

MINUTES

HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE

Monday, January 4, 2021 10:00 a.m.

Present: Supervisors Verno, Leonard, Jacobs, Johnson, Groat and Miller, Social Services Commissioner Dr. Ellen Wayne and Director of Aging and Youth Amy Haskins. Supervisor Robusto was not present for the meeting.

The monthly activities report for Veterans Services was distributed with the agenda. During November there were 330 contacts by veterans and/or family members to the local Office and 14 trips to, or from, the Canandaigua VA Medical Center. The Office was contacted regarding burial benefits for 35 veterans.

A transmittal requesting authorization for the Chairman of the Board to sign a contract with Wayne Area Transportation Services (WATS) for veteran's transportation services at a cost of \$15.50 per one-way trip to the Canandaigua VA Medical Center was presented. Approved 4-0.

Other information distributed with the agenda noted the Veterans Outreach Center issued one bus pass for a County veteran to be transported by WATS as needed within the County at no cost. A food box distribution event took place on December 19th sponsored by the Williamson Legion Riders; 38 individuals received food. At the event Blue Star Mothers gave toys, gifts and produce to recipients, the Ontario Rod and Gun Club paid for \$50 Breen gift cards and the Williamson American Legion purchased poinsettias. The event would not have been possible without the many volunteers that assisted in the collection and distribution of the items.

Dr. Wayne presented the following transmittals for the Department of Social Services:

--Authorization to appoint Colin O'Malley to the Finger Lakes Workforce Investment Board. Approved 4-0.

--Authorization for the Chairmen of the Board to sign an agreement with Regional Transit Services for on-demand transportation services to Social Service clients for an amount not to exceed \$219,000. Approved 4-0.

--Authorization for the Chairman of the Board to sign a contract with the Child Care Council, Inc. for the provision of registering and inspecting child day care programs for a price not to exceed \$120,149. Approved 4-0.

The following Department of Social Services monthly reports were distributed:

- Medical Assistance: SSI Medicaid cases remain steady at 2,246 as of November 20th; however, general Medicaid cases continue to increase and were at 3,369 recipients. Dr. Wayne noted the Department is following the Governor's order not to require full-extension certification for Medicaid recipients. She stated there will come a time when all Medicaid cases in the Department will require thorough certifications; this will be a time consuming effort for staff.
- Food Stamps: Cases remain stable in all categories of Food Stamp distribution. The majority of individuals receiving Food Stamps do not receive any other public assistance benefit. Changes in

State Unemployment benefits affect qualification approval to the Food Stamp Program. The increased number of individuals applying for food stamps has stressed DSS staff. Mrs. Jacobs asked for a plan on how this program can be administered in the most efficient and effective way. Dr. Wayne said she would provide such a document.

- Temporary Assistance Caseload: TA cases have dropped significantly since May with 407 households receiving assisted through the program as of November 20th.
- Child Welfare: Cases were at their annual high in October; however, began to reduce in November with 253 reports of child abuse received. This number is higher than pre-pandemic levels.
- Financial: Through November the Department spent 77.3% of their County budget; this is lower than last year at the same time by nearly 5%.

A report on homelessness and housing was distributed with the agenda. This issue continues to be a difficult to resolve. DSS is responsible for providing emergency housing to the homeless in the County; they work with many departments and agencies trying to resolve housing needs. Due to weather conditions in New York, counties are mandated to provide emergency housing to the homeless regardless of their eligibility during winter months. The goal of the Department is to find affordable, permanent housing for individuals. From November 2019 thru April 2020, the Department housed six individuals under weather mandated circumstances at a cost of \$5,140. During 2020 the Department received 36 after hours calls for emergency housing placements. DSS will participate in a centralized eviction court process in response to the moratorium on evictions due to the pandemic.

Some DSS staff members have tested positive for COVID-19 since the last meeting; staff are at home recovering or quarantining as public health directives mandate. Dr. Wayne thanked the County's Public Health Department for the assistance they provided the Department during this time. She is concerned staff members are not being careful and observing COVID-19 regulations regarding wearing masks and social distancing. To the extent possible, the Department is providing services through phone interview or other virtual means in an attempt to minimize public traffic in the building.

Mr. House stated he has discretionary authority to reduce the density of the workforce in any County Office; however, when staff work from home there needs to be documentation that they are truly working.

Dr. Wayne informed Supervisors food distribution events will start back up this Tuesday.

The cost to Medicaid enduring COVID-19 illnesses is very high; this will have an effect on the State's budget. After the meeting, Dr. Wayne stated the revised Medicaid local share amount will be \$193,515, down from \$224,689; the Federal CARES Act has infused this budget.

Mrs. Haskins presented the following transmittals for the Department of Aging and Youth:

--Authorization for the Chairman of the Board to sign a renewal contract with ARC Wayne for bulk food preparation for the Department's five congregate Senior Centers at a per-meal cost of \$4.36. The cost reflects a slight rate increase from 2020. Approved 4-0.

--Authorization for the Chairman of the Board to sign a contract with ARC Wayne for administration of the Home Delivered Meals Program for a cost not to exceed \$243,780. Approved 4-0.

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--Authorization for the Chairman of the Board to sign a rental agreement with Eldda LLC for the Sodus Congregate Meal Site for a cost of \$7,000. This cost reflects a slight increase. Approved 4-0.

--Authorization for the Chairman of the Board to sign a contract with Seniors at Home, LLC for the provision of homemaker/chore services for a cost not to exceed \$55,000. Approved 4-0.

--Authorization for the Chairman of the Board to sign a renewal contract with Wayne County Pre-Trial Diversion Program for the provision of court ordered diversion services to youth ages 16-21 for a cost not to exceed \$60,000. Mr. Verno questioned if this is a duplicate service. Mrs. Haskins said she would check into this and report to the Committee next month. Approved 4-0.

--Authorization to appoint Alysha Kuha and Ethan Smith to the Wayne County Youth Board. Approved 4-0.

--Authorization for the Chairman of the Board to sign an agreement with ARC for the purchase of freezers for a price of \$7,000. Approved 4-0.

Mrs. Haskins reported elderly services have generally not increased in the past year. The one area that has increased greatly in service is the Home Delivered Meal Program, serving 10,193 units of food in the first 11 months of the year. A waiting list may be started in the spring if numbers remain high; Mrs. Haskins stated there is not adequate staff to serve more individuals through the program at this time. Case management services are up from last year as is participation in the PERS (Personal Care Units) now serving over 250 senior residents.

The Families and Communities Together Program served 65 children and 35 families in the first nine months of the year, Family Counseling Center served 136 youth under the age of 21, and Pre-Trial Services assisted two homeless youth and involved 11 youth in the Diversion Program during the same time.

The Office of Children and Family Services released their 2020 budget; it is based on allocation cuts of 10%. The State then announced an additional 20% would also be withheld from 2020 allocations. Mrs. Haskins is not certain of 2021 program funding, as the State has not been clear on this.

In other business, Mrs. Haskins thanked the Committee and Board of Supervisors for approving additional senior activities utilizing Stimulus monies. Letters have been sent to individual who were lifeguards previously at Sodus Point Park questioning their interest in lifeguarding this summer. If the Park will be open this summer is not yet known. Supervisors were informed the Partnership for Strengthening Families will make a presentation on poverty at their next meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 10:53 a.m. The next meeting of the Human Services Committee will take place on Monday, February 1st at 8:30 a.m.