

**DAKOTA COUNTY
COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE**

Meeting Minutes

February 9, 2021

Boardroom, Administration Center and Videoconference

Call To Order And Roll Call

Commissioner Mike Slavik

Commissioner Kathleen A. Gaylord

Commissioner Joe Atkins

Commissioner Liz Workman

Commissioner Mary Liz Holberg

Commissioner Laurie Halverson

Commissioner Mary Hamann-Roland

Also in attendance: Matt Smith, County Manager; Jen Wolf, Assistant County Attorney; Marti Fischbach, Community Services Division Director; Colleen Collette, Administrative Coordinator.

Due to the local state of emergency and social distancing, Commissioners participated in this meeting in a hybrid manner, via both virtual and in-person. The Board meeting was conducted under Minn. Stat. § 13D.021.

The meeting was called to order at 9:00 a.m. by the Chair, Commissioner Joe Atkins.

Video of this meeting is available on the Dakota County [website](#). The audio of this meeting is available upon request.

Audience

The Chair, Commissioner Joe Atkins, noted that all public comments can be sent to countyadmin@co.dakota.mn.us.

As of 8:00 a.m. on January 12, 2021, none were received.

Approval Of Agenda (Additions/Corrections/Deletions)

On a motion by Commissioner Mary Hamann-Roland, seconded by Commissioner Kathleen A. Gaylord, the agenda was unanimously approved.

Consent Agenda

On a motion by Commissioner Mike Slavik, seconded by Commissioner Liz Workman, the agenda was unanimously approved.

4.1 Approval Of Minutes Of Meeting Held On January 12, 2021

4.2 Authorization To Amend Contract With The Link For Hotel Sheltering And Housing Search Services

WHEREAS, with the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, Dakota County began transitioning congregate emergency shelter for people experiencing homelessness to a hotel shelter model, bringing total shelter capacity in 2020 to 44 units above the pre-COVID census; and

WHEREAS, beginning December 1, 2020, Social Services has continued supporting 90 units of hotel shelter: 50 units with Matrix Housing Services, 30 units with Ally Supportive Services, LLC (Ally), and 10 units with The Link; and

WHEREAS, the Community Action Partnership of Scott, Carver, and Dakota Counties (CAP Agency), continued to support ten hotel shelter units for families through a state grant; and

WHEREAS, Dakota County's contracted street outreach provider reported that outreach contacts have increased by 83 percent between Quarter 1 and Quarter 3 2020 from 168 to 307 individuals served; and

WHEREAS, Social Services staff have been seeking ways to continue to support existing and new hotel shelter capacity to meet this growing need in 2021; and

WHEREAS, by Resolution No. 20-563 (November 17, 2020), the Dakota County Board of Commissioners authorized a contract with The Link for \$300,000 for the period of January 1, 2021 through December 31, 2021; and

WHEREAS, upon review and in consultation with The Link, it was determined the contract needed to start on December 1, 2020; hence, an additional \$25,000 was added to the contract for a total not to exceed contract amount of \$325,000 for the period of December 1, 2020 through December 31, 2021, with the County Attorney's Office review and approval as to form; and

WHEREAS, staff requests authorization to support an expansion of shelter from ten to fifteen hotel units with The Link for youth ages 18-24, and to add \$188,000 for a total not to exceed contract amount of \$513,000 for the period of December 1, 2020 through December 31, 2021.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, That the Dakota County Board of Commissioners hereby authorizes the Community Services Director to amend the contract with The Link for hotel sheltering and housing search services to increase the number of hotel units from ten to fifteen and to add an additional \$188,000 for a total not to exceed contract amount of \$513,000 for the period of December 1, 2020 to December 31, 2021, subject to approval by the County Attorney's Office as to form; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the contract contains a provision that allows the County to immediately terminate the contract in the event sufficient funds from county, state, or federal sources are not appropriated at a level sufficient to allow payment of the amount due.

Regular Agenda

5.1 Authorization To Amend Contract With Bluestone Physician Services, P.A. And Update On COVID-19 Testing And Vaccinations In Long-Term Care And Congregate Care Sites

Evan Henspeter, Social Services Director, presented on this item and stood for questions. The Board Committee asked for additional data on the percent of residents vaccinated in Long-term Care and Congregate Care settings.

On a motion by Commissioner Mary Hamann-Roland, seconded by Commissioner Laurie Halverson, the following resolution was unanimously recommended to the County Board:

WHEREAS, COVID-19 has disproportionately impacted Long-Term Care (LTC) and Congregate Care Settings in Minnesota and across the nation; and

WHEREAS, according to public health officials, the most effective method of containment in these settings is systemic testing and vaccination of all residents and staff, with appropriate isolation and co-horting for positive

cases; and

WHEREAS, Dakota County Social Services staff, in partnership with Dakota County Public Health and the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH), reached out directly to several providers with expertise in this particular service area; and

WHEREAS, Bluestone Physician Services, P.A. (Bluestone), who is currently contracted with MDH, was selected due to their capacity to provide these services in the short, required timeframe; and

WHEREAS, by Resolution No. 20-308 (June 30, 2020), the Dakota County Board of Commissioners authorized a contract with Bluestone to conduct COVID-19 Community Systemic Testing (CST), laboratory analysis of the specimens and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) training for the 160 LTC and 380 Congregate Care Settings located in Dakota County by utilizing Federal CARES Act funding in a not to exceed contract amount of \$1,000,000; and

WHEREAS, on December 1, 2020, the CARES Act funding ended but the need to test continued and with the pending approval of a COVID-19 vaccination, Dakota County initiated a new contract with Bluestone in a not to exceed contract amount of \$50,000 for the period of December 2, 2020 through December 31, 2021; and

WHEREAS, the contract was amended to increase the not to exceed contract amount to \$99,000 through existing Social Services Department funds until such time federal funds became available; and

WHEREAS, with federal funds being available now, staff recommends an amendment to the current contract with Bluestone to conduct COVID-19 CST, laboratory analysis of the specimens, PPE training and vaccinations for LTC and Congregate Care Settings located in Dakota County, on a fee-for-service basis, in a not to exceed contract amount of \$500,000 for the period of December 2, 2020 through December 31, 2021 with the option to extend through December 31, 2022.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, That the Dakota County Board of Commissioners hereby authorizes the Community Services Director to execute a contract with Bluestone Physician Services, P.A. to conduct COVID-19 Community Systemic Testing, laboratory analysis of the specimens and Personal Protective Equipment training and vaccinations for Long-Term Care and Congregate Care Settings located in Dakota County, on a fee-for-service basis, in a not to exceed contract amount of \$500,000, for the period of December 2, 2020 through December 31, 2021, with the option to extend through December 31, 2022, subject to approval by the County Attorney's Office as to form; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the contract shall contain a provision that allows the County to immediately terminate the contract in the event that funds from county, state, or federal sources are not appropriated at a level sufficient to allow payment of the amounts due.

5.2 Update On DakotaLink Transportation Pilot And Direction On Next Steps

Evan Henspeter, Social Services Director, and Robyn Bernardy, Transportation Coordinator, Social Services presented on this item and stood for questions. After discussion, the Board Committee recommended that staff cancel the contract with Hastings Bus Company and set up the use of Lyft to provide rides from Hastings to a location or a transit station within Dakota County. Further, staff was asked to return in four to six months with new data.

Community Services Directors Report

Marti Fischbach, Division Director, reported on several items:

- More youth and adults are seeking shelter during this severe cold weather and hoteling is above capacity. Madeline Kastler, Deputy Director in Social Services stated that she is in close, regular contact with Ally Street Outreach. She provided the Board Committee with their phone number: 612-875-9683 and indicated that the phone number and email to seek emergency shelter has been posted on the County's social media. Additionally, Ally is doing outreach to known camps and providing gas cards as well as working with police to help people get shelter at this time. Commissioner Atkins asked for a brief written summary to be provided to the Board following the meeting.
- Public Health received notification of the Strong Foundations Family Home Visiting grant in January 2021 with a deadline of Feb 5. Staff have applied for the grant with supports evidence-based models with the overall goal to align and streamline the Family Health program. The grant would run from April 1, 2021 through December 1, 2022 with a possibility to renew. If awarded, staff will return to the Board for authorization to accept the grant funds.
- As part of the SHIP strategy to increase smoke-free housing in apartment buildings, Public Health staff and their consultant from ANSR (Association for Nonsmokers MN) will be contacting the city of West St. Paul staff to assess interest in working on effective strategies. This new phase of smoke-free housing work will complement more than a decade of work promoting voluntary policy adoption with property owners/managers. This work is in the exploratory phase so staff will first propose collaboration with interested city staff to collect relevant data via resident and property owner/manager surveys. A flyer will be sent to the Board after the meeting.
- MICAH (Metropolitan Interfaith Council on Affordable Housing) has hosted a Legislative Breakfast for many years to build relationships with elected officials and highlight the importance of affordable housing. This year the event will be held virtually through Zoom on Fri, Feb 19, with a panel including Commissioner Holberg, Tony Schertler and Lisa Melquist (OPA) as well as others. A flyer was sent to the Board on February 2 and will be sent after the meeting as a reminder.

Adjournment

On a motion by Commissioner Mike Slavik, seconded by Commissioner Liz Workman, the meeting was adjourned at 9:51 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Colleen Collette, Administrative Coordinator
Community Services Division