Christa Jensen

1. Meeting called to Order by Chair Christy Keele at 4:02 p.m.
2. Public Comment – There was no public in attendance and, therefore, no public comment.
3. Approve minutes from September 16, 2020, meeting

Action: Minutes approved

HARRIS MOVED, KEELE SECONDED, TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF SEPTEMBER 16, 2020. VOICE VOTE REVEALED ALL IN FAVOR AND NONE OPPOSED. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

4. Educational Presentations

A. Child Support Program Performance Metrics for FFY 2019-2020

Kelly Gross, Child Support Program Manager, provided an overview of the child support program, its funding sources, and the federal and state performance standards for the program. Kelly presented results on Marathon County's performance metrics and answered questions. The Child Support agency has continuously improved its performance over the last decade. The benefit of that is not only for effective customer service, but also allows the county to receive additional federal match for the program.

B. ELEVATE - systems change grant: Status of demonstration project

ELEVATE stands for Empowering Lives through Education Vocational Assessment Training and Employment.

The purpose of the grant is to provide enhanced services that extend beyond employment issues. Previous focus in Child Support has been on fiscal/financial responsibility and maintaining employment. This gives us the opportunity to work together with parents in new and creative ways to help them reach their life goals. The grant focuses on quadrants that are working toward:

- Enhanced case management
- Enhanced child support services
- Employment services
- Parenting education and services

We have 51 enrollees formally in our program at this time. We have found that enrolling individuals and meeting the grant requirements is more time consuming than anticipated. Additionally, the pandemic has created obstacles to direct service in some cases.

In this five year grant, we have received \$150,000 for the initial amount for the year ending December 31, 2020.

C. Introduction of the Child Welfare Manager: Priorities for Child Welfare through 2021

Christa Jensen, Child Welfare Manager, provided the board a brief summary of her background and experience. Christa provided an overview of the teams within the child welfare unit including the vacant positions currently being recruited. Christa's current top priority is hiring to get these vacant positions filled. A second priority has been filling the gaps for services to children and families as a major provider has terminated their provision of services in Central Wisconsin. Development of a strategic plan around Family First Prevention Services Act is another priority. Christa answered board members' questions.

D. Overview of DSS staff participation in Marathon County initiatives addressing diversity

Christa touched on some of the key committees and areas in the social work unit where staff support community efforts in a wide variety of focus areas.

5. Items for Discussion and Possible Action

A. Racial disparity in the Child Welfare System: Scope of information and discussion to prepare for the Board.

Vicki asked what the board would specifically like us to present on this topic. Child Welfare in Wisconsin has historically seen areas in performance where minority populations are overrepresented. Some statewide and county specific data is available through the Department of Children and Families (DCF).

- DCF continues to have conversation about why we have racial disparity and what we can do about it.
- Economic Support benefits – demographic information.
- Employment and do we represent the diversity of the community as well.

Would these topics be on track with what the board would like to see? Supervisor Harris thought these were good things we should talk about. The Board wants to start with data, and learn more about challenges in the child welfare system, nationally and locally, what we are addressing or

hope to address, such as implicit bias and lack of understanding various culture's norms. Recommend creating categories for areas the Board wishes to explore further.

Announcements and possible items for next agenda:

- We experienced an increase in maltreatment reports when schools reopened which we expected.
- Question about how we are dealing with Covid (staff and staff working with clients)
- Presentation planned for next month's meeting about how we're supporting our staff through Covid.

6. Adjournment

There being no further items to be discussed **HARRIS MOVED, BOLLMANN SECONDED, TO ADJOURN MEETING. VOICE VOTE REVEALED ALL IN FAVOR AND NONE OPPOSED. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Meeting adjourned at 5:23 p.m.