

BENTON COUNTY HUMAN SERVICES BOARD
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
JUNE 16, 2020

The Benton County Human Services Board met in regular session on June 16, 2020 in the Benton County Board Room in Foley, MN with Board members Warren Peschl, Jake Bauerly, Spencer Buerkle and Steve Heinen present and Board member Ed Popp absent (excused). Call to order by Chair Peschl was at 9:48 AM.

Bauerly/Heinen unanimous to approve the agenda as written.

Heinen/Buerkle unanimous to approve the Consent Agenda: 1) approve the Regular Meeting Minutes of June 2, 2020 as written.

The next item on the agenda was Board consideration of a letter of support for Meridian Behavioral Health. John Seymour, Vice President of Development and Marketing at Meridian Behavioral Health, was present (virtually), to provide background on this request. He stated his request for a letter of support from the Benton County Human Services Board for a new 96-bed adult residential substance use disorder treatment center; this center would be located at 1485 – 10th Avenue NE, Sauk Rapids. Seymour stated that the proposed treatment center would serve an unmet need for services for adults residing in the Benton County/St. Cloud market area who suffer from a substance use disorder; key rationale to support the need include:

- Today, only 1 in 10 people who need treatment receive the treatment they need (will likely be amplified by the closing of Passages and “winding down” of Journey Home).
- Untreated substance use disorders costs Minnesota \$7 billion per year in health care and public safety costs.
- For every dollar invested in the treatment of substance use disorders in Minnesota, the state realizes a return of \$12.00 in health care, criminal justice and societal costs.
- Meridian Behavioral Health admitted 254 Benton/Sherburne/Stearns County residents into its MI/CD licensed residential programs in 2019.
- The completion rate for the programs that this new facility would model far exceed the state average, as well as most other providers throughout the state.
- This new proposed program will generate 70+ full-time jobs.

Bauerly/Heinen unanimous to approve a letter of support for Meridian Behavioral Health to open a 96-bed substance abuse program in Benton County, and authorize the Chair to sign.

Bob Cornelius, Human Services Director, reported that Benton County Human Services has received additional funding for Evidence Based Home Visiting Expansion Grant; the new monies will cover one Public Health Nurse at 100% (\$70,467). He explained that staff would like to use \$16,000 of these grant dollars to increase hours for two current positions from 35 hours to 40 hours—a Public Health Nurse and Community Health Specialist; the remaining grant dollars are slated to help fund the new Public Health Supervisor position. Heinen inquired about ongoing costs for the increased hours. Nicole Ruhoff, Community Health Administrator, confirmed that ongoing grant funds are available to cover the additional \$16,000 in costs each year. Buerkle/Heinen unanimous to approve additional hours (from 35 hours to 40 hours) for Public Health Nurse and Community Health Specialist.

Chair Peschl adjourned the meeting at 9:57 AM.

Warren Peschl, Jr., Chair
Benton County Human Services Board

ATTEST:

Montgomery Headley
Benton County Administrator