

PROCEEDINGS OF THE MURRAY COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS MURRAY
COUNTY GOVERNMENT CENTER – SLAYTON, MINNESOTA
April 23, 2024, 7:00 a.m. SPECIAL MEETING

Pursuant to notice, the Murray County Board of Commissioners Convened with the following members present: Jackie Meier, Dennis Welgraven, David Thiner. Also present: County Administrator Carolyn McDonald, General Assistant Emily Ackerman, County Attorney Travis Smith, Sheriff Heath Landsman, County Auditor Treasurer Heidi Winter. Commissioner Lori Gunnink via Zoom. Commissioner Malone was absent.

DISCUSS THE CONTRACT WITH PRAIRIE LAKES YOUTH PROGRAM

The meeting was called to review the contract with Prairie Lakes Youth Program (PLYP) that was presented and approved on April 16, 2024. Michelle Buysse from Southwest Health and Human Services (SWHHS) was asked to join the meeting to help determine who should pay the bills and whose responsibility it is to place a child.

Michelle explained the secure detention placement process. This is when law enforcement or the County Attorney issues an A&D (Apprehend and Detain). Placement is then secured in facilities across the state that have secure beds. SWHHS will assist in making phone calls to help find a bed, but when SWHHS does not have custody of children, SWHHS does not have authority to place children and will typically just pay for the placement.

In a normal detention type placement, SWHHS typically just pays the bill. However, in this situation, it was a child protection intake that came to the SWHHS, and miscommunication occurred. Michelle was advised by the CP supervisor in Murray County that a child was being placed and contact numbers for placement facilities were provided to either the investigator or the sheriff. At that time, there were no bed openings, except for PLYP. The County Attorney and the Sheriff felt it was in the best interest of the County to move forward with a contract to ensure a bed in PLYP.

Michelle explained that for counties that need placements, it is often either the County Attorney, Sheriff, or the deputy involved with the case, who will contact Michelle or her associate. SWHHS will then meet with probation if the child is involved in probation and talk about placements or the long-term goals for the child as well as if the child is going to be staying or leaving the facility.

The Board discussed if this contract would provide security for placement in this situation. The contract states that if Kandiyohi County (or another member county) has a child that needs placement, Murray County can get bumped.

The Board then discussed how the process works for SWHHS to start covering the expenses related to the placement if Murray County gets out of the contract.

County Attorney Smith advised that the child in this situation has been ordered detained by the court, so it is the county's responsibility to provide placement for the child's detention. The only way to accomplish placement right now for the child is to have a contract with PLYP. He stated

that if SWHHS wants to take on the responsibility of providing the secure placement and paying for that is fine, but the County has the obligation by statute to provide the secure detention of the child.

Board Chair Meier stated the contract does not guarantee a bed even with the contract. The Sheriff received an email during the Board meeting from PLYP. The email stated that Murray County will always have bed and will never be taken away. Meier said that the contract does not state that. It states that there is no guarantee even with the contract in place. In addition, the contract does not begin until May 1, 2024.

The Board discussed that even if the county has the contract to provide the bed, why SWHHS would not still be financially responsible for the placement? Michelle stated that if the contract between Murray County and PLYP is terminated, then SWHHS would likely take over the financial obligation. The Board then discussed the option of SWHHS ability to reimburse the County for the payment of placement at PLYP, even with the contract in place. Michelle stated that SWHHS would pay while the child is in the facility, but if the child leaves the facility and the contract is not terminated, the expense then goes to Murray County for any days remaining in the contract.

The Board discussed renegotiating the wording of the contract, or to cancel the contract before it goes into effect. The Board discussed providing PLYP a notice that the contract will be canceled.

It was moved by Chair Meier to cancel the contract and have SWHHS assume financial responsibility. The motion died for lack of second.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:15 a.m.

ATTEST:

Carolyn McDonald, County Administrator

Jackie Meier, Board Chair