

**GUNNISON/HINSDALE BOARD OF HUMAN SERVICES
MEETING MINUTES
October 18, 2022**

The October 18, 2022 meeting of the Gunnison/Hinsdale Board of Human Services was held in the Board of County Commissioners' meeting room located at 200 E. Virginia Avenue, Gunnison, Colorado. Present, either in person or via Zoom, were:

Jonathan Houck, Chairperson [ABSENT]
Roland Mason, Acting Chair
Liz Smith, Commissioner
Greg Levine, Hinsdale Co. Commissioner [REMOTE]

Joni Reynolds, Assistant County Manager for
Health, Human and Safety Services
John Cattles, Assistant County Manager
Melanie Bollig, Clerk to the Board
Other Persons Present as Listed in Text

CALL TO ORDER: Acting Chair Roland Mason called the meeting to order at 8:30 am, and noted for the record that Commissioner Houck would not be able to attend the meeting that day.

AGENDA REVIEW: There were no changes to the agenda.

MINUTES APPROVAL:

1. **June 21, 2022 Meeting Minutes – Moved** by Commissioner Smith, seconded by Commissioner Mason to approve the Gunnison/Hinsdale Board of Human Services meeting minutes, as presented. Motion carried.

CONSENT AGENDA: Moved by Commissioner Smith, seconded by Commissioner Levine to approve the Consent Agenda, as presented. Motion carried.

1. Approval for Intergovernmental Agreement and Statement of Work; Colorado Department of Human Services (CDHS); Gunnison/Hinsdale Board of Human Services; for consistent procedure and control over leasing computing equipment, software, service, and accessories through CDHS; Eff Date 11/01/2022, three-year lease cycle; \$23,403

PROGRAM UPDATES:

1. **Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP)** – Community Health Manager Margaret Wacker was present in the room to give a CCAP update to the Board; CH Mgr Wacker then introduced Cheryl Smejkal, also present in the room, as the new CCAP coordinator, stating that they were very happy to have her on board.

Next, CH Mgr Wacker presented the CCAP update, noting for the Board program changes in eligibility and criteria for payment. She outlined that the budget for FY 2023 would be increasing to \$299,802, and further explained that they were applying to the State to go off of an eligibility freeze, as currently only families who qualified for Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) or families with an open child welfare case could be added. They were hoping that Gunnison County could go from a freeze to a waitlist, prioritizing which families could go onto CCCAP assistance as soon as possible.

Commissioner Mason asked what was the reason for the freeze, and CH Mgr Wacker stated that they had been over-budget for a couple of years in a row, and so they went into a waitlist and then a freeze. Their petition to the State was to lift the freeze and be able to return to the waitlist process.

For Hinsdale County, CH Mgr Wacker reported a FY 2023 budget of \$25,594, a small increase over last year's budget. She noted that there had never been a freeze in Hinsdale County; instead, Hinsdale followed an open enrollment process.

CH Mgr Wacker included statistics on the current families and cases served in combined Gunnison and Hinsdale Counties for August 2022. She reported 23 current cases in August, with 34 children being served, and stated that for October 2022 they currently had 18 current cases, down from August.

The Board briefly discussed the number of families being served in both Gunnison and Hinsdale counties. CH Mgr Wacker pointed out that, even as families are able to come off a waitlist, they do not necessarily receive assistance right away as there are no childcare slots available for them at the time. At the request of ACM Reynolds, Ms. Wacker also outlined the difficulty in keeping teachers and then went over the stipends now offered as incentives for shoring up early childhood educators' retention rates.

2. **Pre-K (Coordinating Organization)** – Community Health Manager Margaret Wacker also presented this update. She highlighted that they were currently having a series of planning meetings with Gunnison and Hinsdale County stakeholders in order to begin planning for the Universal Pre-K roll out; October 13th had been the most recent meeting. She went over timing, stating that the Community Plan was due on October 31st – even though they did not know provider rates and requirements yet – and the Parent Portal for the application part was slated to open in January 2023. The Universal Pre-K program was slated to start in the Fall of 2023, for the 2023/2024 school year.
3. **Family First Implementation** – Child & Family Services Manager Marilyn Cheever presented the federal program, Family First, which was implemented on October 1st, 2022. She highlighted some of the changes, including needing to try and keep the children with their families if at all possible;

putting services in place within their homes to keep them with family here. Otherwise, they try to reach out to other family members who might be available and place them in as close proximity as possible. She noted two adolescents who had been placed with other family and were doing well now.

4. **Parenting Programs** – Child & Family Services Manager Marilyn Cheever explained to the Board that there are few services in Gunnison which are in the clearing house for the federal government – these types of programs will provide some reimbursement to the state if families are enrolled in them. She listed those that were, including Nurse Family Partnership (for very young children, usually birth up to 2 years), and Parents as Teachers, a program which Juvenile Services Director Kari Commerford is currently working on getting started. Ms. Cheever stated that several in the community would be going through training for the Parents as Teachers program; the program itself seeks to keep parents involved for up to two years, and would focus on families with children who were three to five years in age. She also noted an agency out of Denver which is providing multi-systemic therapy (MST) for families with older children; the program encourages parents whose children run away to get the aid of law enforcement and have them bring the child back home, in order to work on issues and resolve reasons why the child was leaving the home. CFS Mngr Cheever stated that these programs emphasize support for the parents in their parenting and coping skills, as often it is the parent who needs to change what they are doing, rather than the child.
5. **Child Welfare Services** – Child & Family Services Manager Marilyn Cheever reported on Colorado’s Chafee program, which provides assistance to youth currently and formerly in foster care – helping them successfully transition into adulthood. The state had recently added legislation requiring every county to offer the Chafee program, and Ms. Cheever highlighted that there was housing available in Montrose for those who would be aging out of the child welfare system; staff were available on campus to help youths with hurdles such as getting their GEDs or searching for jobs. Ms. Cheever noted that they will be working with this group to help two adolescents under Gunnison County’s care begin to work on transitioning through the Chafee program.

ACM Joni Reynolds briefly outlined for the Board some of the challenges and gaps that have been exposed during the implementation of the Family First program, such as: past services for families no longer available with a good substitute; lack of services available in rural communities; amount of time it takes to get things approved at the federal level, and; tightening of federal funds available to the state.

Commissioner Smith asked what allowances were being made for families with learning and mental disabilities. CFS Mngr Cheever answered that, if this is identified for any of her families, she would reach out to state experts to see what can be done to help support that family as much as possible. ACM Reynolds added that they also have some support in the clinical services area, with a nursing team to help children with overall health care, chronic issues and disabilities. She noted that this would be more case management, in trying to link these families with proper parental support as well as the health services.

NEXT MEETING: December 20, 2022. The Board confirmed December 20, 2022 as the next meeting date for the Gunnison/Hinsdale Board of Human Services.

ADJOURN: Acting Chair Mason adjourned the Gunnison/Hinsdale Board of Human Services meeting at 9:18 am.

Minutes Prepared By:

Melanie Bollig, Clerk to the Board

Minutes Approved August 15, 2023:

Liz Smith, Commissioner
On Behalf of Chairperson Houck (Absent)