

**TUESDAY, JANUARY 27, 2015**

**APPROVED MINUTES OF THE  
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING HELD**

**STATE OF MINNESOTA)  
COUNTY OF DODGE)**

**COUNTY ADMINISTRATION OFFICE  
MANTORVILLE, MN**

**2015-02 C.O.W.**

The Dodge County Commissioners met in Committee of the Whole January 27, 2015, in the Commissioner's Room at the Dodge County Courthouse Annex, Mantorville, MN, at 4:30 p.m. CST. Chair John Allen opened the meeting at 4:30 p.m. CST.

Meeting Convened

The Chair acknowledged those present:

Those Present

Members present:     John Allen                     District #1  
                                   Tim Tjosaas                     District #2  
                                   Rodney Peterson             District #3  
                                   David Erickson                District #4  
                                   Steven Gray                    District #5

Members absent:       None

Also present:            Jim Elmquist                   County Administrator  
                                   Becky Lubahn                 Deputy Clerk

Semcac Executive Director Wayne Stenberg provided the Board with a Semcac update.

Semcac Update

Semcac serves the counties of Dodge, Fillmore, Freeborn, Houston, Mower, Winona and Steele. There are also limited services in Goodhue, Olmsted, Rice and Wabasha.

Dodge County has three representatives on the Semcac Board of Directors – Tim Tjosaas of Kasson, Neil Witzel of Kasson and Greg Peterson of Claremont.

Semcac's Dodge County locations were listed as follows:

- Head Start Center - 402 West Main Street, Kasson
- Dodge County Food Shelf /Contact Center - 20 East Veteran's Memorial Highway, Kasson
- Senior Dining - Sunwood Manor, Kasson
- Transportation Dispatch office - Daniel's Plaza, Kasson

Mr. Stenberg informed the Board that Semcac is looking into the possibility of building a new facility in an area that is being developed near Hardware Hank and Napa in Kasson. The City of Kasson has discussed options for continuing a street near city hall that would connect to the area in which this new facility would be constructed.

The Executive Director shared the following information:

## I. Core Programs in Dodge County

Semcac Update -  
Continued

### Energy and Housing

**Energy Assistance** - The Energy Assistance Program is a federally funded program administered through the Minnesota Department of Commerce. The program provides financial assistance to help with household winter heating bills. Both homeowners and renters may apply. A household must complete the application process to determine eligibility and the amount of their utility assistance. Financial assistance payments are made directly to the household's utility company. 278 homes have been served to date.

Mr. Stenberg noted that energy assistance is down 1%.

**Housing** - Semcac offers several programs to assist homeowners and rental property owners to fix up their home or property.

**Weatherization** - The Weatherization Assistance Program is a federally funded program that provides energy conservation home improvements to reduce energy consumption costs. Each home is inspected before and after work is done in order to ensure that homes are more energy efficient upon project completion. Homeowners are made aware of all areas of the home on which work will be completed. Improvements may include exterior wall and attic insulation, air infiltration and bypass sealing, and the testing, repair or replacement of the home's mechanical systems to ensure efficiency and safety.

**Home Energy Licensed Professionals (HELP)** – Provides energy audits with blower door testing and infrared scans. Lead testing, health and safety testing with a variety of energy and safety related improvements.

The Executive Director reported that Semcac has been doing a lot of lead testing.

### Head Start

**Center Based Services** - Children ages three-five attend a half-day (3.5 hour) or a full day (6 hour) program at a licensed center four days per week from September to May. Some of the Semcac Head Start locations are partnerships with other organizations or schools. Services include: learning activities, evaluations, medical, dental and nutrition services, and support through community connections.

**Home Based Services** - This program reaches families expecting a baby and/or children birth-five years. Services are offered year round with a home visitor coming to your home for 1.5 hours a week. Services include: parent support, education needs, sharing resources in the community, Head Start comprehensive service support, events to attend.

## Outreach & Emergency Services

Semcac Update -  
Continued

**Food Shelves:** Semcac's Kasson food shelf provides individuals and families with a variety of nutritious food and the opportunity to stretch limited household budgets. The food shelves are sustained by monetary donations, donations of food and personal care items. Donations are needed year-round.

**Family Homeless and Assistance Program** - This program is designed to decrease homelessness by providing one-time assistance with a rent or mortgage payment for households that need a short-term "bridge" until their financial situation is expected to stabilize. Participants must meet program and income guidelines and be able to financially sustain their housing payment after Semcac's assistance. Participants also agree to follow-up visits.

**Rural Housing Assistance and Stability Program** - This program provides information, referral, advocacy, and first month's rent and/or security deposit assistance to homeless persons. Participants must meet the HUD definition of homelessness and be able to financially sustain their rental housing after Semcac's assistance.

**Advocacy, Assistance & Financial Literacy** – Outreach Services staff at Semcac's Kasson contact center offers a personal connection for households struggling with financial hardships to access the agency's programs and services and other community resources.

Crisis assistance may help with motel vouchers, food emergencies, transportation, or other emergent needs that help sustain or create improved self-reliance of an individual or family. Clients receiving crisis assistance also meet with staff to establish a plan for stability.

## Transportation

**Bussing (Rolling Hills Transit)** - Bus rides are available for medical appointments, rides to work, daycare, to a local business, personnel appointments, senior dining site or even a Semcac Contact Center.

**Volunteer Drivers & Donation-Based Rides** - Semcac Volunteer Driver Program provides transportation for persons on Medical Assistance, Blue Plus and UCare to medical and dental appointments. This program also provides transportation to anyone who is 60 years and older to medical, dental or personal appointments as well as to senior congregate dining. The program allows for citizens to volunteer their time (using their own vehicle) in order to help meet the transportation needs of others in the community.

## II. Community Partnerships

Semcac Update -  
Continued

Community partnerships are a key part of the Semcac network. For over 48 years they have invested in the area and have gained the trust of the organizations that they work with. There are currently 755 different associations that are connected to the Agency. This list includes 153 for profit businesses where dollars are invested back into the local communities. Some examples are local newspapers, HVAC, grocery stores, radio, plumbing, auto services, restaurants, suppliers, food vendors, electric, refrigeration, creameries, gas stations, rental property owners, and more.

## III. People Served

In 2014 Semcac reached an unduplicated count of 29,369 people who received some form of service, with the largest demographic age being 22-44 years of age with 6,341 served. The next demographic would be people age 70+ with 6,024 seeking assistance.

Mr. Stenberg informed the Board that the demographics for people served over the last year have changed.

## IV. Dispatch Center located in Kasson

Semcac strategically moved the Transportation dispatch center to Kasson, Minnesota. All bussing and volunteer rides are now dispatched from one location. Semcac has since been able to branch their public transportation services further into Olmsted County. This decision effectively placed them closer to Rochester and prepared them to be part of Mayo Clinic's expansion into rural locations, "destination medical center". This will pave the way for additional ridership and Semcac will offer more support to those who need transportation who otherwise couldn't get to medical appointments. The location of the new dispatch center has proven to be a systematically effective decision.

## V. Transparent

Agency dollars, performance and activities are monitored by the Department of Commerce, Office of Economic Opportunity, Region V Head Start Association, MN Department of Transportation, Office of Population Affairs, Department of Employment and Economic Development, Department of Energy, Federal Emergency Management Agency, United Ways, MN Housing Finance Agency, Greater MN Housing Fund, local philanthropic organizations, political entities and other agencies who provide resources that are managed by Semcac.

The Board thanked Mr. Stenberg for the update.

Semcac Senior Services Director Debbie Betthausser discussed with the Board the Senior Dining Program. Ms. Betthausser informed the Board that the Senior Nutrition Program has been in Dodge County for 40 years.

Semcac Senior  
Dining Program  
Discussion

The Senior Services Director shared the following information with the Board:

Semcac Senior Dining Program Discussion - Continued

### Senior Services

**Meals on Wheels** - This program is for homebound seniors or those confined to their homes that are unable to prepare a balanced meal that are age 60 or older. Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) cards are welcome.

Commissioner Erickson pointed out that Semcac doesn't serve Meals on Wheels in Hayfield. The City of Hayfield handles meal service for their seniors independently and doesn't want assistance from Semcac for this service.

Commissioner Erickson wanted to know where Semcac prepares their meals.

Ms. Betthausen informed the Board that in 2014 Semcac had to make changes regarding where meals were being prepared. Four congregate sites were closed while others were consolidated. The congregate sites that were closed included: Houston, Wanamingo, Morristown and Lewiston. The Senior Services Director reported that Kasson meals now come out of Rochester. Ms. Betthausen noted that numerous updates were needed for the Kasson location therefore it was more feasible to move the distribution location to Rochester.

It was noted that Commissioner Tjosaas, who is Dodge County's representative on the Semcac Committee, was able to tour the Rochester facility. It was Mr. Tjosaas' opinion that it's a nice new building.

Ms. Betthausen reported that Meals on Wheels delivery in the Kasson area is up by 10%. Also noted was that this is a volunteer based program.

The Senior Services Director shared the following additional information:

**Senior Dining** - This program is open to anyone age 60+ and spouses. People enjoy eating in a congregate setting. No one is denied a meal because they are unable to contribute to a suggested donation. EBT cards are welcome.

**The Senior & Caregiver Advocacy Program** - focuses on supporting and empowering seniors, as well as caregivers, by addressing their individual needs and preferences so that they may remain living safely and independently in their own homes as long as possible. This program is for anyone age 60 and older, adults of any age who have disabilities or are on Medicare, family members who help elders with daily tasks.

Ms. Betthausen provided the Board with the following statistics:

Per the 2011 census, Dodge County has 3.4% of the 65 Year old + population in Region X of MN. Semcac serves 3.5% of its congregate meals and 16% of its Meals on Wheels meals in Dodge County. That reflects that Semcac provides a high percentage of their service in Dodge County.

The Board thanked Ms. Betthausen for the update.

The Chair adjourned the meeting at 4:49 p.m. CST.

Meeting Adjourned

**ATTEST:**

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**JOHN ALLEN**  
**CHAIR, COUNTY BOARD**

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**BECKY LUBAHN**  
**DEPUTY CLERK**

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**DATED:**