



BRIELLE BREDSTEN PHOTO

25 years of service to the county
Aitkin County Sheriff's Office Jail Administrator Karla White was formally recognized for 25 years of service with an award presented by Chair Anne Marcotte at the Jan. 22 meeting.

Health and Human Services briefs

- Accounting Supervisor Carli Goble said the HHS fund balance is \$3.9 million, nearing what it was in 2017. Year-end adjustments were not reflected, and Carli Goble expects only a slight change. There was a significant decrease in 2018 expenses for foster care since no children were placed in an institution or residential treatment. Out-of-home placement costs in 2018 were down \$342,051 from the same time of year in 2017. Carli Goble anticipates HHS expenses to come in under budget at 94 percent.
- HHS Director Cynthia Bennett discussed legislative topics including the health care access fund which is due to sunset in 2019, and integrated services and housing for behavioral health.
- New members were appointed the HHS Advisory Committee: Lori Chenevert, Cindy Chuhanic, Joel Hoppe and Cheri Danielson. Current members were reappointed: Kevin Insley, Penny Olson and Joell Miranda.

Aitkin County Board briefs

- The board approved the Land Department's request to enter into a contract with seven other counties and Pro West & Associates to purchase a computer software upgrade for its timber management programs. The cost is \$42,337 each county, to be paid over three years. Data collected from 2002 and beyond will rollover into the new program.
- The board approved the purchase of a WildKat Side Shift 60" rotary mower with 90" rear flail mower for \$57,142. Currently, there is an active state bid for the mower attachments, however there is currently no active state bid for a tractor replacement for Unit #394. The state bid for tractors is expected to be active sometime in February, at which time authorization will be requested to purchase the tractor. Engineer John Welle anticipates the overall cost to be under what is budgeted for the replacement in the 2019 Capital Equipment Replacement Program.
- The board approved sending a letter of support for Enbridge Line 3 to Gov. Tim Walz.

Investigation/ Chappy's Golden Shores in Hill City

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INVESTIGATION FINDINGS

- On Jan. 3, it was concluded that claims of abuse including a physical assault of a client diagnosed with cerebral palsy and cognitive dysfunction by three staff resulted in an intracranial hemorrhage, pulmonary embolism and death were substantiated. The client was allegedly struck in the head and face by a caregiver while another caregiver held the client down. A third caregiver observed but did not report the incident or intervene. The client was hospitalized for a brain bleed several weeks after the abuse, and died due to complications seven weeks later. A hospital physician said the determination of death was deemed as natural causes due to a non-traumatic brain bleed. He stated had he known about the prior head trauma from the abuse it would have "definitely affected the finding." He said there was potential that the trauma was related to the client's death. The three caregivers were still employed at Chappy's Golden Shores at the time of this investigation, according to the DHS. During an interview, the owner stated she was "there that day" and that no one hit the client.
- On Jan. 3, it was concluded that claims of abuse of a client receiving comprehensive home care for Parkinson's disease and anxiety at Chappy's Golden Shores facility was substantiated by the MDH. Three caregivers were alleged to have treated the client in a manner which was harassing and threatening, and one caregiver hit the client with a frying pan. The client's support and care team members indicated the client's treatment at the facility led to the recent decline of the client's health, according to the report.
- On Jan. 3, it was concluded that claims of financial exploitation and abuse of a client receiving comprehensive home care services for anorexia, depression, attention deficit disorder, self-harm and a significant history of suicidal tendencies was substantiated by the MDH. A caregiver allegedly exploited the client while promising gifts in exchange for work around the facility.
- On Jan. 3, it was concluded that claims of sexual abuse of a client who was confined to a power wheel chair by two caregivers was substantiated by the MDH. The client no longer lived at the facility at the time of the onsite investigation, and denied the allegations during an interview. However, the client previously admitted the allegations to several staff members shortly after the alleged incidents occurred, and admitted being "very intoxicated" at the time of one of the alleged sexual encounters.
- On Jan. 3, it was concluded that claims of abuse of a client who was confined to a power wheel chair by caregivers was substantiated by the MDH. The client told investigators the caregiver allegedly struck the client and prevented the client from promptly calling 911. Police officers said their investigation indicated the incident occurred, but criminal charges were not filed.
- On Jan. 3, it was concluded that claims of abuse of a client diagnosed with schizophrenia and bipolar disorder by several caregivers was substantiated. A caregiver allegedly struck the client in the head and treated him in a manner that was demeaning. The DHS reviewed the client's report to the Minnesota Adult Abuse Reporting Center, which indicated the caregiver would grab the client by the face and yell, swear and threaten the client if he didn't listen to staff. According to the report, the client has observed staff use methamphetamine while on duty. Another caregiver was alleged to use a phone she bought the client as a tool to manipulate him into not reporting abuse to the state or police. The client's support and care team members indicated the client was recently hospitalized for his mental health condition and has not yet returned to his mental health baseline as a result of the abuse he suffered at the facility.
- On Jan. 4, it was concluded that claims of neglect of a client by the facility due to medical errors were substantiated. The facility and its nurse failed to make physician-ordered medication changes to the client's medication administration record, failed to monitor and verify the client's medications were administered as prescribed, and failed to respond to the client's symptoms of illness in a timely manner. The client was subsequently hospitalized twice in three weeks due to the neglect, according to the DHS.
- On Jan. 4, it was concluded that claims of abuse of a client diagnosed with alcoholism, seizure disorder and anxiety by two caregivers were substantiated. The report states the client was treated in a manner that was harassing, threatening, and demeaning, including interfering with his ability and right to summon help via 911. The client said a caregiver allegedly bought him a phone and alcohol in efforts to keep him from reporting maltreatment he witnessed at the facility. The client's support and care team members indicated the client was recently hospitalized for suicidal ideation and has not yet returned to his mental health baseline as a result of the abuse he suffered.
- On Jan. 4, it was concluded that claims of neglect and abuse of a client diagnosed as developmentally disabled, major depressive disorder, borderline personality disorder, anxiety and a lengthy history of suicidal ideation were substantiated. The client was neglected when the facility failed to provide one-to-one supervision, which was required per the client's care plan. The client was also abused when the alleged perpetrator prevented the client from communicating with her care team, manipulated the client with bribes, and screamed in a threatening manner in the client's face. According to the report, ongoing abuse culminated in the client attempting suicide. A health practitioner reported she assisted the client with erasing the phone number and over 180 texts from the caregiver which included client responses of, "I'm not going to say anything. I won't tell."
- On Jan. 7, it was concluded that claims of neglect of a client diagnosed with traumatic brain injury was substantiated. The client was discharged from hospice services 17 days before he died. During an interview, a hospice physician said that, while the client was on hospice, the client's condition had improved. The client was completely dependent upon caregivers for any major body position changes. The report states the lack of care and response to the client's change of condition led to an increase in the size of a wound, caused increased pain and suffering for the client. Home health aides interviewed said the client was not turned as frequently as what was ordered by the nurse practitioner, and that he was often left in a recliner for much of the day without pain medication administered. During an interview, a hospital nurse said the client's condition was one of the most disturbing things she has ever seen. She stated the client appeared very dirty and completely neglected. She said this did not just develop over a day or two, and earlier treatment could have been sought. Another hospital physician said the client's wound was the most untreated, foul smelling wound he had seen. The lack of early intervention contributed to the client's death, according to the report.

Shutdown/ Food resource list available at front desk of the HHS building

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continued, the HHS Advisory Committee may have helped the community to organize additional food drives to stock pantries. She noted financial donations go much farther than actual food donations.

Public Health obtains a list of local pantries, Jessica Goble said. A food resource list is available at the front desk of the HHS building. Those who need help with food are encouraged to contact the Minnesota Food HelpLine at 1-888-

711-1151 or www.mnfood-helpline.org.

The shutdown also financially impacted businesses that accept EBT benefits who did not get re-certified in December of 2018.

Public Health Supervisor Erin Melz said WIC

programs are currently operating as normal, and will continue normal operations through April 2019. Melz said recipients may download the My Minnesota WIC App for updates.

Chief reports on 2018 Aitkin Police Department activities

BY LYNN MIZNER

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Mayor Gary Tibbitts and administrator Kathleen Ryan met with staff of the 2020 Census recently, and learned that the census will be hiring local people to help with conducting the census, and will establish a "complete count" committee to make sure everyone gets counted in the county.

The census staff for this area will be coordinated out of the Chicago office.

ADMINISTRATOR REPORT

Ryan reported that city council members have the city email installed on their iPads and phones. Ryan has transferred investments previously managed by Morgan

Stanley to Mass Mutual, the investment company used by Members Cooperative Credit Union.

Ryan has been working to tidy up the city's books in preparation for the closeout of 2018.

AITKIN PD

Police Chief Tim Catlin provided a year-end report of the 2,696 calls for service resulting in 1,017 incident reports handled by the department in 2018. Catlin said the department receives an average of about 10 calls per day.

In his report of accidents investigated, Catlin pointed out that some of the reduction in accidents last year is due to the success of the new roundabout.

The roundabout has sig-

nificantly reduced the number of traffic incidents at that intersection. Thirty-five deer-car collisions were reported since the city started maintaining a tally late in the summer of 2018; Tibbitts saw this as affirmation for the city's decision to host a special hunt this fall.

Some data collection is starting to be automated, traffic stops and warnings, for example. Collection of those data will be automated to make them more accurate and less onerous for the officers to record.

With regard to the School Resource Officer (SRO), Catlin observed that since the SRO has been in the school, the city police have had to write fewer tickets at the school.

The full report is available

Aitkin City Council briefs

- A draft food truck ordinance has been made available for review by the City Planning Commission.
- Council discussed the signage for the city park and the new park property.
- The Rocky Mountain Elk foundation was granted a charitable gambling permit.
- City Engineer Phil Martin will be working closely with Moore Engineering on this year's street improvement projects.

from the Aitkin Police Department.



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Air Force veteran William "Bill" Jason Stein awarded Quilt of Valor

Pictured: Bill's mother Terese, Bill's wife Sarah, Bill, brother Ben and father Bill Stein. Terese is a member of the Ripple River Quilt Guild who makes Quilts of Valor for Veterans as part of its community service projects.