

Special Meeting of Dickinson County Board of Supervisors 11-7-19 4-6:15 pm Dickinson County Community Room

Topic: Mental Health Regional Re-alignment Discussion

Background: The deadline for counties opting to petition into existing Mental Health Regions from former contiguous regions to the Department of Human Services is November 15, 2019. Purpose of meeting was discuss the reasons for/against Dickinson County opting out of current Region- Northwest Iowa Care Connections (NWIACC)- and joining another Mental Health Region- Sioux Rivers.

Present at the meeting: Bill Leupold, Chairman of Regional MH Board and Chair of Dickinson County Board of Supervisors, Kim Wermersen, Tim Fairchild, Steve Clark, Pam Jordan- Dickinson County Supervisors, Dickinson County Assistant County Attorney, Lonnie Saunders ,Barry Anderson, Clay County Supervisor and NWIACC Board member, Mark Lootsch, Plymouth County Supervisor and Chairman of Sioux Rivers Regional Board, Kim Wilson, Shane Walter, CEO's of respective NWIACC and Sioux Rivers Regional Mental Health and Disabilities Services, Beth Will and Sue Duhn, Service Coordinators for NWIACC, Dickinson County Sheriff Greg Baloun, Kolette Delperdang, interested citizen, and members of the media; Steve Schwaller, Seth Boyes and George Bower.

Pam Jordan was designated as secretary for the meeting. It was verified that notice of this meeting was posted as required by the participating parties.

Kim Wilson, current CEO of Northwest Iowa Care Connections, gave out a map from the DHS website showing the 14 Mental Health Disabilities Service Regions in the State of Iowa as of July 1, 2019. The current rule is that counties in these regions may petition other regions to join with them if the petitioning county is contiguous to the border of that region. Receiving regions may accept or reject the application based on a vote from their regional board. Since the inception of this organizational map in 2014, regions have gained and lost counties for various reasons. The minimum number of counties a region can have is three.

NWIACC began as a 6-county region: Lyon, Osceola, Dickinson, O'Brien, Clay and Palo Alto.

Sioux Rivers began as a 3-county region: Sioux, Plymouth and Woodbury.

Since regionalization began in 2014, Woodbury tried to be a stand-alone county, but ultimately joined Rolling Hills, now an 8-county region. To remain viable, Sioux and Plymouth had to have a third county and Lyon County joined them after leaving NWIACC. O'Brien County has petitioned and been accepted to join Sioux Rivers by July 1, 2020. This leaves NWIACC with 4 counties. However, 3 counties to the East have expressed interest in joining NWIACC: Kossuth, Wright and Worth. Kossuth must join first because it is contiguous to Palo Alto. Kossuth, in fact, has petitioned to join, but been put on hold by NWIACC board thus far because of unresolved debt issues with its mental health fund.

Kim Wilson then presented handouts on "Options for Sustainability". The document outlines 5 possible scenarios of certain counties aligning with other regions in the near future. The analysis of factors for and against included population figures, per capita levy rates, fund balances, current core services and newly mandated ones, program offerings with budgets projected, service providers available, guesses about what the Iowa Legislature might implement, fund or not fund, in the 2020 legislative session.

In every projected scenario, it appeared that the current regional systems would likely be fiscally insolvent by 2022 if the Legislature infuses no new funds, does not allow levy rates to be raised or refuses to fund mandated programs such as Children's Mental Health.

Shane Walter, CEO of Sioux Rivers Regional Mental Health and Disability Services, outlined the merits of his region, citing factors that make Sioux Rivers an attractive region to join. He said Sioux Rivers has no debt, has a current levy rate of \$22.50 per capita (going to \$30.49 in FY 21), shares similar service providers, has contracts with Avera of Sioux Falls Behavioral Health, has "robust" jail diversion programs, telehealth options, in-school programs among other benefits.

Sheriff Greg Baloun gave details about transportation issues for clients that make staying in NW Iowa more cost and time effective for clients and his staff of drivers than having to travel to service providers East. His assertion was that 80% of jail residents need mental health services including counseling and medication monitoring.

NWIACC service Coordinators, Beth Will and Sue Duhn, also provided the Supervisors with documented projections of costs with different county configurations, with populations, budgets, reserves, per capita levy projections, regional personnel and a chart showing a comparison between NWIACC and Sioux Rivers of current service providers/ current programs, and those projected to be implemented. Other considerations are which county will be the fiscal agent for NWIACC after O'Brien leaves.

There are software difficulty issues between Tyler Systems and Solutions Systems when it comes to billings and accounts reconciliation. Dickinson County and O'Brien use Tyler, and Sioux County, the current fiscal agent for Sioux Rivers, uses Tyler. Clay County uses Solutions.

Chairperson Leupold asked for other comments: Barry Anderson advised to wait one year; see what the legislature does with I-WILL or levy caps. Sue Duhn projected that staying with NWIACC will likely cost us more to access services and procure services if the Region acquires counties to the East. If Dickinson County waits one year to realign, our options may be more limited and further compromise services to our local clients.

Supervisors thanked all in attendance for their time and effort. Consensus among BOS was to take all the information provided and study it until Tuesday November 12, when the topic will be on the regular agenda of the Dickinson Board of Supervisors.

Clark moved, Fairchild seconded to adjourn at 5:44. All ayes.

Submitted by Pam Jordan, Designated Secretary

