

WI BOS Board of Director's Meeting

August 4, 2020 1:00 pm

GoTo Meeting Webinar

1. The meeting was called to order by Jeanette Petts at 1:04 pm.
 - a. Members Present: Michelle Arrowood, Dana Baumgartner, Mike Bonertz, Duana Bremer, Kim Cable, Cheryl Detrick, David Eberbach, Michelle Friedrich, Angela Friend, Kathleen Fisher, Noel Halvorsen, Lisa Haen, Mary Jacobson, Casey Levrich, Jessica Locher, Jessica Mudgett, Jeanette Petts, Tara Prahl, Millie Rounsville, Wendy Schneider, Chandra Wakefield
 - b. Members Excused: Hannah Hamberg
 - c. Members Unexcused: Michael Etheridge, Ed Wilson
 - d. Staff Present: Carrie Poser
2. Approval of minutes from Board of 7/7/20
 - a. Motion to approve the 7/7/20 minutes made by David Eberbach
 - b. Second made by Kim Cable
 - c. No further discussion
 - d. All in favor
 - e. Motion carries
3. Kathleen Fisher presented the Treasurer's Report. Balance Sheet and Profit Loss Statement were reviewed ending June 30, 2020. There were no questions. Budget versus Actual was reviewed and explained. Question about legal and professional services. Kathleen will investigate the budget and numbers for that line item and report back. Registration numbers are lower which will balance out the conference fees being low.
 - a. Motion to approve the financial reports made by Kim Cable
 - b. Second made by Dana Baumgartner
 - c. No further discussion
 - d. All in favor
 - e. Motion carries
4. Adam Smith, the HMIS Director with the Institute for Community Alliances presented information and answered questions about the Homelessness Management Information System (HMIS) Request for Funding Proposal (RFP) for a new HMIS Vendor.

History/RFI

- a. Wisconsin began using Wisconsin Service Point (WISP) in 2001. In 2002-2003 it became a COC Project. The HMIS Governance is shared by the 4 COC's in the state of WI. Initially WISP was owned by Bowman Systems and was sold to Mediware in 2016.
- b. Five years ago, Mediware, now called Wellsky promised to complete an upgrade to Service Point 6 which has not occurred and there is currently a threat to the continued functioning of the reporting tool in WISP called ART.
- c. In 2019, a Request for Information (RFI) was released to determine what the market had available for HMIS Software Vendors and to evaluate how our current software vendor, Wellsky, compared to competitors. Since 2010, the HMIS Vendor market has shrunk as a result of the HUD Data Standards and Health Act. The nation is currently down to six different HMIS vendors, with four that can accomplish what is federally required.
- d. As a result of the RFI, a recommendation was made to do a formal RFP to include the information from the RFI and add demos and pricing structure.

RFP Process

- e. Demos were completed several months ago. ICA and the HMIS advisory board participated in the demos.
- f. ICA created a rubric for HMIS advisory board members to score the user end demos and reporting tool demos.
- g. ICA did not participate in the rubric scoring.
- h. Out of the four vendors reviewed, Bitfocus/Clarity Human Services scored first and Service Point/Wellsky scored last.
- i. The HMIS Advisory Board voted to switch software to Bitfocus with a goal of making the switch by May 2021.

Questions and Answers:

- j. Were reference checks completed? Yes, each vendor submitted references as a part of the RFP process. In addition, ICA interacts with other users from the other vendors. ICA has not heard anything negative about Bitfocus.
- k. Are there other people using Bitfocus? Yes, Nebraska transitioned in February 2020 which was bad timing due to COVID-19. At this time, the migration has occurred. While Clarity is more expensive, end users will have a better

experience. Most of the changes are on the back end. The goal is to make it as simple and painless as possible for the end users. The most significant issue with WISP currently is the reporting tool ART that will lose the capacity to function in the near future.

- l. Can you please describe the integrity of Bitfocus? Experience has been positive with receiving top quality customer support. ICA has had professional working relationships with staff at Bitfocus for over a decade. There is least a half dozen staff at Bitfocus that began employment after working in the HUD technical assistance field and some from Bowman Systems. Bitfocus has done a good job of hiring people with good customer service skills. ICA discussed their concerns with Bitfocus about longevity. At this time, as a young agency, Bitfocus does not intend to sell anytime in the near future like Bowman systems did, although we cannot predict what will happen in the future. In 2016, when Bowman Systems sold to Mediware it was a surprise that came out of left field and was not in the best interest of the users.
- m. What is your opinion about migrating during the pandemic? There will be no new software required, the bandwidth needed will stay the same, and the system will possibly be faster.
- n. Several board members were concerned about only receiving the HMIS Advisory Board Meeting minutes and letter from Adam Smith about the process. A request was made for board members to get a list of all the vendors that responded to the RFP and the pros and cons of each vendor. Adam will send the rubric document with the scores for each vendor to the board.
- o. As a member of the HMIS Advisory Board, Lisa Haen reported that the ICA staff did an excellent job of organizing the RFP process that included end user and reporting demos and thanked Adam and his staff for all of their hard work on a job well done. HMIS Advisory Board members spent a significant amount of time viewing and scoring the demos as well as making a final decision to choose Bitfocus as the new vendor. HMIS Board members took the process and final decision very seriously and understand the implications of transitioning to a new HMIS software vendor. BOS board members were encouraged to trust the process while making their decision.

- p. Have we received any feedback from the other WI COCs? Yes, Racine and Dane have both reviewed and approved the proposal. Milwaukee has a meeting in two weeks to review the proposal.
- q. Instead of a user fee could there be an agency fee or both? ICA has other systems where there is just an agency fee. There are up sides and downsides to both. We have low user fees right now. If we can have a different system without increasing user fees that would be ideal. If there is staff turnover you do not get charged extra since the billing occurs once a year. Question is what is the cost each agency would pay? As agencies grow and shrink over the course of the year it would be difficult to adjust.
- r. A concern was expressed about engaging in this process during a pandemic and hidden costs that don't necessarily come through in fees but user interface and user training. ICA absorbs those cost in the budget they do not pass those on to users. Unless there is an extreme change, the costs do not get passed onto users. ICA would not recommend a vendor that would 'nickel and dime' us even if the HMIS Advisory Board made such a recommendation.
- s. Do we have to run a specific operating system or browser that we will need to adjust for? None of the vendors will change the browser that users currently use and there will be no operating system changes or downloads. The different architecture of the software allows users to use various browser versions.
- t. Are we going to be charged training fees? No, the training will remain the same. ICA will not charge for training. Users would be charged only a user fee. End users will have a far easier learning curve because the system is more intuitive compared to Service Point.
- u. Kim thanked Adam for sharing the information and thinks it is important to take the decision of the HMIS Advisory Board and consider the increased expense. As Adam stated in his letter, they would negotiate the cost and that we need not worry about the first year because those are startup costs. The goal is to get the cost under \$200,000. It is important to understand that Wisconsin was the earliest state to adopt HMIS software which is why our cost is so low. The pandemic is to our advantage as we are saving office costs of \$10,000 and a request was made to the state increasing support by \$50,000 to \$75,000. The plan for year two and three seems solid while the first year is not palatable.

There is no intention for the Local Coalitions to absorb the increase in cost. If we cannot come to negotiated terms on cost, we would move on to the next vendor per the scoring.

- v. Adam provided clarification that the board is being asked to allow ICA to begin the negotiating process with Bitfocus and certain parameters could certainly be part of the decision.
 - i. Motion to approve up to \$325,000 for year one and \$200,000 for year two and three for the purposes of negotiating the contract and that Adam should come back to us for approval for ICA to move forward with negotiating with the new HMIS Vendor, Bitfocus made by Kim Cable
 - ii. Second made by Cheryl Detrick
 - iii. Further discussion
 - iv. All in favor as evidenced by roll call vote below
 - v. Motion carries

Coalition – Member	Nominated Director – Name	Vote
Brown	Noel Halvorsen	YES
Central	Wendy Schneider	YES
Coulee	Mary Jacobson	YES
Dairyland	Casey Levrich	YES
East Central	Ed Wilson	Absent
Fox Cities	Tara Prah	YES
Indianhead	Jessica Mudgett	YES
Jefferson	Jeanette Petts	YES
Kenosha	Lisa Haen	YES
Lakeshore	Michael Etheridge	Absent
North Central	Chandra Wakefield	YES
Northeast	Cheryl Detrick	YES
Northwest	Millie Rounsville	YES
NWISH	Michelle Arrowood	YES
Ozaukee	Kathleen Fisher	YES
Rock Walworth	Jessica Locher	YES
Southwest	Michelle Friedrich	YES
Washington	Hanna Hamberg	Not present for vote
Waukesha	Dana Baumgartner	Not present for vote
West Central	Duana Bremer	YES
WinnebagoLand	Michael Bonertz	YES
Additional Directors	Nominated Director – Name	Vote
HMIS Lead	David Eberbach	ABSTAIN
Lived Experience	Vacant	--
Domestic Violence	Vacant	--

Veteran	Angela Friend	YES
Youth	Vacant	--
Chronic Homeless	Kim Cable	YES

5. The revised EHH Monitoring Policy was presented by Carrie. The revisions were necessary as a result of the Department of Energy, Housing and Community Recourses (DECHR) no longer requiring the EHH BOS Certification. The revised policy applies to EHH funded agencies and includes monitoring and compliance protocols. A suggestion to take out the and/or in Part 2: Compliance, number 2, first bullet under to read:

A written notice will be sent to the agency, the Coordinated Entry SSO for the coalition (or CE Lead if there is no SSO), and the EHH Lead of the issue(s) raised, concerns in need of additional investigation, and any corrective action required.

- a. Motion to approve the revised EHH Monitoring Policy with the revision made by Millie Rounsville
 - b. Second made by Tara Prah
 - c. No further discussion
 - d. All in favor
 - e. Motion carries
6. Director Update – Carrie
- a. BOS staff have been doing a lot of work. Carrie has given them a lot of tasks above and beyond their job responsibilities.
 - b. Meredith is working on desk monitoring for 2020.
 - c. Ryan is facilitating a lot of trainings.
 - d. Leigh is working on all things related to grants. HAP contracts are out, and Leigh will learn how to complete and APR for the grant.
 - e. All staff are providing support to their assigned coalitions for the Summer Outreach Plans for local coalitions.
 - f. Staff is also working on the sheltering issue. They are collecting information about how shelters are operating and how data is being collected.
 - g. Carrie is working on revising the Fiscal policies, developing a grid on ESG CV Grants to help keep track of HIC/PIC and working on emergency contacts throughout the BOS counties.
 - h. Survey due August 10th. Wants to make sure people complete the survey to express needs in local coalitions.

- i. The comments for the Gender Identity Rule are due August 10th
 - j. Weekly meeting with EFS 6, Mike Basford and DECHR continues to occur as scheduled.
 - k. Interagency Council meeting occurred on July 22nd
 - l. Four COC's targeted conversations with different state departments; DHS about Medicare concerns, and WHEDA.
 - m. EFSP set-aside board meetings continue. Currently making sure agencies are spending down funds and that appropriate representation is happening.
 - n. Ryan and Carrie met with Impact 211, United Way of Milwaukee. They want to use the benchmarks in the Interagency Council Plan.
 - o. Ryan is currently on a call with DECHR training on BOS Coordinated Entry.
 - p. Carrie was asked to present at a conference that was rescheduled for next year.
 - q. Preliminary discussion with DEHCR about their intentions with the Gender Identity Rule. If the rule changes on the federal level what are the options for a State?
 - r. At the last HUD office hour meeting the NOFA was discussed. There will have to be something that occurs but there is not anything determined. Hoping at the very minimum we all just must complete a project application. The Grant Inventory Worksheet will be coming out soon. HUD must release the funding for DV as a side part of the process which we would have to do some work with.
7. August Meeting – Carrie
- a. The registration was sent out last week. Right now, we have a lot of people that paid but have not registered for the go-to-webinar.
 - b. Carrie will get a list of people that need to register for the webinar.
 - c. Carrie met with the presenter to plan the webinar.
 - d. Registration for Friday is just a webinar and there are currently about 78 people registered for the business meeting
8. Public Policy Report – Carrie
- a. Carrie sent several emails over the last few weeks regarding the money for rental assistance that is not being released. She encouraged people to use the links she sent to communicate the need for the bills to be approved. Carrie is offering her assistance to provide data to the State. Her intention is to reach out to the WI Senate and Assembly to encourage movement of the bills in September.

- b. CARES Act grant funds – Initial CARES money had funding for many different programs – WRAP, ESG CARES, and CDBG Funding. Carrie is talking about the HEROS Act that had a lot more funding for rental assistance that has not been approved by the federal funding.
 - c. The ESG CV Grant contracts are in process. Once we get the contracts it sounds like the funds are there and it should not take too long until we will be able to submit a payment request form. Round two of ESG CV funding is out there.
 - d. SSSG allocation is based on shelter nights which COVID has greatly impacted. Carrie is pushing to move away from shelter nights as a funding allocation method.
9. Time did not allow for Committee Reports
10. Other business
- a. Lisa Haen reported that in November there are quite a few board members terms that will expire. The process and deadlines for Local Coalitions to vote will be sent out prior to the November meeting.
 - b. Carrie asked members to let her know if they would be giving a committee report at the business meeting August 14th and to send her any items to be viewed on her screen prior to the start of the meeting.
11. The meeting was adjourned at 2:56 pm.
- a. Motion to adjourn made by David Eberbach
 - b. Second made by Jessica Mudgett
 - c. No further discussion
 - d. All in favor
 - e. Motion Carries

Next Meeting is scheduled for September 1st.

Respectfully submitted,

Lisa Haen, Secretary