

WARREN COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

COMMITTEE: SOCIAL SERVICES

DATE: MARCH 26, 2010

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:	OTHERS PRESENT:
SUPERVISORS	REPRESENTING THE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES:
PITKIN	SHEILA WEAVER, COMMISSIONER
KENNY	DEANNA PARK, COUNTRYSIDE ADULT HOME
BENTLEY	MARGARET SING-SMITH, YOUTH BUREAU
MERLINO	PAUL DUSEK, COUNTY ATTORNEY
STRAINER	FREDERICK MONROE, CHAIRMAN
LOEB	JOAN SADY, CLERK OF THE BOARD
MCDEVITT	KEVIN GERAGHTY, BUDGET OFFICER
	SUPERVISORS
	THOMAS
	BELDEN
	SOKOL
	STEC
	JOANNE COLLINS, LEGISLATIVE OFFICE SPECIALIST

Mr. Pitkin called the meeting of the Social Services Committee to order at 10:45 a.m.

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

Privilege of the floor was extended to Sheila Weaver, Commissioner of Social Services, who distributed copies of the agenda to the Committee members; *a copy of the agenda is on file with the minutes.*

Commencing the Agenda review, Ms. Weaver stated that overtime for the DSS continued to be 15 hours less than the same date last year, and some overtime was authorized due to the backlog of work in the Child Protective Services (CPS) Unit. She reported that the CPS Unit had a significant increase in the number of reports submitted in March, with over 50 reports received by March 10, 2010.

Ms. Weaver presented the Budget Status Report which included both Expenses and Revenue Budget Performance Reports through March 25, 2010; *copies of the Reports are on file with the minutes.* She stated that overall expenses for the DSS, Countryside and the Youth Bureau were under budget at 17%; and Overtime and Salary were at 18% and 19%, respectively. For Countryside, she reported overtime at 43% and she noted that several staff were absent due to illness. Mrs. Weaver pointed out that due to the standard payroll lag, the DSS budget figures were two months behind and would eventually show an increase. Ms. Weaver stated that she would ascertain when the 2009 revenues would be finalized and report same to Mr.

Pitkin.

Ms. Weaver presented six in-State travel requests as follows:

- SCREEN Training in Latham, NY, on April 14, 2010, at a meal cost of \$15 for one day.
Employee(s) to attend: Michael Donohue and Elizabeth DeVit
- Supervisory Core Module I, in Rochester, NY, from June 1 - 3, 2010 and June 14 - 17, 2010, at a meal cost of \$12 per day.
Employee(s) to attend: Diane Coughlin, Kristina Neel and John Schroeter
- Supervisory Core Module II, in Rochester, NY, from October 11 - 14, 2010 and October 25 - 28, 2010, at a meal cost of \$12 per day.
Employee(s) to attend: Diane Coughlin, Kristina Neel and John Schroeter
- 23rd Annual JDA Training Institute Conference, in Bolton Landing, NY, from April 12 - 13, 2010, at a meal cost of \$11 per day.
Employee(s) to attend: Kyle Depew
- Child Protective Services Response Training, in Albany, NY from May 10 - 14, 2010 and May 24 - 28, 2010, at a 50% reduced room rate and a meal cost of \$15 per day.
Employee(s) to attend: Andrea Corbin
- Child Welfare-Child Protective Services Response Training, in Albany, NY, from June 7 - 11, 2010 and June 21 - 25, 2010, at a 50% reduced room rate and a meal cost of \$15 per day. Employee(s) to attend: Rachel Johnson

Motion was made by Mr. Loeb, seconded by Mr. Bentley and carried unanimously to approve all six travel requests as outlined above. *Copies of the Authorizations to Attend Meetings or Conventions are on file with the minutes.*

Continuing the agenda review, Ms. Weaver presented a request to fill the position of Keyboard Specialist, base salary of \$23,799, Employee No. 11373, due to promotion. She apprised that the position was mandated and 75% reimbursed.

Motion was made by Mr. Bentley, seconded by Mr. Strainer and carried unanimously to approve the request to fill the vacant position of Keyboard Specialist as outlined above, and to refer same to the Personnel Committee. *A copy of the Notice of Intent to Fill Vacant Position is on file with the minutes.*

Pertaining to pending items, Ms. Weaver addressed the Warren County Department of Social Services Administrative Policy and Procedure which included a policy for the placement of homeless sex offenders and families; a copy of which is on file with the

minutes. She noted that she had requested information from other counties and her finding indicated that many counties had not established a separate policy and handled homeless sex offenders in the same manner as all homeless persons. Mr. Pitkin asked if there might be a legal reason for such a strategy and Paul Dusek, County Attorney, stated that sex offender status was a public record and the establishment of a separate policy presented no issues from a legal standpoint, as long as the County was not seeking to deprive the offenders of services.

Mr. Bentley asked if the proper authorities were informed immediately upon placement of an offender in a hotel and Ms. Weaver was not certain of the time line within which they were required to do so. Mr. Merlino stated that it was his understanding that there was also a time period within which an offender must submit their address upon release from incarceration, as well as when changing residences. Mr. Pitkin asked the Committee to consider a procedure whereby the DSS would perform a background check on all individuals seeking temporary housing benefits. Ms. Weaver concurred that it would be feasible to conduct background checks. Mr. Strainer raised the issue of offenders who were transferred to our jurisdiction from other counties and Ms. Weaver informed that the County of origin was required to notify the County of destination relative to such transfers. Some counties such as Washington County, she stated, were reliable in this manner; however, she said many were not. She cited that some hotel residents were self-placed and therefore the County would have no knowledge of their location. Mr. Stec asked if a policy should be included whereby Warren County must notify the hotel when placing a sex offender on their property and Mr. Dusek stated that the policy currently included same; however, he said, the County could not list the name of the hotel. Ms. Weaver confirmed that hotel owners had the right to refuse placement of sex offenders. According to Mr. Pitkin, the most critical issue was the proximity of such individuals to families which, he said, underscored the need for the County to have full knowledge of a persons offender status prior to placement in temporary housing. Mr. Dusek expounded that hotels could set rules within specific protected constitutional parameters. Ms. Weaver summarized that she would make the necessary revisions to the policy which included removal of the name of the hotel(s), and add a procedure to include computerized background checks for all individuals seeking temporary housing assistance.

Motion was made by Mr. Loeb, seconded by Mr. Strainer and carried unanimously to approve the revisions to the DSS Administrative Policy and Procedure as outlined above and the necessary resolution was authorized for the April 16, 2010. *A copy of the resolution request form is on file with the minutes.*

Next, Mrs. Weaver addressed the Countryside Adult Home and presented a request for Deanna Park to attend the Empire State Association of Assisted Living (ESAAL) mandated training in Saratoga Springs, NY, from May 2 - 5, 2010.

Motion was made by Mr. Strainer, seconded by Mr. Bentley and carried unanimously to approve the travel request as outlined above. *A copy of the Authorization to Attend*

Meeting or Convention is on file with the minutes.

The next agenda item address by Ms. Weaver was the issue of making available space in adult homes available as temporary housing for the homeless, and she stated that some counties had responded to her request for information in this regard. One county with a 48 bed home, she explained, had a waiver in place which allowed the home to be used as temporary housing for the homeless. She noted that sex offenders, substance abusers and those with mental health issues were exempt from placement in such housing. She cited the example of an adult with eight children who were housed in an adult home for a three month period. Ms. Weaver apprised that the floor plan for Countryside Adult Home was reviewed for this purpose. Mr. Strainer asked if operating in this manner would cause a need for increased staff and Ms. Weaver stated that it would not. She noted that the County already provided meals for the homeless; therefore, she said, meals could also be provided at the home.

Deanna Park, Interim Director for Countryside Adult Home, reported that there were currently 42 residents and 6 empty rooms. Mr. Pitkin suggested designating 12 beds for temporary housing and constructing the necessary walls. He pointed out that the County paid \$400 per week to hotels to the same end.

It was consensus of the Committee to further research the matter relative to the consideration of the use of available space at the Countryside Adult Home as temporary housing for the homeless.

In terms of transportation, Ms. Weaver stated that the Glens Falls Transit Bus could do a morning and afternoon run from the Home. Mr. Pitkin asserted that if the idea were approved by the Department of Health (DOH), it would be valuable to visit Chenango County's Adult Home which, he stated, had operated in like manner since the 1970's.

Regarding meals, Mr. Pitkin stated that Joan Sady, Clerk of the Board, confirmed that a budget adjustment would be necessary in order to transfer funding for meals for the homeless from the Social Services Budget to the Countryside Budget. Ms. Weaver stated that it was likely that breakfast and dinner would be the two meals offered at Countryside.

Another scenario or option, Ms. Weaver stated, which several counties had done, would entail changing the adult home beds to assisted living beds which required a waiver from the DOH. One caveat, she said, was that the New York State DOH required all Assisted Living staff to obtain a TB test. Ms. Park added that there could be an added nursing requirement in order to administer medications.

Addressing current issues at the Countryside Adult Home, Ms. Park stated that she anticipated the continuation of an overall improvement in staff issues. Ms. Weaver informed that she anticipated that some issues might be raised relative to timeliness

and attendance, with the adherence to strict guidelines in place.

Ms. Park reviewed the current census at the Countryside Adult Home which was outlined in the agenda. She reported 42 residents, with one resident currently hospitalized. She apprised that she had revised the work schedule to better address weekend hours which resulted in a reduction or savings of 19 hours per week. She stated that the holiday scheduling had also been revised which resulted in a decrease of 21 hours per day.

Ms. Weaver referred to the Overtime handout which was included with the agenda. Ms. Park stated that overtime had increased in February and had decreased for one week in March. Mr. Pitkin noted that Ms. Park's Directorship had been well received at the Home.

Mr. Loeb maintained the importance of the quality of services and customer service provided by the DSS. Ms. Weaver apprised that Federal and State requirements were very specific and she noted that if clients had not consulted the website or called the DSS prior to making their first visit, it was possible that the lack of necessary items could result in the need for a return visit. She apprised that New York State was making an effort to ease the application processes; however, she said, the changes would not be immediate. Mr. Pitkin cited the example of his visit to the Warren County DSS Office where three to four minutes had transpired prior to being addressed by staff. He commended Ms. Weaver for her prompt acknowledgment of the incident and he said, she showed a consistent effort to monitor and improve customer service in the department. Ms. Weaver noted staff turnover and new supervision in the reception area may have contributed to the issue. She asserted that the overall philosophy regarding responsiveness had changed and she would strive for continuous improvement. Ms. Weaver remarked on the committed and caring staff in the DSS and she cited a case which involved the placement of two infants into foster care which resulted in a commendable show of teamwork on the part of the DSS staff. She added that the public was unable to see the critical and effective behind-the-scenes teamwork that was accomplished in the DSS on a regular basis.

This concluded the Countryside portion of the Social Services Committee meeting and privilege of the floor was extended to Margaret Sing-Smith, Director of the Youth Bureau, who reported that the necessary paperwork relative to the Department reorganization had been submitted to the State.

Mrs. Smith presented a request to authorize the Warren County Youth Bureau Director to submit the application for Youth Program Funds from New York State (NYS) Office of Children and Family Services as outlined in the 2010 Resource Allocation Plan, for the period January 1, 2010 through December 31, 2010, for a total amount of \$80,843.

Motion was made by Mr. Bentley, seconded by Mr. Sokol and carried unanimously to

authorize the Warren County Youth Bureau Director to submit the application for Youth Program Funds from the NYS Office of Children & Family Services as outlined in the 2010 Resource Allocation Plan, and the necessary resolution was authorized for the April 16, 2010 Board meeting. *A copy of the resolution request form is on file with the minutes.*

Mrs. Smith presented a request to authorize continuation of the contracts with various agencies as listed in Schedule "A" for Youth Development Delinquency Prevention Programs and Special Delinquency Programs, from January 1, 2010 through December 31, 2010, for a total amount of \$31,135. Mrs. Smith reviewed the list of 2010 Youth Development/Delinquency Prevention dollar amounts for each municipality; a copy of which was included with the agenda. She pointed out that the figures were based on the number of youth served in addition to other factors. Mr. McDevitt noted the disparity in the 2009 and 2010 amounts for Warrensburg which were \$1,300 and \$2,000, respectively. Mrs. Smith stated that the total eligibility census could account for the increase and she would re-examine the figures and offer further detail and clarification at the next Committee meeting.

Motion was made by Mr. McDevitt, seconded by Mr. Bentley and carried unanimously to authorize continuation of contractual relationships with various agencies for Youth Development Delinquency Prevention Programs as outlined above and the necessary resolution was authorized for the April 16, 2010 Board meeting. *A copy of the resolution request form is on file with the minutes.*

Next, Mrs. Smith requested authorization to sign interfund transfers where there was no change in State Aid, for programs in the 2010 Resource Allocation Plan.

Motion was made by Mr. Merlino, seconded by Mr. Loeb and carried unanimously to authorize Margaret Sing-Smith to sign interfund transfers as outlined above and the necessary resolution was authorized for the April 16, 2010 Board meeting. *A copy of the resolution request form is on file with the minutes.*

The final request submitted by Mrs. Smith was for approval to submit the application for the National Junior Tennis Foundation grant, for the period April 16, 2010 through December 31, 2010, in the amount of \$2,000.

Motion was made by Mr. Bentley, seconded by Mr. Strainer and carried unanimously to authorize submission of the National Junior Tennis Foundation grant application as outlined above and the necessary resolution was authorized for the April 16, 2010 Board meeting. *A copy of the resolution request form is on file with the minutes.*

Mrs. Smith informed the Committee that she was in receipt of a letter of thanks from the Lake George School District which expressed appreciation for the Warren - Washington County Youth Leadership event held recently at Adirondack Community County. She advised that the School commended the student facilitators as positive role models; noted the relevancy of the program and expressed their hope for the continuation of the program.

As there was no further business to come before the Social Services Committee, on motion made by Mr. Bentley and seconded by Mr. Strainer, Mr. Pitkin adjourned the meeting at 11:40 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Joanne Collins, Legislative Office Specialist