# MINUTES

## Human Services and Veterans Services Committee Meeting

Wednesday, August 19, 2026-9:30am

Erlandson Building 1st Floor Conference Room or remote via Microsoft Teams

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1. **Call to Order**
   - Meeting called to order by David Strudthoff at 9:30 am

2. **Affirmation of Proper Public Notice & Disclaimer**
   - Jill Bender stated there was proper public notice
3. **Attendance**

Committee Members Present: Kay Stanek, Jean Klousia, Kathleen Sullivan-TEAMS, Greg Lawton, David Strudthoff, Alycann Taylor-TEAMS, Patrick Sullivan

- Committee Members Not able to attend: Jody Schroeder, Scott Champion
- Visitors: Charles Jacobson, Tim Hundt-Teams, Leddia Tellman- Teams, Crystal Jones- Teams
- Others Present: Jill Bender, Ashley Bean, Theresa Berger, Marsha Everson, Crystal Knoll, Nate Torres, Brook Strangstalien, Jeri Lynn Lindner
- Not Present: Brenda Anderson, Brenda Olson

4. **Approve of Minutes: July 15, 2026**
   - Motion made by-Kay Stanek Seconded by-Greg Lawton
5. **Audience to Visitors-none**
6. **Regular Business**

A. Veterans Services

Office Bills - None

Office Numbers – See attached sheet. Active Veterans listed 303, 52 completed fully up from 38 last month 64 finished on our side for now waiting on VA up from 55 last month. This leaves 187 claims in various forms of completion. We are booked out 4 weeks for appointments as well.

Office Notes

VA numbers YTD// The individual county numbers are not out yet and will more than likely come out by September.

- The Federal VA is trying to reduce the time it takes for applications being put in for claims. They are shortening the number of pages for the main service connection application 21-526EZ and the survivor benefits application 21-534EZ. This change should be in effect by December 2026. This will apparently cut the application time by 1/3. The 526 will go from 15 to 5 pages and the 534 will go from 20 to 7 pages. Note this will not have any effect on the time it takes for the VA to process and either grant or deny the application.

- For Wisconsin VA claims we sit at 8,380 pending claims with 908 of them over the 125 target days. This equates to a 11.1% backlog which is below the National Average of 11.6%

- Wisconsin claims take on average 77 days to completion with a 63.5% grant rate.

- Nationally claims average 87 days to completion with a 60.3% grant rate.

- Specific tracked claims by the Milwaukee Regional VA are ALS/ PTSD/ PACT Act with this year alone having 52 completed claims and 4 still pending with a 91.9% grant rate. PTSD 3739 claims completed 1,189 pending with a 79.7% grant rate and 12,911 completed PACT Act claims 3,640 pending and a 73.6% grant rate. Nationally only the numbers for PTSD claims have been posted with 928,815 completed 248,456 pending and a 70.5% grant rate.

- For appeals Higher Level Reviews are taking an average of 67.7 days to completion and Supplemental Appeals are taking 52.4 days to completion.

So, the big number being YTD October 1, 2025-July 31, 2026- $210,642,371 for total federal VA dollars coming into Wisconsin for Compensation Claims as tax free cash into our Veterans pockets.

- Cemetery Flag holders are in, and an invoice is being taken care of utilizing the Care of Graves Funding.

- Discussion of funding my 2nd part-time person with tax levy for the 2028 budget cycle. Determined that I should speak with Finance and bring this back to the committee with numbers.

**A.** Approval of Resolution for Veterans Services Budget Amendment

**B.** Human Services-Unit and Program Reports

### Western Region of Economic Assistance- Director

Bender gave the WREA report.

Total recipients for Vernon County were 5,430, Health Care only was 4,812, Caretaker Supplement Recipients 11. FoodShare Recipients 2,511. FS Benefit Issuance $496,517.00. WI Shares Child Care Families Served 32. WI Shared Child Care Children Served 55. WI Shares Child Care Subsidy Benefit Issuance $52,672.00.

The total number of recipients for the WREA Consortium was 54,927 for the month of July. Health Care only was 48,123 Caretaker Supplement Recipients 150. Health Care with FoodShare was 26,179, WREA FoodShare Benefits issuance was $4,413,389.23. WI Shares Child Care Families Served 374. WI Shared Child Care Children Served 598, and WREA Child Care Subsidy Benefit Issuance totaled $535,899.29.

### Clerical/Administration/Energy Assistance- Brenda Anderson

Bender gave the report.

Clerical/Front Office: Call stats for July total not available.

Economic Support:

Congratulations to three of our ES specialists in being selected for the Quality Assurance Team within WREA. Lori Ellis, Holly Starr and Lacy Moser. This team of six will concentrate on Foodshare quality control for Vernon County and the other seven counties within WREA.

WREA walk-ins for July: Front Office assisted 58 and ES Specialists assisted 3

Administration/Salvation Army:

Salvation Army Vouchers for July: rent 3, lodging 4, Utilities 9.

YTD Salvation Army Vouchers: Gas 4, Rent 7, Lodging 29, Disaster/Fire 1, Food 1, Utilities 34.

Season Stats: Total Households Applied for Energy Assistance: 1,035, Total Households paid for Energy Assistance 900 Total Households paid a Heat Benefit 897, Total Households paid a Non-heating Electric Benefit 892, Total Households paid a Crisis Benefit 245, Total Households paid an HVAC Benefit 68, Total Households paid a Water Conservation Benefit 15.

### Child Support- Brook Strangstalien

Strangstalien gave the report.

Performance for July. Caseload: 905; Court ordered performance: 89.17%; Paternity establishment: 104.19%; Current support collection: 81.82%; Arrears collection: 82.17%; Current Child Support Due in Vernon County in July $208,540.64 – CSA Collected $167,138.00.

### Family & Children's Services- Theresa Berger

Berger gave the report.

Berger reports there were 2 CPS reports screened in, and 11 reports were screened out. CPS Maltreatment was 1 for physical abuse, 1 for neglect, 0 for sexual abuse, 0 for emotional abuse and 0 for unborn child abuse. Berger reported that there were 6 alleged victims screened in, 18 allegedly screened out. 0 had a response same day, 0 had a response time of 24-48 hours, while 2 were within 5 business. There were 6 screened in-service reports for child welfare and 2 screened out. Screened in by service type Services intake Child Welfare 3 and Kinship 3. For youth referrals there were 0 JIPS referrals, 1 delinquency referrals, and 0 Truancy. Berger reported that there are 28 kids in Foster Care, 30 in Kinship Care, 3 in a Group Home and 3 in Residential Care.

Berger stated there were 9 kids in Targeted Safety Support Funds and 10 in Coordinated Services Team. Berger stated the caseload total was 57. Berger stated that there were 9 total assessments approved in July. 2 assessments were open and 7 assessments were closed.

### Long Term Support/Mental Health- Jeri Lynn Lindner

Lindner gave the report.

Lindner stated that in July: 28 children were receiving services in the Birth to 3 Program, 128 in the Children's Long-Term Support Waiver Program and 47 in the Children's Community Options Program. Lindner reported in July: 1 Emergency Detention, 11 Court Committed consumers, 6 MH Placements, 79 Comprehensive Community Services consumers and 43 Community Support Program consumers. Reported by Lindner 105 Adult Protective calls for information and resources, 9 Adult Protective Service investigations, 2 Guardianship referrals and 0 Emergency Protective Placements. There are 3 consumer in AODA Treatment and 73 Protective Placement annual reviews.

## Aging and Disability Resource Center of Vernon County

Bender gave the report

July 2026 Call Log total: calls 778, walk-ins 119

Dementia Care Specialist Report: Services 5, Care Mngt/Info 8, AFCSP referral 0

Community Classes and Events total attendees: 23

Elder Benefit Specialist Activities: monthly contacts 20, outreach 7, financial impact 239,026.00

Disability Benefit Specialist Activities: new client meetings 10, current client meetings 7, current open cases 56, current appeals 23, new applicants 4, approved/won cases 3. Monthly award of 4135.00 and backpay award of 0. Monthly financial impact was 284,335.00.

Transportation program provided 122 one-way rides by the Volunteer Drivers, 95 one-way rides provided by minibus, 49 one-way rides provided by handicap accessible minivan, 266 one-way rides provided by transportation program, 0 Vouchers, and 22 Ridership Days in Month.

Nutrition Program: Home delivered2507, congregate meals 989, for a total 3496.

Options Counseling: new calls 101, face to face visits 53, LTCFS administered 8, MA applications 7, enrollment 9, disenrollments 3, communities visited 11, facilities visited 9.

## Financial- Marsha Everson

Everson gave the report.

2026 Everson presented the Fund 80 at 55.73%, Aging Programs are at 50.70%, ADRC 55.96%, Mental Health Court Committed at 42.91% and State Mental Health Facilities are at 60.96%.

**C.** Human Services- General Report

## Review Human Services Voucher/Internal Transfers

Bender presented Internal Transfers in the total amount of $73.24. Bender reviewed department expenses with the committee. Questions on vouchers were answered. The monthly vouchers for Human Services for the month of July $672,897.33.

## Review Human Services Service Contracts and Amendments

Bender presented 2026 Purchases of Services Contracts for CCS submitted for August. Total amount of $330,000.

## Human Services Director's Report, Updates, and Announcements

Bender discussed that the Birth to 3 Program had annual compliance review and the determination was "met requirements"; STRIVE CCS had an onsite Medicaid review 7/27 and no deficiencies were issued and the program was re-certified for another two years. Bender discussed that it is Child Support Awareness month. Bender reviewed the legal invoices for the month for the dept.

D. Review and Approve Department Policies

5310 Grant Application

The Chairperson presented the approval for the 5310 Grant Application, motion was made by Patrick Sullivan to approve the 5310 Grant Application, Seconded by Greg Lawton. Motion carried.

Presented Records Request Policy and Procedures

The Chairperson presented Vernon County Child Support Records Request Policy and Procedures to be amended, motion made by Kay Stanek and seconded by Patrick Sullivan. Motion carried.

Open discussion on the Vernon County Child Support Records Request Policy and Procedures to be approved motion made by Patrick Sullivan and seconded by Greg Lawton. Motion carried.

7. **Agenda Items for Next Meeting**
    - Department presentations on 2027 Budgets
8. **Confirm Next Meeting Date**
    - Scheduled for September 16, 2026
9. **Adjourn**
    - Motion made by- Greg Lawton Seconded by- Jean Klousia

Submitted by,
Ashley Bean
Administrative Assistant