

**Board of Social Services
MINUTES
May 11, 2020**

**Commissioners' Conference Room
Second Floor – County Administration Building
10:00 am – 12:00 pm**

In Attendance: Commissioner John Kefalas; Commissioner Steve Johnson; Commissioner Tom Donnelly; Linda Hoffmann; Laura Walker; Heather O'Hayre; Thad Paul; Shannon Reiff; Lindy Duvall. Via phone Janis James; Lori Metz; Janice Cannon.

A recording of this work session is available at: <https://www.larimer.org/bocc/commissioners-meetings/internet-broadcasts-commissioners-meetings#/ws/>

Introductions & Announcements

Commissioner Steve Johnson welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order. Director Heather O'Hayre asked if there were any additions to the agenda. There were none. Heather O'Hayre introduced Janis James as Deputy Director of Larimer County Human Services, Lori Metz as Aging and Adult Services Division Manager, and Lindy Duvall as the Director's Office Executive Assistant.

National Youth Project Using Minibikes (NYPUM)

Children, Youth and Family Services Division Manager, Thad Paul, provided review of NYPUM. NYPUM is sponsored by Honda Motor Corporation and has over 50 operational programs in the United States. It has been in existence nationally since 1969 and is an experiential therapy program for youth ages 10-17. Over 1500 young men and women a year are mentored by dedicated and caring adults, who are trained through a curriculum used by the Motorcycle Safety Foundation which provided program support and yearly certification. Started in 2000 as the first program nationally in child welfare, it was initially funded through an integrated board targeted towards reduction of out-of-home care and served approximately 60 youth per year. In 2012, the program transitioned to the Jacob Center and is now funded as a Core Service. The outcomes were evaluated through the CSU Social Work Research Center and Thad presented a Youth Self-Assessment at Program Completion of the Impact of NYPUM graph. The program runs a couple days per week after school and youth set goals for themselves and work with mentors to accomplish those goals to receive riding time. They are assigned a minibike to ride and maintain themselves. Thad read a story to the Board about a youth previously involved in NYPUM program who is now a caseworker for Larimer County Human Services. The next steps for the program are to bring it in-house by partnering with Risk Management to identify insurance options, working on securing riding and storage, naming a NYPUM Director and part-time certified instructors, and expanding prevention services. Commissioner Johnson asked if there was Forest Service Land to ride the motorbikes on. Thad said the facility currently being used Northeast of Fort Collins is closer, has a lot of land, and provides less noise pollution to the surrounding community. Commissioner Donnelly said a track at the Ranch would be a possible future site. Heather and Thad said they would inquire further with Jeff Green about using the Ranch.



Department Performance Report – 1st Quarter

Heather O’Hayre presented the 1st Quarter Department Activity Report and highlighted several areas within the data that are impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Children, Youth, and Family (CYF): In Q1, a total of 2,152 referrals were received and 933 were screened in for assessment. March data shows decrease in referrals due to COVID-19. There are currently 1076 child protection cases, which is about 20% lower than last year’s Q1 (1,215 child protection cases). Most child protection placements are in a Family-Like Setting, Independent Living Arrangement refers to placement for older children, and the ‘Other’ category refers to trial homes and other arrangements. The data reflected in the placement data reflect only those children for which the County has legal custody; therefore youth who are in temporary custody of kinship caregivers are not represented in the data.

Adult and Aging Services (AAS): In Q1, 497 referrals were received for adults, 108 referrals were assigned for assessment, 47 services were started for clients in adult protection cases, and the total amount of expenditures was \$6,730. There was an increase in referrals in March due to the population being the most at risk to COVID-19. Adult Protection Services (APS) received a lot of calls from other service providers whose facility would not allow them to care for the individuals. They were requesting APS to check-in with these individuals. Many of these did not result in a safety concern. There were 142 APS caseloads. Linda Hoffman asked about the significant increase in service expenditures in March 2020. AAS Division Manager, Lori Metz, explained the increase is due to when the invoice was processed by Accounting and not necessarily the dollars being spent in March. There were two significant environmental clean ups and support to a family filing for guardianship that occurred in January and February, but the invoice was not provided until March. Heather explained specific allocations for APS team and stated APS is on track to be underspent by the end of the year. Commissioner Donnelly asked if assigned for referrals means Human Services (HS) went into the home in-person and what is being done to protect physical health when going into the home. Heather answered yes, and she will address safety concerns in next agenda topic. Commissioner Kefalas asked about a specific adult hoarding case. Heather answered that going in and cleaning a house with hoarding issues is very expensive. Office on Aging (OOA) had 232 visits to long term care facilities, \$17,479 was spent on respite care grants provided to family caregivers, and the total expenditures delivering direct service for seniors through partner agencies was \$334,046. There was a 300% increase in consultations which is referred by facilities and from family members. Commissioner Johnson asked who initiates the need for the consultation if the senior is not getting visitors. Heather answered it is from the senior’s current facilities or from family members of the senior. Commissioner Kefalas asked if the Ombudsman program reaches out to skilled nursing facilities or nursing homes and if they also reach out to assisted living facilities and where the breakout is occurring. Heather stated the skilled nursing facilities reached out and she will look into this further. Options for Long-Term Care (OLTC) had a total of 850 assessments (new and redetermination) and the caseload for Q1 was 1,330.

Benefits and Community Support (BCS): For Q1, the total benefits issued for food assistance was \$7,764,553. There was a slight increase in SNAP benefits for March and a significant increase in April and May. This is not an allocation to HS, it is a direct pass thru. TANF benefits were \$1,040,209, which is an allocation to Larimer County. Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) had a total of 125 received applications. In March, all cases were removed from the waitlist and added to the program. Because of significant fiscal impact expected due to COVID-19, decision has been made to sell \$1,000,000 in CCAP to Boulder County to help HS recoup County match rather than go back into the State at closeout. Commissioner Johnson asked if HS will be underspent. Heather responded HS will be underspent in CCAP even with selling the portion to Boulder County and will expect to spend that portion next year.



Commissioner Kefalas asked what kind of jobs are being represented in those 59 applications for March in CCAP. Heather responded communication has been shifted to the community and messaging is being sent regarding benefits. First responders are among those who may qualify for benefits and, during the COVID-19 emergency, those applications have been triaged to ensure support is being provided. The total amount of child support collected was \$4,871,117. Child support collected during March and April are typically higher due to tax intercepts. The caseloads for food assistance were 11,645, financial assistance (OPA, AND, TANF) were 1,823, and child support were 7,251.

Operations: For Q1, \$21,583 was recovered through benefits recoupment, \$31,609 was recovered through federal tax intercept, and \$45,788 recovered through state tax intercept. There were 61 appeal hearings held.

COVID-19 Impacts

Heather O'Hayre and Shannon Reiff provided COVID-19 impacts on Human Services.

- **Workload Impacts of COVID-19:** There was a 38% increase in total number of public benefits applications from 2,528 applications in 2019-Q1 to 3,495 applications in 2020-Q1. For Colorado Works (TANF), there was a 57% increase in applications from 230 applications in 2019-Q1 to 360 applications in 2020-Q1. For food assistance (SNAP), there was a 52% increase in applications from 1,358 applications in 2019-Q1 to 2,068 in 2020-Q1. For Medicaid Applications, there was a 38% increase in applications due to an open enrollment period that went into place. From 1,310 applications in 2019-Q1 to 1,810 applications in 2020-Q1. For Child Welfare there was a 35% decrease in referrals from 1,327 referrals in 2019-Q1 to 868 referrals in 2020-Q1.
- **Continuation Plan:** 4-tiered staffing process was put into place. Communication to staff has been a priority and includes a guidance document that is shared with staff daily. All staff have been provided cloth masks from a local sewing group and made a purchase of surgical masks to provide to staff and clients. Creativity has been used to come up with different ways to reach families, youth, and seniors. Commissioner Kefalas asked if teams are still working on delivering food to those in need. Heather responded that 1,000 blizzard boxes were received by AAS and delivered food to seniors. A food pantry set up in Red Feather. Commissioner Kefalas asked if HS was collaborating with Volunteers of America. Heather responded yes. Linda Hoffman congratulated HS management team on creativity and diligence shown and stated communication used was some of the best in the County.
- **Q1 and April Fiscal Impacts:** County Administration Allocation: YTD through April is \$5,095,926 and the year-end projection (through June 30th) is \$7,305,327, which is an over expenditure of \$456,524. For the close out process, any underspent funds are available for surplus distribution to those counties who overspent. Over expenditures not covered by surplus distribution are paid out of fund balance. Heather stated we are always overspent in County Administration. Unsure we can be covered this year due to instability at the State level. CCAP Allocation: \$1,000,000 was sold to Boulder County. YTD spending is \$4,564,053 and the year-end projection is \$4,665,992. For the close out process, counties can buy/sell their CCAP allocation prior to close out. Any underspent funds are available for surplus distribution to those counties who overspent. Over expenditures not covered by surplus distribution can be covered by CCAP reserves or fund balance. Colorado Works (TANF) Allocation: YTD spending is \$4,996,064 and the year-end projection is \$7,166,002. For the



- close out process, counties can buy/sell their TANF allocation prior to close out. Any underspent funds are paid for out of the county's TANF reserves. Local emergency declaration activates TANF emergency policy so additional benefits can be paid out as a one-time emergency payment to families. OOA Allocation: YTD is \$2,115,619 and year-end projection is \$2,928,557. For the close out process, the State Unit on Aging determines each year what percentage of the funds can be carried over. Any funds over the carry over percentage are reverted to the State. Increase of funds due to COVID-19 relief. Due to COVID-19, carry over funds can be carried over in the full amount to be used within 18 months. Commissioner Johnson asked if these allocation lines will change in the current fiscal year with the legislature examining current year's budget. Shannon stated the reduction impacts would be affected in FY21. Commissioner Kefalas stated an emergency rule was passed which provided County's the option to waive the parent co-payment fee for Child Care Assistant Program and asked if this has been implemented. Heather stated this has been implemented and has reduced the fee in March, and waiving all parent fees for April, May and June. Commissioner Kefalas asked about the emergency rule that passed which allows more flexibility with virtual face-to-face contacts within child welfare. Specifically, he asked what is being done for those who live in remote parts of the County who may not have access to computers. Heather responded that families who do not have access to computers or phones would be met in person by the caseworker. Thad responded that track phones and data packages have been provided to families who cannot have virtual meetings. Commissioner Kefalas commended resiliency and adaptability the team continues to provide.
- **We are LarimerStrong-Video Presentation:**
Heather presented "We Are LarimerStrong" Presentation to the Board. This presentation was sent out to all staff. Commissioner Kefalas asked about Senior Access Points. Heather explained there's been a significant increase in their website and the Network of Care which is the tool the OOA uses. It is meant to be a "one stop shop" and the team has been able to reach back out via phone. Commissioner Johnson asked where the people receiving meals on wheels are being served. Heather answered there are multiple different strategies with entities across the County being used to ensure food is still being delivered. Commissioner Kefalas asked what the level of collaboration is with the Larimer County Farmer's Market and if people can use their EBT cards. Heather answered messaging is being sent to community that EBT cards can be used.

Other Business

None.

Commissioners requested an update on the COVID-19 long-term recovery efforts for the next meeting's agenda.

Next meeting August 10, 2020.

Meeting adjourned.