

**Wood County Human Services Department
Minutes of Public Hearing on 2018 Budget
August 16, 2017 1-2 p.m.**

Health and Human Services Committee members present: Donna Rozar, Brad Kremer, Dennis Polach, Marion Hokamp, Jessica Vicente, Tom Buttke

Others present for part or all of the meeting: Jo Timmerman, Wood County Human Services Department (WCHSD) Administrative Services Division Administrator; Jordon Bruce, WCHSD Norwood Health Center Administrator; Dawn Schmutzer, WCHSD Executive Administrative Assistant; Amy Sue Vruwink, US Representative Ron Kind's office; Pam Ironside, PIER Community member; Bailey Baver, citizen; Bill Clendenning, Wood County Board supervisor

Meeting called to order by Donna Rozar at 1 p.m.

Introductions were made around the room.

Donna reviewed the budgetary situation. There were five main points: 1) Levy limits only increase by amount of net new construction, 2) Health insurance premiums will increase, 3) Wage and step increases will account for roughly \$1.2 million of the HHS budget, 4) Use of debt, and 5) Capital projects: to borrow \$1 million for CIPs was voted down by County Board.

Exceptions for department budget increases include increased rent due to increased square footage in the River Block building and worker's compensation amounts.

Brandon provided overview of HSD budget. With Edgewater now under the HSD, the department budget is approximately \$40 million. With a 0% increase in funding, the HSD will need to cut \$1.2 million just to absorb the increased health insurance premiums and the wage and step increases. There are few revenue generating sources available. Cuts will need to be done to keep a balanced budget.

Public Comments: the following were comments made by members of the public present. Use of community partnerships and other funding sources were suggested.

Question about last year's over \$800,000 sales tax payback--where is that money in the 2018 budget?

Request for the breakout of how much of the budget in dollars is for wages, step increases, and health insurance increases. Request for a 5-year trend of percentage of wage increases for County employees. Last resort should be to freeze wages.

For the services users – if they can reach out to their local legislatures and County Board members, this may trickle up to State level and result in more funds for Human Services.

Question regarding staff turnover. HSD has lost good social workers and leaders lately.

Brandon addressed by stating Wood County has had less turnover than other counties. CCS may have a higher turnover due to the nature of the work. Wages may not be as

high as other counties; fortunately, we have other additional resources and supports in Wood County. We are fortunate that in 2017, the Department did not lose any Child Welfare Social Workers.

Psychiatry recruiting – shortage of psychiatrist and psychologist is an issue state-wide.

Jordon stated Norwood has been recruiting for two years. Various salary and bonus options have been looked at.

Edgewater issue – where does the public go to complain about how their family members are treated at Edgewater? There is a five year old issue that is still not resolved. Brandon and Jordon noted the new Edgewater Administrator can be contacted with any issues.

Can *Business After Hours* be held at Edgewater to let the public see the facility?

Discussion about future of Edgewater followed.

WCHSD does Family Preservation well. They promote services. Need to work on finding the gaps in service and address them.

Discussion regarding a budget survey being available on the Eau Claire County website took place.

State budget dollars for Human Services items are still unknown. Brandon did note that this next biennial state budget has some increases for Human Services in it.

The word “partnership” used many times today. This needs to happen. New ideas will be explored.

Love, Inc. – *Love, In the Name of Christ* is being headed by DaNita Carlson. This may be a possibility for a future partnership.

The Chair declared the meeting adjourned at 2:14 p.m.

Minutes taken by Dawn Schmutzer and reviewed by the HHSC Chair.