

WARREN COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

COMMITTEE: SOCIAL SERVICES - INCLUDING COUNTRYSIDE ADULT HOME AND YOUTH BUREAU

DATE: NOVEMBER 24, 2010

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

SUPERVISORS THOMAS
KENNY
MERLINO
STRAINER
LOEB
MCDEVITT

OTHERS PRESENT:

SHEILA WEAVER, COMMISSIONER OF THE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES
DEANNA PARK, DIRECTOR OF COUNTRYSIDE ADULT HOME
MARGARET SING-SMITH, DIRECTOR OF THE YOUTH BUREAU
FREDERICK MONROE, CHAIRMAN
JOANN MCKINSTRY, ASSISTANT TO THE COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR
JOAN SADY, CLERK OF THE BOARD
KEVIN GERAGHTY, BUDGET OFFICER
SUPERVISORS MCCOY
TAYLOR
VANNESS
WOOD
PAT AUER, DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC HEALTH/PATIENT SERVICES
SUSAN HUGHES, COMMUNITY MATERNITY SERVICES
DON LEHMAN, *THE POST STAR*
CHARLENE DIRESTA, SR. LEGISLATIVE OFFICE SPECIALIST

COMMITTEE MEMBER ABSENT:

SUPERVISOR BENTLEY

Mr. Thomas called the meeting of the Social Services Committee to order at 10:32 a.m.

Motion was made by Mr. Strainer, seconded by Mr. Kenny 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 the Department of Social Services (DSS), who distributed copies of the agenda to the Committee members; *a copy of the agenda is on file with the minutes.*

Ms. Weaver requested authorization for twelve members of the DSS staff to attend the NYPWA (New York Public Welfare Association) Winter Conference on February 2-4, 2011 at the Marriott in Albany, NY. She advised that the conference fees for two of the twelve attendees would be at no cost to the County and the necessary funds for the remaining staff members were budgeted. She noted information pertaining to the 2011 State Budget would be presented at the conference.

Motion was made by Mr. Loeb, seconded by Mr. McDevitt and carried unanimously to authorize attendance at the NYPWA Winter Conference as outlined above. *A copy of the Authorization to Attend Meeting or Convention form is on file with the minutes.*

Ms. Weaver requested to amend the 2010 County budget to increase and decrease estimated revenues and appropriations in the amounts of \$482,500 and \$275,000 to cover shortfalls. Mr. Loeb stated the amount that had been improperly budgeted was significant and he requested an explanation. Ms. Weaver explained the DSS had received numerous retroactive rate increases; there were former employees who had received unemployment benefits for which

it had been determined they were not eligible; and there had been 20 additional children in the Foster Care Program which had not been anticipated.

Motion was made by Mr. Kenny, seconded by Mr. Merlino 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. Weaver stated there was no new information available on potential properties which would be suitable for homeless housing.

Referring to the Overtime Report which was included in the agenda packet, Ms. Weaver pointed out that overtime usage continued to be in excess of 100 hours per pay period. She noted overtime for the CPS (Child Protective Services) backlog for October and November was higher than previous months because she had authorized additional overtime due to the receipt of additional funds from the State for the purpose of processing CPS casework. She mentioned there were some overtime hours in TA (Temporary Assistance) due to the increase in the number of cases; however, she said, overtime usage was still under budget overall.

Pertaining to the Report of Revenue and Expenditures for 2010 as of November 19, 2010, Ms. Weaver reported salaries for the DSS were under budget by 11.99% and salaries for Countryside Adult Home were under budget by 24.78%. Referring to page 7 of the Expense Budget Performance Report, Ms. Weaver pointed out that the DSS had expended 77% of the amount budgeted. She stated that page 5 of the Revenue Budget Performance Report reflected that the DSS had generated 58% of the anticipated revenues. Mr. Loeb asked if receipt of revenues was delayed due to the State fiscal year and Ms. Weaver replied receipt of State revenues usually began in late March. Mr. Loeb questioned if revenues were anticipated to be generated close to 100% of the amount budgeted and Ms. Weaver responded that she anticipated 75% to 77% of anticipated revenues would be realized. Mr. Loeb queried if the DSS would have a negative budget at the end of 2010 and Ms. Weaver replied she anticipated a surplus; however, she added, the amount of the surplus would not be as significant as it was in 2009. Chairman Monroe stated there had been a negative balance in the DSS for many years prior to Ms. Weaver's appointment as Commissioner.

Ms. Weaver said the reception area of the DSS had handled 10,800 calls in September and 11,061 calls in October. She advised the reception area was short staffed by two employees, had one employee working the reception window while answering calls and four employees who received calls for specific program areas. She commented that authorization had been obtained to fill one vacant position and she anticipated doing so by the end of the month. She added one of the employees was out on Medical Leave for three weeks and was anticipated to return in mid-December. Ms. Weaver reported that 1,449 people had visited the DSS Office in the last week and 47,827 had visited the Human Services Building in 2010. Mr. Loeb mentioned that if an employee was on the telephone for more than two hours a day, productivity was increased significantly by the use of a headset. He asked if the employees in the reception area used headsets or handsets. Ms. Weaver replied that headsets were used by the employees in the reception area with the exception of the employee who worked the reception window.

Ms. Weaver requested Pat Auer, Director of Public Health/Patient Services, address the Committee concerning the next item on the agenda. Ms. Auer stated that during the budget process she and Ms. Weaver had discussed possible Departmental collaborations pertaining to

the Child Maternal Health Program working more closely with the Child Care Unit, the Preventive Unit and CPS. She stated that often people were more receptive to home visits from a Nurse than they were from a Social Worker. She said they would work on ways to collaborate without duplication of efforts.

Ms. Weaver introduced Susan Hughes, of Community Maternity Services (CMS), who had requested to address the Committee. Ms. Hughes distributed a TASA (TeenAge Services Act) handout to the Committee members; *a copy of same is on file with the minutes*. She explained that counseling, referral, transportation, education and advocacy services were provided to qualifying pregnant, parenting and at risk people under age 21. She advised CMS had been in operation in the area for over thirty years and had suffered a loss of funding due to recent reductions from the State. She said she wanted to discuss the possibility of the DSS contracting with CMS for TASA services. She noted that Albany, Fulton, Herkimer and Washington Counties currently contracted with CMS for TASA services.

Ms. Hughes stated the goal of CMS was to ensure that pregnant and parenting clients under age 21 received the services they were entitled to and were provided with the tools to become self-sufficient. She advised the transportation services provided by CMS were vital to the clients in the northern part of the County where public transportation was not available.

Ms. Hughes stated the total cost for TASA services in Washington County in 2009 was approximately \$20,000 of which approximately \$5,000 was paid by Washington County, \$5,000 by New York State and \$10,000 by the Federal government. She added once the County reached their Medicaid cap, their 1/4 of expenses was covered by the State. Ms. Hughes explained that CMS completed all the necessary billing for services at the home office in Albany and all documentation and case notes were stored by CMS. She added all the documentation was reviewed by the County yearly. Ms. Hughes commented that CMS had a successful working relationship with Warren County which included collaboration with the Preventive Unit and CPS on many cases. She stated that CMS would be unable to continue to provide the same level of services to Warren County residents unless an additional source of revenue was determined. She advised CMS currently had only one part-time employee who was responsible for Warren County.

Mr. McDevitt asked what agency currently provided the services and Ms. Weaver replied some TASA services were provided by County employees in the DSS and Public Health, as well as CMS. She stated she had asked her staff if they would be able to continue to provide TASA services in the future and the response had been affirmative. She said she had advised CMS that the DSS was not interested in contracting for services as the funds were not budgeted.

Mr. McDevitt queried Ms. Auer for her opinion and Ms. Auer stated the Public Health Department had successfully collaborated with CMS for a long period of time. Ms. Auer explained local obstetricians provided the Public Health Department with referrals of Medicaid eligible patients and the Department contacted all referrals to offer available services. She noted CMS offered transportation services which were not offered by the County. Ms. Hughes explained CMS assessed the situation in the individual's home to determine the needs and ensured the client received the necessary services.

Following further discussion, it was the consensus of the Committee that Ms. Auer, Ms. Hughes and Ms. Weaver would schedule a meeting to discuss the options and determine the best

course of action in order to continue to provide TASA services to Warren County residents without duplication of services and they requested Ms. Weaver report back to the Committee.

Mr. Merlino mentioned that while shopping he witnessed a resident pay for groceries with their Food Stamp benefits card and receive cash back from the purchase. He continued by saying the resident in question had handed the cash to a second person and he later witnessed the second person in the parking lot with a case of beer. Ms. Weaver explained the New York State Benefit Identification Card was a debit-type card on which Food Stamp benefits and Temporary Assistance (TA) benefits were credited. She clarified the only cash that a resident could receive from the card was the amount designated as a TA allowance. Mr. Strainer questioned why cash back was an option and Ms. Weaver replied the TA allowance was intended to be used for rent, utilities and incidentals; however, she added, there was no way to monitor how the money was expended. She commented that if it was determined that the person receiving TA benefits was not paying their rent and utilities with the benefits, it was possible for the DSS to pay the landlord/utility companies directly.

This concluded the Social Services portion of the meeting, Ms. Auer and Ms. Hughes exited at 11:13 a.m.

Privilege of the floor was extended to Deanna Park, Director of Countryside Adult Home, who distributed copies of the agenda to the Committee members; *a copy of the agenda is on file with the minutes.*

Ms. Park requested authorization to pay an invoice from Adirondack Technical Services, Inc. in the amount of \$871.76 for dishwasher repair. She explained the current contract was with RF Gordon Mechanical; however, she added, Adirondack Technical Services had been incorrectly contacted for service.

Motion was made by Mr. Loeb, seconded by Mr. Kenny and carried unanimously to authorize payment of the invoice from Adirondack Technical Services, Inc. as outlined. *A copy of the resolution request form is on file with the minutes and the necessary resolution was authorized for the December 17, 2010 Board meeting.*

Ms. Park said the first pending item pertained to the establishment of a sub-Committee to determine the future of Countryside Adult Home and to decide how to deal with the repercussions of same. Mr. Strainer asserted there was no need to have a sub-Committee as he felt it would cost the County more money to close the facility than to continue operations. He added he did not think it would be possible to find a buyer for the building if the facility was closed; however, he said, if a sub-Committee was established, he would be willing to serve as a member. He noted the Countryside Adult Home budget had been significantly reduced since the appointment of Ms. Park as Director. Mr. Thomas suggested initiating Mr. Taylor's previous recommendation to determine the best future use of the property. He added the best use could include the continuation of the Countryside Adult Home with a recommendation for use of the unoccupied space. Chairman Monroe questioned if there was an unmet need in the community and Ms. Park responded the facility was currently not fully occupied. She inquired if a determination had been made pertaining to the possibility of housing the homeless in the unoccupied space. Ms. Weaver noted the second pending item pertained to the possibility of housing the homeless at the facility and she added extensive research had been completed

which determined that it would be possible to house homeless families at the facility. She explained this option would require blocking off one half of one of the wings of the building and designating six rooms for housing homeless families. She said the Buildings & Grounds Department had developed a cost estimate which was less than \$50,000 to complete the necessary work. She noted the homeless families were not the segment of the homeless population that were difficult to find housing for, it was the single homeless sex offenders.

Discussion ensued.

Ms. Park said the third pending item pertained to the possibility of pursuing a Social Adult Day Care waiver and she stated she was still in the process of gathering statistical data on the issue. She advised she was determining ways to reallocate the duties of the current employees in order to reduce the costs associated with initiating the Social Adult Day Care Program.

Ms. Park asserted the last pending item pertained to the possibility of plowing the driveway and parking lot of Cornell Cooperative Extension (CCE). She advised CCE had indicated plowing of the driveway and parking lot took an average of 30 minutes to complete and she estimated it would cost \$12 per event for the maintenance staff of Countryside Adult Home to complete the plowing. She noted CCE had requested the plowing be completed at a fee of \$10 per hour and she added the plowing of the Warren County Soil and Water District was currently completed at no charge. It was the consensus of the Committee for Countryside Adult Home to assume the responsibility of plowing the driveway and parking lot of CCE.

Ms. Park reported 289.9 hours of overtime usage over the last three pay periods and noted this included two holidays. She said overtime usage had decreased overall by 159.1 hours compared to 2009. She announced the current census of the facility was 43 residents which included 16 men and 27 women with an average age of 75.3 years. She commented there had been one referral, one admission and one discharge for the month. Referring to Veteran's Administration Aid & Attendance applications, Ms. Park reported they were awaiting judgement on six applications and three applications had been denied, two due to admission of the applicant into a nursing home and one due to the fact that the Veteran had not served during war time. She noted they were waiting for additional paperwork for applications of seven Veteran residents.

Ms. Park stated there was an issue with the boilers at the facility that had required technicians to be called four times over the last two months. She added the maintenance staff had been called in after hours seven or eight times due to the boilers which had also shut down during the day time. She advised the County Administrator had requested a meeting be scheduled with Frank Morehouse, Superintendent of Buildings; Skip Beesaw, Senior Building Maintenance Mechanic for Westmount Health Facility; and the Building Maintenance Mechanic for Countryside Adult Home and herself to discuss the issue and determine a solution. Mr. Strainer asked if there was a service contract on the boilers and Ms. Park replied affirmatively. Mr. Loeb expressed his concern that the boilers could fail in the middle of the winter. Brief discussion ensued.

Ms. Park reviewed in detail a list of cost saving measures which had been initiated at the facility; *a copy of the list is on file with the minutes*. Pertaining to Item No. 2b on the list, Ms. Park explained a Medicare Advantage Program entitled Senior Whole Health had been initiated which combined Medicaid and Medicare Insurances and allowed billing to be completed

consecutively. For any members who signed up for Senior Whole Health Program, she continued, Countryside Adult Home was reimbursed for their transportation costs. She noted the facility had been receiving reimbursements since September ranging from \$1,000 to \$1,500 per month. Ms. Weaver stated page 2 of the Revenue Budget Performance Report showed revenues for Countryside Adult Home at 69%. She noted revenue was usually at 50% which meant there had been an increase in revenue of 19% for the facility.

This concluded the Countryside Adult Home portion of the Committee meeting and Ms. Park exited the meeting at 11:44 a.m.

Privilege of the floor was extended to Margaret Sing-Smith, Director of the Warren County Youth Bureau, who distributed copies of the agenda to the Committee members; *a copy of the agenda is on file with the minutes.*

Ms. Sing-Smith announced the information pertaining to State funding for 2011 Youth Programs had been received and reflected a slight increase. She reminded the Committee the formula for State funding was based on the County youth population under age 21. She explained a portion of the funds were intended for youths in crisis situations and the majority of the funds required local matching funds for youth programs operated by the municipalities. She advised at the end of the year the Warren County Youth Board reviewed the proposals for 2011 programs and recommended applications. Due to the delay in the announcement of State funding it was necessary to act quickly, she continued, in order to submit the 2011 Resource Allocation Plan before the deadline. Ms. Sing-Smith announced the municipalities had received approximately \$30,000 which was divided based on youth population. She added the balance of the funds were distributed among four programs operated by not-for-profit agencies which she listed, as follows: the Youth Court Program; Youth and Family Counseling; the Alternative Sentence Program through the Community Action Agency; and Home Based Parent Education through CMS.

Ms. Sing-Smith requested authorization to submit the 2011 Resource Allocation Plan for Youth Program funds to the New York State Office of Children and Family Services and to sign intrafund transfers with no increase or decrease in State Aid for Programs in the 2011 Resource Allocation Plan.

Motion was made by Mr. Strainer, seconded by Mr. Loeb and carried unanimously to authorize the Director of the Warren County Youth Bureau to submit the 2011 Resource Allocation Plan for Youth Program funds to the New York State Office of Children and Family Services; and to authorize the Director of the Warren County Youth Bureau to sign intrafund transfers with no increase or decrease in State Aid for Programs in the 2011 Resource Allocation Plan. *Copies of the resolution request forms are on file with the minutes and the necessary resolutions were authorized for the December 17, 2010 Board meeting.*

Ms. Sing-Smith requested to amend Resolution No. 460 of 2010, which authorized a contract with the Town of Johnsburg for administration of the Youth Tennis Program, to extend the termination date to June 30, 2011.

Motion was made by Mr. Kenny, seconded by Mr. McDevitt and carried unanimously to amend Resolution No. 460 of 2010 as outlined above. *A copy of the resolution request form is on file with the minutes and the necessary resolution was authorized for the December 17, 2010 Board meeting.*

Referring to the pending item pertaining to the Terms of Office for members of the Citizens Advisory Board which would expire on December 31, 2010, Ms. Sing-Smith advised she would email the Board members and the Town Supervisors to inform them that the terms would expire. She noted three Supervisors were appointed to the Citizen Advisory Board by the Chairman of the Board at the Organization Meeting in January. She added a representative of the DSS was appointed by Ms. Weaver, as well.

Ms. Sing-Smith announced she was accepting applications from the Towns for 2011 Youth Recreation Funds.

As there was no further business to come before the Social Services Committee, on motion made by Mr. Strainer and seconded by Mr. Merlino, Mr. Thomas adjourned the meeting at 11:52 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Charlene DiResta, Sr. Legislative Office Specialist