Human Services Systems Modernization Advisory Council

Members:

Dakota County Commissioner Laurie Halverson, Dan Jensen, Dusty Letica, Christine Paltrow, Commissioner Tikki Brown, Commissioner John Connolly, Commissioner Jon Eichten.

Introductions and Opening Remarks

Introductions in order:

Commissioner Jon Eichten

Commissioner Laurie Halverson

Dan Jensen

Dusty Letica

Christine Paltrow

Commissioner Tikki Brown

Commissioner John Connolly

Council Business

Dusty Letica moved to nominate Laurie Halverson for Chair. The motion was seconded by Dan Jensen.

Commissioner Brown moved to nominate Jon Eichten for Vice Chair. Dan Jensen seconded the motion.

- Laurie Halverson was elected unanimously Chair.
- Jon Eichten was elected unanimously Vice Chair.

Council reviewed role, which is to provide recommendations to the commissioners of DHS, DCYF, and MNIT on "planning, prioritization, governance, financing, development, implementation, integration, replacement, and integration needs…"

Deputy Commissioner Hirsch provided an overview of Chapter 120, 2026 session laws/SF334.

MMB / Modernization Fund Overview

Margaret Oliver and Maddy Kennedy from MMB presented.

- The modernization fund is a vehicle for ongoing funding. It will not solve all problems in perpetuity but is a significant change to address the challenges in furthering this work.
- Human Services Modernization Fund Overview:
    - There are mechanisms to keep funds for a specific policy purpose. The fund is a dedicated resource for the modernization of IT systems. No additional undedicated money is available, but there is a possibility for additional money in future years.
- After other transfers are made, if the final GF balance is higher at the end of the biennium than EOS estimates then MMB must transfer funds to the Modernization Fund.
    - MNIT was appropriated $11.4 m for IT projects. The law outlines eligibility requirements. MNIT, DHS, DCYF, received additional funds for the Advisory Committee.
- DCYF received the majority of the one-time fund, most of the one-time funds are available until June 30, 2029.
    - GF Appropriations:
        - IT projects for counties: $10m available until June 30, 2031
        - Fraud Prevention and Detection: $10m available until June 30, 2031

County Priorities

Dan Jensen: This work was completed with a Steering Committee.

Impact Levels:

- Significant: Modern GUI or Scripting Layer for MAXIS to replace the green screen user interface with a modern interface, using human centered design.
    - One of the largest lifts.
- Major: Centralized AI-Enabled Policy and Procedures Manual Repository Run by State with Ability to Query.
    - Statewide repository made available counties.
- Major: Income, Asset, and Work Verification Software for Both SNAP/Medicaid Programs
    - Unified statewide verification process.
- Significant:
    - Automated MAXIS Ex Parte Processing
- Each Ex Parte processing takes 45 minutes for a worker to complete. Ex Parte processing uses 55-60 FTEs a year to do the manual process. Significant savings statewide would be realized if this were modernized/automated.
- Major: State-Funded/Run Data Warehouse/Data “Depot”
    - Counties are hopeful that this effort will be supported using the fund.
- Moderate: Automatic Case Note Functionality in MAXIS
    - MAXIS case notes require repetitive manual documentation.
- Moderate: SNAP Quality Assessment/Case Review Tool

    - SNAP error rate requires a more consistent approach to case review.
- Major: Simplify the MAXIS SNAP Panel
    - Payment errors because MAXIS does not integrate address, shelter, and utility updates.
    - Counties have taken action to implement a script as a workaround, but it is a system-wide change.
- Major: Modernize Time-Limited Recipient Coding Within SNAP
    - Manual process that is complex and vulnerable to missed actions and data entry errors.
    - The effort would improve payment errors.
- Major: AI-Powered Client Self-Service Tools
    - Provide clients 24/7 support to collect their information updates via Self-Service technologies.
- Not ranked:
- Update outdated automated notices in MAXIS and METS.
- State to host Caseworks (EDMS) used via 50-60 counties across MN.
- SSIS adult section that includes fiscal.
    - State/County Coordinated PRISM technology road map.
- Chair Halverson
    - SNAP Error rate: Complexities exist in the system that attribute to the “error” as well as issues on the client side.

DCYF Human Services Systems Modernization

Laura Haffield presented for DCYF

- A foundational value of DCYF’s is the Whole Family approach. This shows up in our technology work, in that we value:
- Technology that connects, including integrated systems that help families access the right services without repeating their story.
- Integration Layer
    - This integration layer is a set of tools that are built to retrieve and input data into our eligibility system of record.
    - This appropriation will fund the buildout of a web-based user interface for eligibility workers across the state.
    - It is a top priority with our local partners. It is our understanding that the counties would like all the human services policy manuals centralized and managed in one place.
- Expand Income Verification Technology
    - We’ll be expanding our income verification technology specifically for SNAP, and the other programs managed in MAXIS, with this appropriation.
    - Client-driven income verification delivers a higher rate of success in gathering uncommon or ‘gig’ income from the applicant. With the income sources in hand, our eligibility workers are best equipped to issue an error-free benefit.
- Participant Portal
- The launch of MNbenefits was a critical step forward in easing access to benefits for Minnesotans.
- Eligibility System Modernization Study

    - This one-time appropriation for DCYF will help identify if MAXIS can be modernized through current appropriations or should be replaced, and what other opportunities might exist for alignment with technology initiatives in early childhood, licensing, child support, child welfare and youth services.
    - We aim to synthesize prior studies and build a roadmap for technology modernization specifically for MAXIS.
- Rules Engine, Policy Engine, New Logic Layer
    - We received funding to improve the eligibility determinations and increase automation out of MAXIS.
    - Business Rules Engine can bring increased business agility to DCYF, specifically by providing quick implementation of policy.
    - DHS is working through a proof of concept for a Rules Engine with four different vendors.
- Statewide Electronic Document Management System (EDMS)
    - Documentation is a functionality gap.
    - A statewide Electronic Document Management system, state hosted and managed, is a solution and business capability need.
- We look forward to working with this Council to define scope, priority, outcomes, buildout options and opportunities to address this need.

DHS

Jeff Jorgenson presented.

- Modernization standard, our systems must help us deliver the mission and strengthen accountability.
- In Ch. 120, DHS has two asks to accelerate modernization work already underway. These efforts will bring closer alignment between DHS, MNIT, DHS and counties.
- DHS has existing county engagement paths through Modernization meetings, governance groups, ad-hoc workgroups. Ch. 120 creates clear pathways for modernization decisions and provides sustained funding for modernization efforts that move towards enhanced Service Delivery to achieve better outcomes for Minnesotans.
- DHS' Strategic Plan:
- 3 Outcomes: Helping Minnesotans Thrive, High-quality human services, build an inclusive sustainable DHS workforce.
    - Modernization is a means to achieve the outcomes.
- First appropriation is for $1.8M for a modernization team that DHS intends to use for a team shared with DCYF.
- The second appropriation is for MAXIS and METs. Together, these investments provide governance capacity and resources needed to advance modernization framework (see slide notes).
- METS Projects: DHS is working with MNIT and the vendor Merative to develop a list of potential METS improvements working with DHS workers, MNIT, and clients to gather improvements.
- The work ahead is substantial, but modernization is key. This is as much about change management as it is about technology. Some of these systems have been in place for decades.

- MAXIS Ex Parte rules - work already underway with counties and MNIT. Counties have identified this as priority, as has CMS.
- DHS plans to bring Ex Parte renewals to the Systems Governance Group later this month.

Discussion:

Commissioner Connolly: specificity and prioritization is helpful. How we do the work is a key issue. If we can talk with the counties on how best to move forward.

Christine Paltrow: What we maybe need to do as a next step is to bring all of these groups together because we each have our perspective on how to move forward. There are good intentions on all sides, but somewhere when the work is getting done, something is getting missed. How do we get better at understanding? We all have the same common goal to make services better for the residents of Minnesota.

Commissioner Brown: There is an opportunity to share more understanding. Also important, we have an idea of where we are and where we want to go. Does everyone have the same understanding and awareness? Keenly aware of the timelines to keep things moving forward.

Chair Halverson: What is the structure? Do we want to have metrics that we establish along the way. The goal of a shared understanding is very important. How do we check in to ensure we are walking away with a shared understanding?

Dan Jensen: What is our strategy to meet the goals?

Vice Chair Eichten: Appreciate the clear alignment and translate that into a shared strategy. We are securing more resources to help us align, communicate, and tie those goals to strategy. We don't want to lose momentum.

Commissioner Brown: How are we connecting across multiple enterprise systems? The consultants that Commissioner Eichten is bringing in can move us along,

Chair Halverson: Brining all these entities together is a new way of looking at our work.

Commissioner Connelly: For program integrity, the journey is still very real. It will be a lengthy path, and we have a long way to go. The 3 efforts outlined in Jeff's slide, we are 80% through the corrections. The deferrals of funding, we have had 3 of those, and they will continue withhold funding. It ends up with a year-long tale of effects. The One Big Beautiful Bill goes on for years. Though it wasn't on the counties list of priorities, it will continue to demand a decent amount of capacity from DHS.

Chair Halverson: To restate what I'm hearing, real specificity, agencies putting together potential solutions, states are experimenting.

- Do we want more presentations from counties, agencies, etc.?
- Approval process—do we want more presentations on the approval processes?
- As much clarity and transparency on how we connect across the enterprise.

- How do we work better across agencies? We are trying to break down silos.
- The need for program integrity.

Dusty Letica: We need to think and do differently. Continue the work and move forward. It would be easy just to stall out and wait for the new administration. Over the past year, the counties are being more involved in decisions and not just considered a check box. It is appreciated that we are being brought to the table to be a part of the solutions.

Vice Chair Eichten: Upcoming meeting, dedicating some time for Dusty Letica to present the child welfare project as a model.

Commissioner Connolly: There is forthcoming study on how we do the work to modernize more broadly.

Dan Jensen: It's difficult for the three of us to represent all the counties. There is a lot of alignment across the counties. The counties have done a tremendous amount of work to reach alignment on what is needed from a modernization standpoint.

Chair Halverson: We are going to continue to keep an eye on any upcoming legislation as we move forward to the next session.

Commissioner Eichten: We can coordinate with the cross-agency team to collaborate on the next meeting's agenda. The goal is to spend the time valuably and allow each of us to prepare for the meeting well. We're looking at a monthly meeting for the time being and certainly can adjust as we move forward. The external partner can help us with the charter. We can continue to do the work, without getting into a 6-month charter debate.

Meeting adjourned at 3:49.