

**Three Rivers Human Service Zone Board
Meeting Minutes
Three Rivers Human Services Board Room
Mandan
210 2nd Ave NW
March 20, 2025**

Meeting Call to Order:

- Dennis called the meeting to order at 10:06 AM

Roll Call:

Mandan: Dennis Meier, Jackie Buckley, Lori Flaaten, Rose Mary Lawson, **Absent:** Karen Rohr, Dawson Holle, and Heidi Peltz

Carson: Marty Meyer (Phone)

Fort Yates: Ken Snider (Phone), John Pretty Bear (Phone)

Others present: Jodie Leier, Jenny Wetsch, Mandy Garrett, Tracy Mertz

Approval of Agenda

- Moved by Ken Snider to approve the agenda seconded by Jackie Buckley. All in favor. Motion carried.

Approval of Minutes from February 20, 2025

- Moved by Lori Flaaten to approve the minutes from February 20, 2025, seconded by Marty Meyer. All in favor. Motion carried.

Review and Approval of March 2025 Bills:

- Lori Flaaten and Jackie Buckley came early to review the bills.
- Moved by Lori Flaaten, seconded by Jackie Buckley to approve the bills as presented. With a unanimous roll call vote the bills were approved.

Name	Roll Call	Bills Approved
Jackie Buckley	P	Y
Lori Flaten	P	Y
Rosemary Lawson	P	Y
Heidi Peltz	A	Absent
Marty Meyer	P	Y
Ken Snider	P	Y
John Pretty Bear	P	Y
Dennis Meier	P	Y
Karen Rohr	A	Absent
Dawson Holle	A	Absent

Budget Review

- Dennis went over February Financials. In February we were below budget by 1 1/2%.

- Dennis will continue to closely monitor our budget throughout the year.
- Our only concern and big unknown are the uncovered child placement costs that could come up throughout the year.
- We have a bill from DBGR that is coming due to an emergency PRTF placement exceeding the 10 days. We are working on getting a QRTF bed in Minot and we are waiting for an opening.
- We have a bill coming from PATH for \$3,000 a month regarding a case that is ineligible for foster care payment
- Next month may be a heavy month for uncovered foster care placement costs.
- May will be a 3 pay period month.
- May is also our recalc for this fiscal year.

Vince Gillette- Three Rivers Human Service Zone Tribal Liaison Report for February 2025

- There are approximately 50-75 SRST foster children placed in ND foster homes that Vince helps to facilitate visits.
- Standing Rock currently has 41 ND IV-E cases and 33 SD IV-E cases in ND Foster Homes and 15 in paid Foster Care placements.
- Vince attends ND IV-E and Tribal IV-E eligibility meetings. The meetings are about keeping cases current with court orders and paperwork, so the children don't lose their benefits.
- Vince spends a lot of time dealing with Medicaid payment issues for both ND and SD Foster children.
- ND Tribes FMAP available reimbursements are out totaling \$1,292,229.00 for SFY 24-25. The new requests for reimbursements need to be in by June 30, 2025.
- Vince reported the completed F-MAP for Turtle Mountain from July 2024 to September 2024 is \$260,000. There is an additional \$290,000 that can be claimed prior to June 30, 2025.
- Ft. Berthold reached out to Vince 2 months ago for FMAP assistance, but they haven't followed up.
- A Tribal council representative reached out to Dennis to come to the HEW committee to talk about reimbursements that are eligible to the tribe. We are in the process of getting a meeting finalized.
- Vince has offered the IV-E Assistance to Spirit Lake but haven't received a response.
- Vince continues to track the Indirect Expenses for Fort Yates for Jodie to report to the state.
- Vince did 10 Foster Care visits for SRST and 4 for TRHSZ in February. He also assisted in a transport pick up in Minot and brought back to DBGR in Bismarck.
- Vince explained the Keeping the Culture Alive class for Native Foster Children and Foster Parents is off to a slow start but seeing progress. The January and February classes were canceled. They are having trouble securing a location for the classes.
- Vince has taken on the project of updating the TCM (Targeted Case Management Billing). There have been numerous changes to what can be billed for, so he is working on sharing that information with the FC/IH team so that we can capture the most money available through reimbursements of Federal money. Every billable quarter of an hour is worth \$22.13, with a whole hour of reimbursable time being \$88.52. Currently we are averaging around 4-5,000 a month with a potential to reach \$10,000 to 20,000 a month. Tribes can benefit greatly from these reimbursements. Vince explained that the State already funds our programs with State General Funds, so anything we get in reimbursement will probably be withheld from the payments they give to TRHSZ. The advantage is we are replacing State General Fund monies with Federal Medicaid money.
- Dennis requested John Pretty Bear ask that Dennis and Vince be placed on the HEW committee agenda for next week.

Mandy Garrett – Income Maintenance/Eligibility Supervisor

The Stats shown on the attached paperwork show the difference between the Power VI System vs Spaces System.

Three Rivers Zone Office Information

- Current Openings: EW, I position is filled but we are waiting for a drug test and background check.
- **Medicaid**
 - Total Households: February 2025 - 2433
 - Total Individuals: February 2025 - 4527
 - Total Benefits: N/A
- **SNAP**
 - Total Households: February 2025 - 1277
 - Total Individuals: February 2025 - 3326
 - Total Benefits Paid: \$675.5K
- **LIHEAP**
 - Total Households: February 2025 – 286
 - Total Individuals: February 2025 – 84
 - Total Benefits: \$69.7K
- **TANF (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families)**
 - Total Households: February 2025 – 125
 - Total Individuals: February 2025 – 507
 - Total Benefits: \$56.6K
- **Childcare Assistance Program**
 - Total Households: February 2025 - 149
 - Total Individuals: February 2025 – 584
 - Total Benefits: \$185.1K
- **Call Center February Stats**
 - Total Calls Received: February 2025 – 21,998
 - Answered Calls: February 2025 – 17,165
 - Abandoned Calls: February 2025 – 4,045
 - Average Wait Time: February 2025 – 8 minutes
 - Average Talk Time: February 2025 – 6 minutes
- **Swim Lanes**
 - Group 4-CCAP/LIHEAP/MA/SNAP/TANF: Nothing to report.
 - Group 2/3-Workers: Nothing to report.
 - Overall, Que's have slowed down, and workloads are lower than normal.
- **Support Specialists (Statewide)**
 - Nothing to report. They are uploading data with the current date.
- **Foot traffic in the three offices has been monitored since May.**
 - Sioux County 183 in February.
 - Grant County 28 in February.
 - Morton County 347 in February.

Jenny Wetsch – Child Protection

See the attached Statistical information which was presented during the meeting.

- 85 total reports in February: 1 Reports in Grant County and 0 Reports for Sioux County.
 - 48 assigned as Full.
 - 2 ATP Assessments.
 - 37 Administratively Assessed or Administrative Referrals.
 - 0 Alt Response.
 - 1 Substance Exposed Infant (SEI).
 - 2 Child Sex Cases
 - 2 Prenatal Drug Cases
 - 0 Courtesy Interview Requests from other zones/0 Law Enforcement
 - 1 Conflict cases for another Zone
- The Goal is to close all 2024 cases by the end of March.

Tracy Mertz-Foster Care/In Home -

- See the attached statistical information which was presented during the meeting.
- Currently we have 80 cases.
 - 62 Foster Care
 - 18 In-Home Cases, ICPC, Courtesy Case Management & Home Study's
 - 30 Foster Homes/PATH
 - 3 QRTP/PRTF
 - 21 Relative Care
 - 8-18+
 - 0-YCC

Child Welfare Unit Updates

- We are down 1 FC/IH worker but have been approved to fill.
- Lisa Stymeist has been hired and started on Monday the 17th. She already has cases as she has had a lot of experience.
- FC Redesign is hoping to implement processes by the end of year or beginning of 2026.
- Interns are now paid \$20 an hour during internships.
- Training for Field Supervisors is going to be held with Tracy, Jen and Dennis going.
- There is Social Worker training in Fargo April 1-4 where several of our staff will be attending.
- If the "Mother's Bill" passes, Cheryl Thomas will come to speak to us.

Eligibility Redesign Update

- LIHEAP is moving to a year-round program.
- The Spring Symposium is May 13-15th in Bismarck. TBD who will be able to attend this year. Some staff will attend online.
- Mandy was asked to be on a committee to review the Redesign.
- The Redesign has 4 metrics:
 - Application Timeliness
 - Recertification time
 - Payments
 - Error Rates to not exceed 10%
- We are currently updating SNAP policy with the implementation date of April 1.
- Nationally there is a potential of funding cuts to both the program and staffing levels.

- Workers need to provide narratives for cases which will include training for old and new workers.
 - Will have a template.
 - Must have a narrative even if the case touch was minor.
 - We are to monitor the narratives.
 - Training is located on Peoplesoft with additional information on SharePoint
 - Goals are to prevent corrective action plans for the worker.

Zone Director Update

Legislative Update

- HB 1268 Mandatory Drug testing for parents of Foster Children. Mandates drug testing to be done by all parents whose children were removed for illicit drug related reasons and/or paraphernalia before unsupervised visits are allowed. Zone Directors are not in support of this bill. The department and zones are working on drug testing policy. There are numerous issues with this bill. Hoping for a do not pass.
- HB 1562 Mandated Reporting Bill (Schools want to know what the zones are doing when they report).
- HB 1095 CPS Liaison Bill comes from the Minot area because the school district being dissatisfied with the zone response and follow-up. A CPS liaison as recommended in the bill would be employed by the school and may compromise confidentiality of CPS cases. There are items such as Mental Health, DMV, Addiction, etc., that the school does not need to know. Directors are hoping that if this were approved, they would make the Liaison would be a zone employee.
- HB 1556 Relinquishment of parental rights. This started as a bill for adoptive parents. This would apply to children who were diagnosed with severe Mental Health and Behavioral Health conditions or have committed a violent crime or a sexual behavior against a family member whose parent is in fear for the family. This bill is expanded to all parents and would take away the responsibility of the parents and place it with the zones.
- SB 2112 Life Skills and Transition Center. Grafton still houses the most vulnerable DD individuals but would also allow us to use for some challenging placement children.
- SB 2362 Heart River Bill would have infants 0-18 months housed with the mother. This is also known as the "Bonding Bill". This passed 8-3 in the Senate Judiciary and is going to the ND Senate floor next week. This bill is supported by the directors. 11 Other states have done this and have found their recidivism is much lower.
- HB 1549 Supports the option of a grant for the D.O.C. to provide services in preparation for release back to society. Social Services would go out to the institutions and help the individual apply for EA services. This makes greater effort and support to ensure they are successful on release. This supports Native Americans in transition and will help with finding jobs, shelter and reduces the recidivism.
- HB 1012 The Department Budget Bill is to be reviewed next week and is looking to decrease the salary raises to 2% and 2% over the next two years.

Other: Gerard Kraft has been approved to represent Grant County as the community representative to replace Charles Steinkuehler.

Adjourn:

- Moved by Jackie Buckley, seconded by Rose Mary Larson to adjourn the meeting at 11:54 AM. All in favor. Motion carried.

Next Meeting April 17, 2025 – 10 AM, Mandan

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jodie Leier', with a large, stylized flourish at the end.

Jodie Leier

Fiscal Services

Three Rivers Human Service Zone