

**ROCK COUNTY HUMAN SERVICES DEPARTMENT
PUBLIC HEARING MINUTES
Wednesday, July 11, 2018 - 6:00 p.m.
Room D/E
Rock County Job Center, Janesville**

Call to Order: Chair Knudson called the Public Hearing to order at 6:00 p.m. on July 11, 2018, in Room D/E at the Rock County Job Center.

Present: Board members present: Chair Brian Knudson; Sally Jean Weaver-Landers, Citizen Representative; Stephanie Aegerter, Supervisor; Vicki Brown, Supervisor; Kathy Schulz, Supervisor; Terry Fell, Supervisor; Shirley Williams, Citizen Representative; and Terry Thomas, Supervisor; Staff present: Kate Luster, Director; Tera O'Connor, Deputy Director; Sara Mooren, Administrative Services Division Manager; Jennifer Thompson, ADRC/Adult Protective Services Division Manager; April Heim, Economic Support Division Manager; Greg Winkler, Behavioral Health Division Manager; Lance Horozewski, Children, Youth, and Families Division Manager; County Board Chair Podzilni; and Jodi Parson, Administrative Secretary.

Chair Knudson welcomed everyone to the annual Public Hearing for the Rock County Human Services Department 2019 Budget. Chair Knudson asked Board members to introduce themselves and then he introduced the Human Services Director, Kate Luster. Ms. Luster introduced the HSD Division Managers. Chair Knudson stated that the Board and staff are here to listen to concerns as we plan for the fiscal year 2019 and are not allowed to respond. Ms. Luster welcomed anyone with specific questions to touch base with the Division Managers after the meeting.

Chair Knudson introduced the speakers in the order they signed in:

Speaker #1 – Dorothy Harrell, NAACP – Ms. Harrell stated her interest is with the school based Diversion program which is a partnership with the Beloit School District and Beloit Police Department. She has serious concerns about the makeup of the workgroup, as she feels that law enforcement is over represented and others under represented. She questions whether there are enough resources going forward to support the program.

Ms. Harrell stated Chief Zibolski attended only one of the meetings and the head of the SROs has left. The police are overly involved in decision making and part of every step of the process. She has seen too many instances where the police over rule the school and make an arrest even though the school says it can be serviced under the code of conduct. She has concerns this will continue.

Another concern is about the shifting of staff for this and not adding new HSD staff. She worries about the impact on staff if there is an overload on staff. There needs to be additional staff for this. She asked the Board to keep looking at this and continue to monitor and evaluate the program. At the last workgroup meeting they talked about barriers for youth and families to participate. Families need to

feel they can take advantage of this and if police are in every step of the program they may not see it as a diversion program. Madison Schools have gotten away from so many SROs in the schools and moved toward more social workers and psychologists. She feels Beloit should do the same. The more people from human services we can bring in to work with the students and the program would be the most beneficial.

Speaker #2 – Eunice Glass, NAACP – Ms. Glass agreed with Ms. Harrell on her comments about the School Based Diversion Project. Ms. Glass suggested cultural competency training for all teachers. She was a substitute teacher in the Beloit School District and feels that some youth do not realize what they are saying is getting them in trouble. If a child thinks one way and your culture makes you think a different way it doesn't work.

Speaker #3 – Chief David Moore, Janesville Police Department – Chief Moore offered appreciation for the Crisis Intervention team and the Human Services Department. This last year we made great strides with our issues of mental health within our county. Across the nation anywhere from 25% to 40% of police calls involved someone with mental illness. If you suffered from mental illness your chance of being shot by a police officer was 17% higher. These are astonishing numbers and we need to pay attention that.

Today in Rock County when an officer is called for service very often they will see a flag to be aware that the person they are going to see suffers from mental illness and will start thinking in those terms. Behind the flag often times there is a plan they can use to help with the situation. He gave an example of a situation that happened earlier in the day.

We believe avoiding a crisis event is the best response. This collaboration results in reducing responses from police officers, reduces the use of force by police officers, and provides better outcomes for individuals. The savings because of this are fewer mental health commitments and less people needlessly entering the criminal justice system. For years our varying disciplines worked independently but due to the vision of Director Kate Luster this collaborative has come together and excelled.

Speaker #4 – John Pfleiderer, Family Services – Mr. Pfleiderer stated he is the Executive Director of Family Services and was speaking on behalf of the Beloit Domestic Violence Survivor Center. He distributed a handout. The County historically has supported some costs for victims of domestic violence which is appreciated. He referenced data that has been tracked over the years on utilization of the facility and the difference the services make.

We want to do more than just provide immediate safety for victims and have more of an impact long term. We want to help with self-

sufficiency and help to keep them remaining free from domestic violence is also a goal.

The demands on the Beloit facility for housing have increased steadily and persistently over the last few years. Occupancy rate is over 100%. Other facilities throughout the state are at capacity as well. There is consideration of options to expand the facility but a 24/7 facility is very costly. There still is a need for these services.

Chair Knudson thanked the speakers for coming and sharing their comments. There were no further requests to speak.

Adjourn: The meeting adjourned at 6:15 p.m.

Jodi Parson, Administrative Secretary

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