

Price County Health & Human Services Board Meeting Minutes

Date: November 5, 2025

Time: 9:00 a.m.

Place: Courthouse County Board Room 101; 126 Cherry St; Phillips, WI 54555

Call to Order: Meeting called to order at 9:00 a.m. by Paula Houdek, Committee Chair.

Roll Call:

Members Present: Joe Baratka, Paula Houdek, Sally Huml, Robert Kopisch, Nicole Kulwicki, Suzanne Ocker (Remote), Patricia Stephan, Gerald Swenson

Members Excused: Dennis Wartgow.

Also Present: Sarah Reese Socha, Health and Human Services Director; Nick Trimner, County Administrator

Public Hearing 9:00 a.m. (time is approximate)

2026 Specialized Transportation Assistance Program for Counties (85.21 Wisconsin Statutes): Public hearing opened at 9:00 a.m. by Committee Chair Houdek. Chairperson Houdek read the legal notice: The meeting will take place in the Courthouse County Board Room 101; 126 Cherry St; Phillips, WI. All people interested in presenting evidence are welcome to attend. Written comments sent to the County Clerk and comments from the public in attendance will be heard. The 2026 draft application for § 85.21 aid may be obtained from Price County Senior Services; 104 S Eyder Ave; Phillips, Wisconsin. Written comments should be sent to: Price County Senior Services; PO Box 88; Phillips, WI 54555 and will be accepted for the record until November 4, 2025. Transportation to the hearing for the elderly and people with disabilities will be available. For more information call Kris Mabie, Senior Services Manager at 715-339-2158. *Times are approximate. s/Meredith Hueckman, Price County Clerk. Pc: The Price County Review (for publication October 23, 2025 and October 30, 2025) WCQM/WPFP Radio. No public comment. Hearing adjourned at 9:02 a.m.

Items For Discussion and Possible Action

- 1. Public Comment:** None.
Communications: None.
- 2. Vouchers – Krisan Bastil:**
Motion Kopisch/Swenson to approve the October 2025 vouchers in the amount of \$199,330.15.
Motion carried.
- 3. Minutes from October 8, 2025 Meeting**
Motion Kopisch/Swenson to approve the October 8, 2025, meeting minutes. Motion carried.
- 4. Public Health Unit – Tiffany Palecek, Susie Daniels**
Partnership for Success Grant Year 1 – Susie Daniels: A presentation was given and is on file, entitled: Strategic Prevention Framework-Partnerships for Success. Preventing Youth Alcohol Use in Wisconsin. The five rural counties selected for this project-Barron, Forest, Oneida, Portage, and Price- not only exceed the national average on various data points related to alcohol consumption, but also regularly exceed the state averages. Price has a five-year grant from September 30, 2024-September 30, 2029 Focusing on Underage drinking prevention and mental health for youth aged 14-21 years. The Youth Risk Behavior Survey from 2023 shows minors in 9-12th grade identified 33 percent used alcohol in the past 30 days and 17 percent of students reported binge-drinking. Rural Northern Wisconsin was identified as: a local culture where drinking is normalized; alcohol is present at various community events and activities; binge or heavy drinking are considered socially acceptable; and stigma exists toward those that do not drink alcohol. Local youth are getting alcohol from homes and/or siblings and taking it to rural areas such as ice shacks and hunting cabins to drink. Support provided includes: Coalition can Provide Campaign materials to Partners; Provide Liquor Locks; Support Afterschool Programs; Partner with Snowmobile or ATV

Safety Classes; create new policies; and work with key partners on a social host ordinance. Local teens in a focus group identified the following reasons for using alcohol: it helps them run away from their problems; gives a sense of euphoria; bad home life; depressed; to feel something/anything, to get away from the world; and it's an amazing feeling. Discussion on creating an ordinance addressing parental ability to serve minors alcohol at restaurants in the county.

- a. **Well Water Update from DNR – Tiffany Palecek:** Discussed the well water update from the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) on Polyfluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS). Testing was completed through the emerging contaminants scientists through the UWC grant and tested Price, Rock and Dodge. PFAS testing was offered to 40 Price residents and the 20 who responded were performed. Two were identified as high levels of PFAS. The DNR took care of the two and recommended not using their water for drinking or preparing foods and were eligible to receive home bottled water through the DNR for six months. Information was given to contact the DNR for further follow-up. There were a couple residents prior to August who had high levels of manganese, and they were referred for new wells. High levels of manganese can cause neurological problems.

5. **Aging & Disability/Senior Services Unit – Kris Mabie, Dawn Griesel**

- a. **2026 Application for 8521 Department of Transportation (DOT) Grant – Kris Mabie:** All Wisconsin Counties are eligible to receive these grants, and Price County is slated to be awarded \$79,898.00 of grant monies in 2026. It will go to cover four projects: the elderly and disabled transportation program (comprised of 6 volunteer drivers and 3 vehicles), BART bus in Phillips, BART bus in Park Falls, and BART bus in Minocqua/Woodruff. All expenditures and revenues anticipated for 2026 are listed in the project budget reports. Funds are also contributed to BART from municipalities in the amount of \$12,500 for Park Falls and Phillips. \$1500 was requested from Fifield and there is a meeting scheduled with Butternut on November 12th to request funding. BART also contributes per project. Motion Baratka/Swenson to approve the 2026 Application for 8521 Department of Transportation (DOT) Grant and for the Aging and Disability/Senior Services Manager to send it to state. Motion carried.
- b. **Award Contract for Nutrition Program RFP – Kris Mabie**
The 2026 Contract for Nutrition Program RFP was awarded to Phillips Café at \$5.45 per plate.
- c. **Senior Services Quarterly Report – Kris Mabie:** Presented the Senior Services Quarterly Report for July, August, and September 2025 including Nutrition, Transportation Program, and the Community Outreach/Program Coordinator. It is on file. The Strong Bodies program trained three new instructors to accommodate more participants. Tomorrow a gentleman from Madison will give a presentation on the Edmond Fitzgerald, and 41 people signed up.
- d. **NAC Update – Kris Mabie:** The Nutrition Advisory Council met on October 30th at the Peace Center in Park Falls and reviewed meal site statistics. Members discussed the 2026 suggested meal contribution, which will be going to the Council on Aging (COA) for final approval. Home delivered meals increased by a quarter. The COA will review that and make the final decision. Park Falls site substitute, Nancy Olson, took a different county position, and they were able to hire a different sub to train next. Many comments were received from individual sites.

6. **Economic Support – Jenny Schuh**

- a. **Quarterly Report:** The 2025 Third Quarter Monthly Estimate report for Economic Support was presented and is on file. Discussed the senior dining rules and costs as well as the status of SNAP funding/food benefits. There have been mixed messages from the federally funded SNAP food programming whether or not people will receive benefits in full, partial, or at all in November due to the government shutdown. SNAP funding has never been withheld or delayed due to a government shutdown.

7. Fiscal and Administrative Unit – Keri Hammond

- a. High-Cost Placements Reports:** The High-Cost Placement Reports for Children and Youth and AODA, 9 Year Expense comparisons, were presented and are on file. Children and Youth is 45% higher than this time last year; and behavioral health/AODA is 35% less than it was at this time last year. Both categories of funding are continuing on the same paths.

8. Director Report – Sarah Reese-Socha

a. Agency Updates:

Birth to Three was audited in August and they were found to be in 100% compliance, which is excellent. The Senior Living Expo was a huge success with around 120 attendees, 27 door prizes were awarded, public health administered 27 flu shots and 10 vital checks, one memory screen was given. Positive feedback was received from attendees and vendors. Looking into doing it again next year.

- b. Personnel Updates:** No new updates.

9. Next meeting: January 14, 2026, unless necessary in December.

10. Announcement and motion to adjourn to closed session pursuant to the exemptions in Wis. State Statute 19.85 (1)(f) for considering financial, medical, social or personal histories or disciplinary data of specific persons, preliminary consideration of specific personnel problems or the investigation of charges against specific persons except where par. (b) applies which, if discussed in public, would be likely to have a substantial adverse effect upon the reputation of any person referred to in such histories or data, or involved in such problems or investigations reasons require a closed session for the purpose of:

- a. General Abatement Order, Town of Ogema Property**

b. Return to Open Session

Motion Kopisch/Baratka to go into closed session at 10:15 a.m. Roll call vote. Yes (7): Baratka, Houdek, Huml, Kopisch, Kulwicki, Stephan, Swenson. No (0). Absent (2): Wartgow, Ocker (Remote). Motion carried.

Motion Kopisch/Baratka to go into open session at 10:52 a.m. Roll call vote. Yes (7): Baratka, Houdek, Huml, Kopisch, Kulwicki, Stephan, Swenson. No (0). Absent (2): Wartgow, Ocker (Remote). Motion carried.

11. Take action, as needed, on closed session items: No action taken.

12. Adjourn: Meeting adjourned at 10:53 by Paula Houdek, Committee Chair.

Respectfully submitted by Meredith Hueckman, County Clerk