

FAMILY POLICY BOARD

Monday, September 9, 2019

Health & Human Services Building – Basement Auditorium

12:00 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Tita Yutuc, Sue Mathison, Tracy Puent, Jenni Loging, Ann Kappauf, Ashley Santolin, Stacy “Sassy” Smith, Mandy Bisek, Isaac Hoffman, Mary Kay Wolf, Jason Witt, Sharon Hampson, Jodi Widuch, Katie Berkedal, Hetti Brown, Heidi Odegaard, Bridget Todd-Robbins

GUESTS/OTHERS PRESENT

Fawn King - City of La Crosse Housing Authority, Amy Oliver – Principal from Hintgen Elementary School, Andrew Kiel – Boys and Girls Club of Greater La Crosse, Jenni Moris – La Crosse Area Family Collaborative Social Worker.

CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson Tita Yutuc called the meeting to order at 12:00pm

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

MOTION made by Jodi Widuch and seconded by Ann Kappauf to approve the July 1, 2019 minutes as presented.

Motion carried unanimously.

HUMAN SERVICES DEPARTMENT AND BOARD UPDATES

HHS Board Update: Sharon Hampson

No new updates at this time, the county board starts working on the budget in earnest next month.

HS Director Update: Jason Witt

- The Human Services lobby is undergoing some changes to be more in line with the Trauma Informed Care approach to services.
- In response to the child welfare crisis across Wisconsin driven by the opioid and meth epidemics, the 2019-2021 State Biennial Budget includes a \$25.5 million (approximately 36 percent) increase for county child protective services (CPS). These new funds come with the recognition by the Wisconsin Department of Children and Families (DCF) and counties that system changes need to take place within CPS to align the system with current needs of children and families it serves and best practices. The intent is to use the new funding as a bridge to improved practices and not to continue “business as usual.”
- The 2019-21 State Biennial Budget also includes a change where the State will fully fund county-administered crisis intervention services beyond certain maintenance of effort levels and also adds dementia services as a reimbursable crisis benefit. This funding can only be accessed by counties which collaborate to provide these services regionally. There is still a lot of detail to be worked out before it is clear what the opportunities and impact will be for La Crosse County.

Family and Children’s Section Update: Tracy Puent

- Remaining positions to be filled include three ongoing social workers and supervisor.
- School is back in session which results in an increase in referrals from the school district and a corresponding rise in workloads.
- The Family and Children’s Center has received funding flagged for families entering community response services. They will be hiring staff who focus on home events and early indicators that a child or family needs assistance. The goal is to be working with a prevention focus to assist families in accessing supports prior to their becoming involved in the formal system. Initially the service will be limited to Holmen because it is a small area in which the Family and Children’s Center feels a singular staff member can make an impact.

COLLABORATION PRESENTATION: Hintgen and Huber Collaboration

Isaac Hoffman, Fawn King, Jenni Moris and Amy Oliver provided a very informative presentation regarding the collaboration between the City of La Crosse, the County of La Crosse, the School District of La Crosse, La Crosse Police Department and the Boys and Girls Club in their efforts to improve the lives of children and families residing in the Huber neighborhood. They were able to use grant money from the Franke Foundation for the project. A full PowerPoint will be posted on the Family Policy Board site.

The project was initiated in that neighborhood and school because:

- The children at Hintgen Elementary School were displaying an increase in “carry-in” issues resulting in an accelerated level of emotional and behavioral referrals.
- There were an increased number of formal police calls for service
- There were high levels of referrals being made to Child Protective Services
- Children were being exposed to violence, traumatic incidents and toxic stress
- Families were living in poverty and struggling just to reach self-sufficiency

All these things meant that as soon as the children walked off the bus, they were expressing stress as a result of things happening in the neighborhood which was making learning difficult.

Community services were mobilized with the mantra of “Doing with not to.” Some of the focuses included:

- Increased security in the neighborhood to make both the school and the neighborhood feel safe.
- Neighborhood based events and activities to bring families and children together outside of school.
- Adding Neighborhood Resource Officers from the La Crosse Police Department, a full-time social worker from the La Crosse Area Family Collaborative and basing a Boys and Girls Club in the Huber neighborhood to provide a sense of consistency, safety, support and healthy recreational options.

Programming was provided throughout the 2018/2019 school year and last summer. They are now in year two of the project and are seeing a collective positive impact on children’s welfare. There has been an increase in the amount of calls for positive interaction and participation from the police department and a decrease in the number of reactive calls by police made to the neighborhood. There has also been a decrease in both the frequency and intensity of behavioral incidents at the school. Children are coming to school ready to learn. Almost every child in the neighborhood is signed up for a club activity and the community center is being used for more neighborhood events.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Essential Health Clinic is now Planned Parenthood of Wisconsin and has expanded services and hours of operation.

Quarter 4 Grant applications are due to the La Crosse Community Foundation by October 15th.

The Rebuilding for Learning Summit will be held on October 28th and themed “Know Your Impact.”

The Biker’s Against Child Abuse annual fund raiser is November 9th at All Star Banquets. People to cook chili are needed as are items for the silent auction and raffles.

ADJOURNMENT TO THE NEXT MEETING TO BE HELD MONDAY, OCTOBER 7, 2019, AT NOON

Chairperson Tita Yutuc adjourned the meeting at 1:00pm.

Approved: Monday October 7, 2019, Rachel Klistau, Recorder