

**WARREN COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS**

**COMMITTEE: HEALTH SERVICES**

**DATE: APRIL 23, 2010**

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**COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:**

SUPERVISORS SOKOL  
THOMAS  
TAYLOR  
PITKIN  
LOEB  
MCDEVITT

**COMMITTEE MEMBER ABSENT:**

SUPERVISOR CHAMPAGNE

**OTHERS PRESENT:**

REPRESENTING WESTMOUNT HEALTH FACILITY:  
BARBARA TAGGART, ADMINISTRATOR  
BETSY HENKEL, COMPTROLLER  
BRENDA HAYES, DIRECTOR OF NURSING  
REPRESENTING THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH:  
PAT AUER, DIRECTOR, PUBLIC HEALTH/PATIENT SERVICES  
SHARON SCHALDONE, ASSISTANT DIRECTOR, HOME CARE DIVISION  
GINELLE JONES, ASSISTANT DIRECTOR, PUBLIC HEALTH DIVISION  
TAMMIE DELORENZO, CLINICAL & FISCAL INFORMATICS  
COORDINATOR  
FREDERICK MONROE, CHAIRMAN  
PAUL DUSEK, COMMISSIONER OF ADMINISTRATIVE & FISCAL  
SERVICES/COUNTY ATTORNEY  
PATRICIA NENNINGER, SECOND ASSISTANT COUNTY ATTORNEY  
JOAN SADY, CLERK OF THE BOARD  
KEVIN GERAGHTY, BUDGET OFFICER  
SUPERVISORS KENNY  
MCCOY  
STRAINER  
TODD LUNT, HUMAN RESOURCES DIRECTOR  
DON LEHMAN, *THE POST STAR*  
CHARLENE DIRESTA, SR. LEGISLATIVE OFFICE SPECIALIST

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Mr. Sokol called the meeting of the Health Services Committee to order at 9:30 a.m.

Motion was made by Mr. McDevitt, seconded by Mr. Thomas and carried unanimously to approve the minutes of the previous Committee meeting, subject to correction by the Clerk of the Board.

Mr. Sokol announced that the next Committee meeting would be held at Westmount Health Facility. He noted there had been an article in *The Post Star* pertaining to the shortage of nurses at local nursing homes, particularly LPN's (Licensed Practical Nurses). He added the County-owned facility in Argyle, New York had spent in excess of \$80,000 to hire nurses through a nursing service to cover shifts.

Privilege of the floor was extended to Barbara Taggart, Administrator of Westmount Health Facility, who distributed copies of the agenda to the Committee members; a copy of the agenda is on file with the minutes.

Ms. Taggart requested authorization to charge off various accounts totaling \$116,052.88 as bad debt. She said there were nine accounts, seven of which were N.A.M.I. (Net Available Monthly Income) accounts and two were Private Pay accounts. She added the residents were

all deceased and had no remaining assets or family members. She stated unsuccessful attempts were made to collect on the outstanding accounts and she had been advised by the County Attorney to charge off the debt. She explained N.A.M.I. accounts were calculated with monies received from the residents investments, social security and pension incomes. She added Medicaid was billed for any outstanding balance above the amount in the N.A.M.I. account. She apprised family members often kept Medicaid funds which were owed to Westmount Health Facility. Mr. Loeb asked for further clarification on a N.A.M.I. account and Ms. Taggart explained when a resident was admitted to the Facility, they collected the residents investment, social security and pension income to offset the amount paid by Medicaid. She apprised sometimes family members were able to obtain the residents social security and pension income and often they did not pay those funds towards their relatives care. Ms. Taggart explained the Facility requested the income payments be transferred to the Facility but there was often a lag time with the transfer. Mr. Pitkin suggested they request the checks be written to both the client and the Facility and Betsy Henkel, Comptroller for Westmount Health Facility, responded the checks came in the resident's name and until the proper paperwork was completed it was not mailed to the resident at Westmount Health Facility. She added in some of the cases listed, the family had chosen not to sign the checks over to the Facility.

Motion was made by Mr. Pitkin, seconded by Mr. McDevitt and carried unanimously to charge off the various accounts totaling \$116,052.88 as bad debt. *A copy of the resolution request form is on file with the minutes and the necessary resolution was authorized for the May 21, 2010 Board meeting.*

Ms. Taggart requested to amend the 2010 County budget to increase estimated revenues and appropriations in the amount of \$144,201 to correct an accounting error in the salary codes which had not been corrected prior to adoption of the budget. She explained the purpose was to amend various nursing overtime and per diem salaries by amending the Unrestricted Fund Balance.

Discussion ensued pertaining to issues with the New World System.

Motion was made by Mr. Pitkin, seconded by Mr. Loeb and carried unanimously to amend the 2010 County budget as outlined and to forward same to the Finance Committee. *A copy of the resolution request form is on file with the minutes.*

Ms. Taggart requested a transfer of funds in the amount of \$16,824 between various accounts in order to balance the budget. She noted there were a variety of reasons for the transfers which were listed on the request form. Mr. Thomas questioned the transfer of \$13,205 from Salaries Part-Time to Salaries Regular and Ms. Henkel explained it was the salary for the full time Laundry employee who had previously been paid out of the part-time code. She said the employee had been listed as part-time but the Treasurer's Office had requested the employee be paid from Salaries Regular as she was full time and received benefits.

Motion was made by Mr. Loeb, seconded by Mr. Pitkin and carried unanimously to approve the request for a transfer of funds as outlined and to forward same to the Finance Committee. *A copy of the Request for Transfer of Funds form is on file with the minutes.*

Ms. Taggart stated a report on current staffing levels was included in the agenda packet. She added there was a vacant RN (Registered Nurse) position on the 7:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. shift and a vacant LPN on the 3:00 p.m. to 11:00 p.m. shift. She noted they were in the process of filling the two vacant CNA (Certified Nursing Assistant) positions on the 3:00 p.m. to 11:00 p.m. shift. Brenda Hayes, Director of Nursing, explained they were using three Per Diem CNA's, two of which she was hoping would fill the vacant positions.

Discussion ensued.

Ms. Hayes stated they held a job fair at ACC (Adirondack Community College) and BOCES (Board of Cooperative Educational Services) and very few RN's had applied for positions at Westmount Health Facility. She added most of the new RN's wanted to start their career at a hospital. Mr. Pitkin mentioned a possible relationship with ACC to assist in the recruitment of RN's and Ms. Hayes replied she had spoken with the Director of the Nursing Program at ACC who had shown little interest at this time. In answer to a question pertaining to the reason new RN's were not willing to take positions at Westmount Health Facility, Ms. Hayes responded part of the reason was the salary level. She explained many of the applicants were currently earning \$30 per hour and Westmount Health Facility had a starting base salary of \$20 per hour. Mr. Loeb asked if Westmount Health Facility offered an increased salary based on experience. Todd Lunt, Director of Human Resources, explained they had developed an RN II position at Westmount Health Facility which offered a slightly higher salary for those with two or more years of experience. Ms. Hayes explained the difference in salary between the RN and RN II position was approximately \$1 per hour.

Mr. Geraghty stated the nursing salaries at Westmount Health Facility had been increased two years ago in an attempt to make them more competitive. He suggested it might be time to revisit the nursing salaries to determine if they needed to be increased further. Paul Dusek, Commissioner of Administrative & Fiscal Services/County Attorney, advised if there was a desire to research the salaries of the nursing staff at Westmount Health Facility, Mr. Lunt would need to work with Ms. Taggart and Ms. Hayes to complete a study. Mr. Sokol said part of the enticement for people to work at the County were the benefits and longevity and with the elimination of longevity for new hires it was becoming more difficult to fill vacant positions. Ms. Hayes noted the hospitals had improved their benefit packages so that the County benefits were no longer as attractive to potential employees. Ms. Taggart stated the MDS (Minimum Data Set) Coordinator had been recruited from Saratoga Hospital and was available to fill in for staffing shortages on weekends. Mr. Loeb questioned the rotation for weekends and Ms. Hayes responded the Nurses were required to work every other weekend. Mr. Dusek recommended a motion from the Committee if they wanted a salary study completed.

Motion was made by Mr. Pitkin, seconded by Mr. Thomas and carried unanimously that a salary comparison study for the nursing staff at Westmount Health Facility be completed.

Ms. Taggart said a salaries comparison to date was included in the agenda packet and compared salaries expended in 2010 to those expended in 2009. Ms. Henkel noted the format was similar to the one used by the Health Services Department. She explained the 3.11% increase in salaries was attributed to the COLA (Cost of Living Adjustment) increases received by employees. She advised per diem salaries were not budgeted until the end of 2009, which meant there was no way to calculate a direct comparison of Salaries-Part Time. She suggested

the bottom line which represented the totals was the best way to compare 2010 Salaries to 2009 Salaries.

Ms. Hayes stated the Facility previously had contracted pharmaceutical services with Royal Care Pharmacy. She said when the RFP (Request for Proposal) was released they had wanted to retain the services of Royal Care Pharmacy but they had not been the low bidder. Since that time, she added, Royal Care Pharmacy had been awarded the State contract so Westmount Health Facility could continue to use their services without the need for a contract.

Ms. Taggart displayed pictures from the recently held Volunteer Recognition Luncheon. She announced that Trinna Cullin, Assistant Manager of Panera Bread, and Priscilla Geysler, a local senior citizen were recognized. She said Ms. Collins and her staff volunteered at Westmount Health Facility where they assisted with Programs and brought refreshments. She added Ms. Geysler conducted a reading group twice a week for the residents. Ms. Hayes noted Ms. Geysler used to sit with a previous resident and read to them and after their passing she stayed and continued the services with the remaining residents.

Mr. Dusek advised an executive session was required to discuss collective bargaining agreement administration, the employment history of a particular person and for attorney/client privilege relative to a grievance that was filed.

Motion was made by Mr. Loeb, seconded by Mr. Taylor and carried unanimously that executive session be declared pursuant to Sections 105 (e) (f) and 108 (3) of the Public Officers Law.

Executive session was declared from 10:02 a.m. to 10:16 a.m.

The Committee reconvened and Mr. Sokol noted no action was required pursuant to the executive session.

Privilege of the floor was extended to Pat Auer, Director of Public Health/Patient Services, who distributed copies of the agenda to the Committee members; a copy of the agenda is on file with the minutes.

Ms. Auer mentioned she had used double-sided copying for the agenda in an effort to save funds. She noted a report on monthly Emergency Preparedness activities was included in the agenda packet.

Referring to the pending item pertaining to the Preschool provider who failed to provide speech therapy to two children for a four month period, Ms. Auer reported there was no new information at this time.

Ms. Auer requested to renew the current grant agreement with the New York State Department of Health (NYS DOH) to authorize receipt of funding in an amount not to exceed \$11,866 for the Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program, commencing April 1, 2010 and terminating September 30, 2010. She noted this was usually a \$25,000 grant but the NYS DOH was in the process of changing the contract year, which had altered the grant amount.

Motion was made by Mr. Pitkin, seconded by Mr. Taylor and carried unanimously to renew the

grant agreement with the NYS DOH as outlined. *A copy of the resolution request form is on file with the minutes and the necessary resolution was authorized for the May 21, 2010 Board meeting.*

Ms. Auer requested authorization for Sharon Schaldone, Assistant Director of the Home Care Division of Public Health, to attend the Home Care Association of New York State Annual Membership Conference on May 20, 2010 in Saratoga, New York, at a cost of \$475 for registration. Ms. Auer added Ms. Schaldone would use her personal vehicle but would not request mileage reimbursement.

Following a brief discussion, motion was made by Mr. Thomas, seconded by Mr. McDevitt and carried unanimously to authorize Ms. Schaldone to attend the Conference as outlined. *A copy of the Authorization to Attend Meeting or Convention form is on file with the minutes.*

Ms. Auer requested an agreement with Hudson Headwaters Health Network for Warren County to provide HIV Health Education, with funding provided by the Ryan White Early Intervention Services Program grant for an amount not to exceed \$4,000, commencing April 1, 2010 and terminating October 31, 2010.

Motion was made by Mr. Pitkin, seconded by Mr. Loeb and carried unanimously to authorize an agreement with Hudson Headwaters Health Network as outlined. *A copy of the resolution request form is on file with the minutes and the necessary resolution was authorized for the May 21, 2010 Board meeting.*

Ms. Auer apprised effective April 1, 2010 the NYS DOH would change the rates for the Early Intervention Program. She added there would be a negative impact to the 2010 County budget as she was anticipating a decrease in funding of approximately \$23,000. She explained the State felt it was better to place the children in programs which required the County to transport them. She noted the Early Intervention Program was for children from birth to three years old, which made transportation an issue. She apprised Warren County was lucky to have the opportunity to provide the services in-home and maintain the original intent of the Program. Mr. Loeb asked why the County was required to provide transportation and Ms. Auer responded it was part of the Entitlement of Services for the Early Intervention Program.

Ms. Auer requested to amend the contracts with various business associates who provided services to pediatric clients to reflect the rate change for children in the Early Intervention Program. She added a list of the business associates was included in the agenda packet. She said the rates for Region One would decrease from \$53 to \$50 and in Region Two from \$60 to \$57 to reflect the decrease in funding from the NYS DOH as outlined above.

Motion was made by Mr. Thomas, seconded by Mr. McDevitt and carried unanimously to amend the contracts as outlined above. *A copy of the resolution request form is on file with the minutes and the necessary resolution was authorized for the May 21, 2010 Board meeting.*

Ms. Auer requested approval for out-of-state travel for Ms. Schaldone and Tammie DeLorenzo, Clinical & Fiscal Informatics Coordinator, to attend the Delta Health Technologies 2010 National Customer Forum on June 21-24, 2010 in Altoona, Pennsylvania. She stated Delta Health Technologies would cover the registration fee of \$399 per person and the cost to the County

would be \$99 per night for the hotel room and the use of a County vehicle. Ms. DeLorenzo said she would attend the modules that pertained to technical and billing aspects while Ms. Schaldone would attend modules pertaining to the clinical uses of the program. This way, she continued, they would obtain the most information from the Forum. Ms. Schaldone announced she had been requested by Delta Health Technologies to join the Technical Advisory Committee.

Motion was made by Mr. Loeb, seconded by Mr. Thomas and carried unanimously to approve the request for out-of-state travel as outlined. *A copy of the resolution request form is on file with the minutes and the necessary resolution was authorized for the May 21, 2010 Board meeting.*

Ms. DeLorenzo said a report on Free and Reduced Care was included in the agenda packet. She explained the statute required the County to provide 3.3% of revenue free care; however, she added, no County in New York State met the percentage due to an increased number of people with health insurance. She announced the State was considering reducing the statute to less than .5%.

Referring to the report on Revenues and Expenditures for 2010 as of April 12, 2010, Ms. DeLorenzo said the report was representative of the previous year's reports as of the month of April. She explained they could not bill the State for the Early Intervention Program or the Preschool Program that were provided in 2010 at this time. She advised they were still waiting to be allowed to bill for those Programs for all of 2009. She added once that was completed the revenues for 2009 would increase. She noted State Aid was also not included in the report as it was billed on a quarterly basis. She added they were still waiting for the results of the Municipal Health Service Plan and the State Aid application for 2010.

Ms. DeLorenzo announced the billings for the CHHA (Certified Home Health Agency) and Long Term Care Programs were being sent out at a faster rate. She added the March bills would be sent by the end of this month. She said the billing cycle had been reduced from approximately 90 days to 30 days and noted the funds were received by EFT (Electronic Funds Transfer) which meant the payments were being received faster, as well.

Mr. Sokol questioned if the County was close to having a paperless procedure and Ms. Schaldone responded the patient clinical records were now 75% electronic. Ms. DeLorenzo said it was still necessary to use paper when dealing with physicians referral paperwork. She explained Washington County now scanned and attached records electronically but there was a cost to initiating the process.

Discussion ensued.

Ms. DeLorenzo stated a Salaries Comparison Report was included in the agenda packet. She added there was a decrease from the amount expended in 2009 by 8.84%. She continued by saying the Part Time Salaries had decreased by 20.52% which she attributed to the Point of Care System which had resulted in a decreased need to use per diem staff. She announced the Public Health Nurses had received training on the System and were now assisting in making some of the home visits.

Ms. Auer noted there was a page in the agenda packet entitled Financial Impact Issues which detailed cash flow issues caused by the reduction of funding from the State. She advised the Municipal Health Services Plan was submitted by the September 30, 2009 deadline in order to receive the \$406,000 base grant. She added usually the Plan was sent back with corrections several times before it was accepted but this year they had received no feedback.

With regard to Preschool Medicaid reimbursement, Ms. Auer stated, they were informed on July 1, 2009 they could not bill any Medicaid claims. She said they had billed from January 1, 2009 until July 1, 2009. She noted in 2008 they received \$212,000 from Medicaid. Brief discussion ensued.

Mr. Loeb requested Health Services number the individual pages of the agenda packet and place the corresponding page numbers next to the item they pertained to on the agenda in a format similar to that of Westmount Health Facility and Ms. Auer responded she would do so.

Ms. DeLorenzo advised the Emergency Preparedness Grant involved participants from Emergency Medical Services agencies and the Office of Emergency Services. She noted in the past, grant funding had been used to purchase items that were not for the Public Health Department. She explained due to the amount of funds remaining, Ginelle Jones, Assistant Director of Public Health, had sent a letter to the participants of the grant to determine their current emergency preparedness needs.

Mr. Sokol reiterated the next Health Services Committee meeting would be held at Westmount Health Facility.

Ms. Auer announced there had been an article last month in *The Post Star* pertaining to a mother that was arrested after bite marks were found on her child. She noted it was a Public Health Nurse that first noticed the bite marks and reported them. Mr. Pitkin reported there were valuable resources in the communities and referenced a Meals-on-Wheels volunteer who had voiced his concern about an elderly citizen who had a bad case of gout that was going untreated. Ms. Schaldone stated the Department often received reports from outside agencies.

As there was no further business to come before the Health Services Committee, on motion made by Mr. Pitkin and seconded by Mr. McDevitt, Mr. Sokol adjourned the meeting at 10:48 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Charlene DiResta, Sr. Legislative Office Specialist