

**JEFFERSON COUNTY HUMAN SERVICES
BOARD MINUTES
April 14, 2026**

Board Members Present in Person: Joan Callan, Michael Wineke, Gino Racanelli, Steven Ganser, Pamela Abrahamsen, and James Braugher

Present by Zoom: Kirk Lund, Assistant Finance Director Tammy Worzalla, and Watertown Daily Times Reporter James Kuckkan

Others Present: Director Brent Ruehlow; Administrative Services Division Manager Brian Bellford, County Administrator Michael Luckey, Child and Family Division Manager Laura Wagner, Social Worker Jenny Witt, Social Worker Maggie Messler, and Officer Manager Kelly Witucki

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Lund called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m.

2. ROLL CALL/ESTABLISHMENT OF QUORUM

All present/Quorum was established.

3. CERTIFICATION OF COMPLIANCE WITH THE OPEN MEETINGS LAW

Mr. Ruehlow certified that we are in compliance.

4. REVIEW OF APRIL 14, 2026, AGENDA

5. PUBLIC COMMENTS

No Comments

6. APPROVAL OF MARCH 10, 2026, BOARD MINUTES

Ms. Callan made a motion to approve March 10, 2026, board minutes.

Mr. Ganser seconded.

Motion passed unanimously.

7. COMMUNICATIONS

No Communications

8. REVIEW OF THE FEBRUARY 2026 FINANCIAL STATEMENT

Mr. Bellford reviewed the February financial statement (attached) and reported that we are projecting year-end fund balance of \$60,504. This balance includes our carryover from 2025, including \$650,000 from our reserve carryover. We are, at this point, \$589,496 unfavorable to the budget when the reserve is excluded.

9. DISCUSS AND APPROVE MARCH 2026 VOUCHERS

Mr. Bellford reviewed the summary sheet of vouchers totaling \$933,274.72 (attached).

Mr. Braugher made a motion to approve the March 2026 vouchers totaling \$933,274.72.

Mr. Racanelli seconded.

Motion passed unanimously.

10. PRESENTATION ON CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION (CAP) MONTH AWARENESS ACTIVITIES

Child and Family Division Manager Laura Wagner introduced Child Protective Services (CPS) Case Managers Jenny Witt and Maggie Messler, who provided an overview of alternate care and Child Abuse Prevention (CAP) Month activities.

Ms. Witt reported that at the end of 2025, CPS had approximately 45 open cases, with 28 children achieving permanency. Permanency outcomes included reunification with a parent, guardianship, or termination of parental rights (TPR) with adoption. Of those children, 10 were reunified with a

parent, 8 achieved permanency through guardianship, and 10 through termination and adoption. Ms. Witt also highlighted increased collaboration with both internal and community partners, including Parents Supporting Parents, Family Teaming, Comprehensive Community Services (CCS) Department, Birth to Three, Children’s Long Term Waiver (CLTS), local schools, and other community resources.

Ms. Messler shared updates on CAP Month awareness efforts. Pinwheel gardens have been displayed throughout Jefferson County, including at the courthouse, Fair Park, the Collective in Watertown, and the Fort Atkinson Library. Community members were also invited to purchase their own pinwheel gardens this year, with 20 gardens sold to date. Additional fundraising efforts include the sale of Child Abuse Prevention clothing and additional internal activities.

Funds raised support children and families by providing items such as sports equipment, bedding, as well as gas cards to assist with transportation to visitations and medical appointments. Ms. Messler also noted efforts to strengthen partnerships with medical providers. A presentation by the CPS team is scheduled for next Tuesday to address questions related to documentation, confidentiality, and consent requirements when working with children in care along the medical continuum. This initiative aims to reduce barriers, particularly in ensuring children receive timely well-child visits, immunizations, and dental care when biological parents are not always available to attend those appointments.

CAP funds have also supported the purchase of technology to facilitate hybrid Family Teaming meetings and virtual visitation when in-person visits are not possible.

11. DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION ON NEW 2026 PROFESSIONAL SERVICE CONTRACT (CCS REGIONAL SERVICE ARRAY, INPATIENT SERVICES AND ADULT ALT CARE)

Mr. Ruehlow reported that we have six new service providers. (attached)

Mr. Lund made the motion to approve the professional service contracts listed.

Mr. Ganser seconded.

Motion passed unanimously.

12. DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION ON KINDNESS AND CARING ACTION AWARD

Mr. Ruehlow reported that there were five nominations for the Kindness and Caring in Action Award. This award recognizes an employee who has gone above and beyond in demonstrating kindness, caring, and compassion to the people of Jefferson County. Each year, two recipients are selected to receive a plaque and a \$500 award.

The recipients are as follows:

- Alysha Kratochwill, CLTS Support & Services Coordinator
- Ashley Torres, HSP Professional
- Jennifer Wendt, Psychotherapist
- Lori Brummond, HSP Professional
- Elizabeth Shropshire, Parent Coach

Mr. Lund made a motion to approve the recipients: Jennifer Wendt, and Elizabeth Shropshire to receive the Kindness and Caring in Action Award.

Ms. Callan seconded.

Motion passed unanimously.

13. DIRECTOR’S REPORT

Mr. Ruehlow reported on the following items:

- Mr. Ruehlow congratulated the County Board Supervisors on their re-election.
- Mr. Ruehlow shared that the County Board approved the hiring of a full-time Medical Director as an official Human Services employee last month. Previously, this position had been

contracted. He reported that one reference check has been completed and a second is pending. He anticipates being able to announce the selected candidate at next month's meeting.

- Mr. Ruehlow gave an update on space needs within Human Services. While the remodeling plans that were shared last year were not approved, space continues to be a challenge. County Administrator Michael Luckey has set aside funding for a space study to review the main building, Lueder House, and the Community Support Program (CSP) building and look at what adjustments can be made both now and as the department continues to grow.
- Mr. Ruehlow noted that last month it was reported there were zero errors in the Economic Support area, meaning there was no fiscal impact. Supervisor Callan asked which quarter that applied to, and Mr. Ruehlow confirmed it was for the last quarter of 2025 (October–December).
- Mr. Ruehlow shared a letter from DCF included in the board packet. He noted that over the years, several Jefferson County staff have been recognized through nominations for the Secretary's Putting Families First Awards. This year, Andrea Szwec, Supervisor of Parents Supporting Parents and Family Teaming, was nominated by one of her staff and was selected to receive the 2026 award. She will be honored at a ceremony on Monday, April 27.
- Mr. Ruehlow invited board members to attend the Employee Luncheon that will be held on May 20th at 11:30 a.m. at the Fair Park Activity Center.

14. ADJOURN

Mr. Ganser made a motion to adjourn the meeting.

Ms. Abrahamsen seconded.

Motion passed unanimously.

Meeting adjourned at 9:41 a.m.

Minutes prepared by:

Kelly Witucki
Office Manager
Human Services

NEXT BOARD MEETING

Tuesday, May 12, 2026, at 8:30 a.m.
Jefferson County Workforce Development Center
874 Collins Road, Room 103