

MINUTES

HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE MEETING

Monday, April 4, 2022 9:00 a.m.

Present: Supervisors Verno, Leonard, Johnson, Donalty, Mettler, Bender and Groat, County Administrator Rick House, Fiscal Assistant Brian Sams, Director of Veterans Service Renee Maybee, Deputy Commissioner of Social Services Lisa Graf and Aging and Youth Department Director Amy Haskins.

Minutes from the February 28th Committee meeting were approved as written.

The following monthly reports for the Department of Social Services were distributed with the agenda:

- Financial: Through February the Department expended 14.8% of their County budget; this is slightly higher than last year at the same time. Cost expended for Family Type Homes is higher than at the same time last year. This is the cost associated with an adult care facility in which an operator provides residential care, personal care, and/or supervision services in the operator's home for individuals who they are not related to, to provide a home-like environment. The WIA (Workforce Investment Act) Youth budget is also running higher than last year. These funds provide assistance to incarcerated and institutionalized youth, with the goal to help transition them back into society and to reduce recidivism.
- Temporary Assistance: Numbers are down slightly from last year at the same time to a total of 353 participants. Temporary Assistance is help for needy individuals who are unable to work, can't find a job, or their job does not pay enough--this public assistance benefit helps pay for living expenses.
- SNAP: Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (Food Stamps) benefits help qualified residents to put healthy food on their table. Participation rates remained steady during the past year. Monthly benefits can be used to purchase qualifying food at authorized food stores. Mrs. Graf noted the maximum SNAP benefit remains in effect through the end of April.
- MA Caseload: Medicaid helps with healthcare costs of persons with limited income and resources. The County's Medicaid caseload has consistently increased during the past year and now has 3,790 participants, while Medicaid/SSI benefits remained fairly constant over the past year ending February with 2,181 participants. Until the State budget is passed, the status of program participation and benefits will not be known for the upcoming fiscal year.
- Child Welfare Services: The Department received 135 reports regarding the welfare of 201 children in the County during February; of this number 11 were child abuse reports.

Supervisor Eygnor arrived at the meeting at 9:10 a.m.

The following transmittals were presented for the Department of Social Services:

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--Authorization for the Chairman of the Board to sign an amended agreement with the Child Caring Institution Elmcrest Children's Center. Mrs. Graf said this agreement, and those that follow, need to be amended to reflect modifications in State regulations. Approved 5-0.

--Authorization for the Chairman of the Board to sign an amended agreement with the Child Caring Institution House of the Good Shepherd. Approved 5-0.

--Authorization for the Chairman of the Board to sign an amended agreement with the Child Caring Institution Villa of Hope. Approved 5-0.

--Authorization for the Chairman of the Board to sign a contract with Victim Resource Center of the Finger Lakes for the provision of domestic violence residential services for a price of \$75,000. Approved 5-0.

--Authorization to accept a five-year \$500,000 allocation from the New York State Office of Children and Family Services to maintain the Multi-Disciplinary Team operated Child Advocacy Center within the County. Mrs. Graf said the Department continues to work on a financial plan for the continuation of operations at the Child Advocacy Center, should State funding be reduced. Approved 5-0.

--Authorization for the Chairman of the Board to sign a renewal contract for child-only services with ARC of Wayne for a cost of \$81,979. These services are used to break the cycle of poverty and dependence on government subsidies. Approved 5-0.

--Authorization to purchase replacement office equipment for Workforce Development staff and amend the budget for this \$18,864 cost. When the State Labor Office left their office space in the County's Health Services Building and took the furnishing that were theirs; most of the office equipment in the space. A transfer will be made within the Social Services budget for these unanticipated purchases. Approved 5-0.

--Authorization to retain a part-time attorney for the Department of Social Services and amend the County budget. Mrs. Graf noted a full-time attorney in the Department submitted his resignation. The hourly rate for the part-time position is \$60 an hour. The need to have legal counsel in the Department was stated. Mr. House noted the request was received after the due date for agenda items; however, it meet the requirements needed to be placed on today's agenda. Approved 5-0.

This month's program spotlight is on the Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP). The program helps low-income people pay the cost of heating their homes. In 2021 the Department processed HEAP benefit applications for 179 County residents receiving Temporary Assistance, 3,512 SNAP benefit recipients and an additional 1,273 applications for HEAP only assistance. Households can

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apply for HEAP through the mail, at the Social Services Office or online. There is an Emergency HEAP Program for specific cases. Benefits of this program are determined through financial eligibility. This year's HEAP benefit season will close on April 30th 2022.

The local Department of Social Services received a no-match grant from the Domestic Violence Assistance/State's Pandemic Emergency Assistance Fund. Notification of this grant was received early in February and must be expended by the end of May. Mrs. Graf stated funds have to be utilized for the relocation of an individual suffering from domestic violence. She reviewed individual cases funds have been used for.

Mrs. Graf noted proposed changes in State regulations regarding mortgage liens. The changes are intended to help prevent avoidable property foreclosures as emergency Federal foreclosure protections expire. The proposal seeks to ensure that both banking institutions and borrowers have the tools and time they need to work together to prevent avoidable foreclosures. Mrs. Graf said actual regulations regarding this change have yet to be received by the Department. After April 1st the Department of Social Services will not be allowed to assign mortgage liens.

A copy of the monthly activities report for the Veterans Service Agency was distributed with the agenda. During February the Office had contact with 462 Veterans and/or family members. Six Veterans were transported to the Canandaigua VA Medical Center by WATS and eight by a County driver along with seven trips to the Syracuse VA Medical Center. The Office was contacted regarding 33 Veteran burial related services during the month. Mrs. Maybee noted WWI Veteran contacts will be removed from future activity reports, as there is no one residing in the County to apply for this status. Supervisors were informed the Department's transportation van broke down in mid-February and WATS was requested to complete this transportation run. Mrs. Maybee stated the aging 12-passenger van in the Department is in need of replacement; she is hopeful it will last through 2022. Mrs. Maybee will work with the County's Public Works Department on specifications for the type of vehicle needed for the Department and any grants that may be available. The Veterans Service Agency has an account for \$15,000 that is allocated for a vehicle purchase.

Mrs. Maybee said she is keeping an eye on the State budget to see if any funding changes will affect the Veterans population.

Mrs. Maybee reviewed with the Committee the ETS (Expiration Term of Service) Sponsorship Program, a new initiative between the New York State Association of Counties and Department of Veterans Administration. The program is in place to assist service members in transition to civilian life in the post-military community. The ETS Sponsorship Program assist service members in transition by providing instrumental, informational, and emotional support. The VA would work to enroll service members up to 12 months before they leave active military service, train sponsors using VA-certified curriculum and provide a personalized plan of action for each

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Veteran. Details on how such a program would operate were sent to Committee members prior to today's meeting. Mr. House noted some counties are utilizing similar programs to team up veterans within their workforce.

The monthly activities report for the Area Agency on Aging and Youth was distributed with the agenda. The Office received nearly twice as many contacts regarding the NY Connects program than they did last year at the same time. Individuals contact NY Connects for information on long-term services and support for people of all ages with any type of disability. Mrs. Haskins reported staff from other units are assisting with this program to make sure requests for NY Connects are being responded to.

There is a waiting list of 24 individuals for Case Management services. Mrs. Haskins said waiting list will need to be addressed for all programs; at this time Stimulus monies are available to fund the increased usage of these programs, these funds could run out during 2023. Elderly participants requesting Case Management have more severe mental health issues than in the past; that makes cases time consuming.

Mrs. Haskins distributed an application for the New York State Governor's Youth Council. To date, no student have applied. A copy of the application was e-mailed to all School Superintendents. The Council creates opportunities for youth to participate in regional and state level activities to better inform State government on issues and challenges.

The Committee was updated on the County's Home Delivered Meal Program. Mrs. Haskins stated from January 2019 through March 2022 the Department of Aging and Youth had a contract directly with the ARC of Wayne to run the County's Home Delivered Meals Program. The County would provide the assessment, ARC prepare the food and subcontracted with Home Meal Service to perform client intake and coordinate volunteer delivery services. In February, the Office of Aging and Youth was informed Home Meal Service does not want to continue coordinating volunteer services for the County program. Home Meal Service decided it would be profitable for them to pay an outside vender for meal preparation and for them to directly deliver their meals to individuals around the County; the difference being there would be a cost for their meals and meals could be received by any age group. Mrs. Haskins stated there is no cost for the County's Home Delivered Meal Program, only a suggested contribution of \$3 a meal. The cost Home Meal Service will charge for their meals is not known at this time; although is thought to be substantially higher than the County's recommended contribution. Mrs. Haskins said she is not certain what volunteers have been told by Home Meal Service, nor does the County know how many of their clients have contacted Home Meal Service to switch to their program. A letter was sent by Home Meal Service to all county participants of the Home Delivered Meal Program promoting Home Meal Service and encouraging the participants to switch. This is concerning because of the difference, particularly with the cost between the two programs. Letters from Home Meal Service were confusing and upsetting to many of the County's clients and were a misuse of Home Meal Service's access to County client's information. A letter has been sent

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directing that there be no further contact. Friday was the first day the new volunteer transportation list was being used for the County's Home Delivered Meal Program; there were very few issues with the delivery of food that day. ARC has recruited about 40 volunteers and is using staff and programs to deliver meals. Mr. Verno requested a program update for the next Committee meeting.

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

--Authorization for the Chairman of the Board to sign and to submit Department Plans for Aging and Youth Services during 2022. This is a new State requirement. Approved 5-0.

--Authorization for the Chairman of the Board to sign a contract with NYS Industries for the Disabled (NYSID) for nutrition programming and authorization to amend the County budget for this service. Mrs. Haskins said the increased cost for meal preparation will add \$241,000 to this contract, which will be covered with Stimulus funds. NYSID is a State approved vendor. Approved 5-0.

The meeting adjourned at 9:53 a.m. The next meeting is scheduled for Monday, May 2nd at 9:00 a.m.