



Official Proceedings of the Buffalo Bridges Human Service Zone Board – May 2, 2023

At 11:03 a.m., Zone Director, Mandi Freije called the regular meeting (via Teams Meeting) of the Buffalo Bridges Human Service Zone Board to order. Zone Board Members Steve Cichos, Gayle Nelson, Tracy Johnk, Allison Swenson, Tom Overn, and Shawn Olauson were present. Carla Johnson, Eligibility Worker, Christina Gillingham Child Welfare Worker, Wanda Larson, and Shannon Davis were also present.

Johnk made a motion, seconded by Cichos, to approve the presented minutes. Roll call vote taken. Motion carried.

Nelson made a motion to approve the presented vouchers, seconded by Johnk. Roll call vote taken. Motion carried.

Carla Johnson, Eligibility Worker was introduced to the board. Johnson told the board that she loves what she does as an eligibility worker, and said every day is different. Prior to working for Buffalo Bridges HSZ Johnson poured concrete.

Christina Gillingham, a Foster Care/In-Home Case Manager in the Child Welfare Unit was introduced to the board. Gillingham has worked for Buffalo Bridges HSZ for two year and was the Parent Aide for one year prior to becoming a Case Manager. Gillingham graduated from NDSU and is getting her master's in social work.

Freije talked about the increase of need for the Bridge Together Pantry. Freije told the board we had to limit use of the pantry to once a month and we have developed a check in process. Freije also told the board we are working on a 501C3 form, so we are able to petition companies for funds and have created a letter to seek donations from companies. Freije asked the board if they had any suggestions for stocking the panty. Swenson suggested the Lion's Club, Kiwanis Club and USDA. Johnson suggested contacting Crystal Sugar.

Freije filled the board in on office updates. One eligibility worker resigned, and we received an FTE position from Cass. Both positions have been posted and filled. Contractors have been hired to assist the Eligibility Call Center. This is going well and has shortened the wait time for clients. Julie Opp, Child Care Licenser retired March 31st but will be working as a temporary employee.

In other business, Freije told the board that legislative sessions wrapped up and the Zone Budget approved 3.75 million dollars for Zone salary equity. Guidance for this will be coming from the state. The fiscal year will switch from January to July, annual raises will now be given in July. An average of 6% was passed by the legislature and guidance from the state will be given on how this will be distributed to staff.

Freije also told the board that we have done our 2023 recalculation and requested the cell phone reimbursement increase from \$20.00 to \$40.00 per month. Johnk made a motion to approve the increase, seconded by Olauson. Roll call vote taken. Motion carried.

The **July 10, 2023**, Zone Board meeting will be held both in person and virtually through Teams.

At 11:57 a.m., Overn made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Johnk. Motion carried.

ATTEST:

Mandi Freije, Zone Director

Gayle Nelson, Secretary