

MINUTES

HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE

Monday, March 1, 2021 8:30 a.m.

Present: Supervisor Verno, County Administrator Rick House, Fiscal Assistant Ken Blake, Via Zoom: Supervisors Leonard, Robusto, Jacobs, Johnson, Chatfield and Miller, Social Services Commissioner Dr. Ellen Wayne, Veterans Services Director Renee Maybee and Department of Aging and Youth Representatives Amy Haskins and Kathy McGonigal.

The monthly activities report for the Veterans Service Agency was distributed with the agenda. During January there were 348 contacts made by Veterans and/or family members to the Office. The majority of contacts were by phone and mail and from Vietnam Veterans. WATS transported eight Veterans to the Canandaigua VA Medical Center; there were no transports during January to the Syracuse VA. The Office was contacted regarding 35 Veteran burials and paid \$5,508 toward three indigent burials. Veterans are being encouraged to get their COVID vaccinations; WATS will provide transportation to the Canandaigua VA for this.

The Annual Report for the Veterans Service Agency was received and filed. Staff had contact with 2,984 Veterans and/or family members during the past year; 458 in person and 2,526 by phone or mail. The Office maintained their accreditations during the year. There were some personnel changes in the Office with the naming of a new Director, elimination of the part-time Veterans Services Officer and vacancy of a Motor Vehicle Operator. The Office made significant improvements to streamline and secure sensitive claims work by converting to a new claim management software system. The number of transportation services provided to VA Medical Centers was down during the year due to challenges related to COVID. Six Veterans qualified for indigent burials at a cost to the Department of \$12,994, about half the number of the prior year. The population of Veterans is slowly declining in the County and in 2019 was 6,559. Estimates of benefits paid to Wayne County Veterans in 2019 were Compensation and Pensions \$23.9 million, medical care \$23 million and education \$2 million. There are 1,167 County Veterans receiving monthly compensation or pension payments because they have a disability. Mr. Verno questioned if the Office has a backlog of Veterans awaiting services. Mrs. Maybee said there is a short waiting list. Mr. Verno requested this information be included on the monthly activities report. If the Motor Vehicle Operator position will be filled was questioned. Mrs. Maybee said the office put out a memorandum of understanding for this service. Wayne CAP responded a member of their AmeriCorps program could provide the service; however, contractual issues need to be worked out.

The following transmittals were presented for the Department of Aging and Youth:

--Authorization to rollover unexpended 2020 Stimulus funding of \$231,591 into the 2021 budget. Approved 5-0.

--Authorization for the Chairman of the Board to sign the Area Agency on Aging 2021 Annual Implementation Plan. Approved 5-0.

--Authorization to hire Lifeguards and set the salary for Sodus Point Park staff for the 2021 season. It is anticipated the County Park will be open this summer to the public. The cost of having Lifeguards at the beach is \$55,815 for the season. Mr. Verno noted there has been no formal opening of County Parks this summer. Mr. Miller suggested a date be set for a determination if the Parks will be open this summer. It was agreed language would be added to this request stating these positions will only be filled if the County makes a determination the Sodus Point Park Beach will be open for the 2021 summer season. Approved 5-0.

The Annual Report for the Department of Aging and Youth was received and filed. A copy of the report was sent to Supervisors prior to the meeting. Mrs. Haskins took over as Director of the Department at the beginning of 2020. COVID-19 affected programs, many services were offered over the phone, while participation in the Home Delivered Meals and 'to go' meal programs increased. Department programs are designed to promote the quality of life by administering coordinated services to meet the needs of young and old in Wayne County. The Department operated on a budget of \$2.6 million in 2020; the majority of this amount for aging services. State and Federal funding to both youth and aging programs continues to decrease. The Department offers a number of programs to aging (residents over 60) and youth in an effort to link assistance with services and support. The Senior Lunch Program was closed for several months in 2020 due to COVID, then went to a 'to go' meal program at their locations. The services offered through the Aging Department help seniors stay out of nursing homes. Eight children who received services through the Families and Communities Together (FACT) Program avoided an out-of-home or out-of-school placement by remaining at home with counseling services for them and their families.

Sent out prior to the meeting were Social Services monthly reports:

- Financial: The Department expended 8.1% of their County budget and received less than one percent of their anticipated revenues. Dr. Wayne noted the Department is operating under a lower weekly share amount for Medicaid costs, she remains concerned about this expense. The cost to house juvenile delinquent in placement facilities increased when Hopewell closed. The cost to house and for transportation of the youth is expensive.
- Temporary Assistance: Cases increased slightly in January. Stimulus payments to individuals are disqualifying many from receiving these benefits.
- Food Stamps: Supplemental Nutrition Program cases remain stable with over 4,500 recipients.
- Medical Assistance: The number of individuals receiving Medicaid benefits continues to increase and now exceeds 3,600 residents. Eligibility for the program was extended during then pandemic, when that ceases the Department will have to re-qualify persons for this benefit; this will be a large task.
- Child Welfare: Cases decreased slightly in January.

Dr. Wayne submitted a spotlight report on the Department's Child Care Division. The main purpose of the Child Care Program is assisting low-income families with paying the cost of childcare so they can work or go to school. The program depends on State funding. In 2020 this

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program served about 115 families and 151 children. Families are responsible to pay a portion of childcare costs, based on a sliding scale. Applicants do not need to come into the Department of Social Services to apply for Child Care Assistance, the application can be mailed.

A transmittal was presented requesting authorization for the Chairman of the Board to sign a contract with Family Counseling Center for administration of a Child Advocacy Center at a cost of \$62,840. Dr. Wayne noted this was not the lowest priced proposal received for this service; however, Family Counseling is offering the County a better based value program. Their proposal committed to \$12,480 in matching funds to support their program; this would potentially lower the County cost of the program. The County Attorney has reviewed this request. Approved 5-0.

Dr. Wayne noted food distributions, due to the pandemic, were initially placed under the administration of government entities, Wayne County designated the Department of Social Services. The Department has dedicated a lot of time and resources to registering individuals for the program and physically distributing the food. An effort was made to find a not-for-profit agency that could handle administration of this program as it continues. Wayne CAP has said they would locally administer this program for Foodlink. This week will be the last time Social Services will be involve in this food distribution process. Through the newly administered program, individuals will not need to register for food pick-up. The food will be distributed on a first-come first-serve basis. Supervisors commended Dr. Wayne and her staff for their commitment to this program over the past several months.

The Department of Social Services is assisting in County COVID vaccination clinics. More staff will be available once the Department is no longer administering food distribution sites.

Dr. Wayne stated she would updated Mr. Verno on a pending litigation matter after the meeting.

The 2020 Annual Report for the Department of Social Services was received and filed. A copy of the report was sent to Supervisors prior to this meeting. The report hi-lighted the many community-focused initiatives and other ways staff have responded to the COVID pandemic. Dr. Wayne commended her staff for the work they have done during this difficult service time. The Temporary Assistance Division serves the County's financially fragile individuals and households with the intake for Temporary Assistance, SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Program) Medicaid and the Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP). The Division implemented revised practices and protocols, as recommended by the State, for the intake process during the pandemic. There was an increased number of individuals requesting Medicaid coverage during the year due to loss of employment. In 2020 there were 3,258 applications received for SNAP, 2,764 for HEAP, 1,163 for Temporary Assistance and 94 for emergency services. The Services Division is in place to ensure the well-being of children, meet the needs of vulnerable adults and to offer support to families and care givers. Child Protective and Preventive Services received 1,632 reports, 127 of this number were abuse reports. Foster Care had 21 cases; there are 17 existing Foster Care Homes in the County. There were 97 Consumer Directed Personal Assistance clients and 371

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Temporary Assistance cases with a Child Support Order. The Department operated on a \$22.4 million budget, with an \$18.4 million County cost. The Department tripled its staff trainings in 2020.

Dr. Wayne reviewed activities taken by her staff in an effort to work with residents of the Sandhill Trailer Park that was condemned and forced to close in 2020. Staff went to the park to assist residents in applying for housing assistance. This was done in an effort to avoid a high number of people coming into Social Services requesting emergency housing. Mr. Verno noted the appreciation of the Board for the actions taken by Social Services in this matter.

Minutes from the February 1st Committee meeting were approved as written.

The meeting adjourned at 9:58 a.m. The next meeting of the Human Services Committee is scheduled for Monday, April 5th at 8:30 a.m.