

MINUTES

HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE

Monday, April 5, 2021 8:30 a.m.

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

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

The monthly activities report for the Veterans Service Agency was distributed with the agenda. During February 345 Veterans and/or family members made contact with the local Veterans Service Office; the majority by phone and mail. Mrs. Maybee noted the overwhelming majority of Veterans contacting the Office were in service after 1990. There were four units of transportation to the Canandaigua VA Medical Center and the Office was contacted regarding 24 Veterans burial benefits during the month.

Mrs. Maybee stated the Veterans Office is currently tracking 104 claims. Efforts continue to reduce this list.

Mrs. Maybee informed Supervisors the Rochester Transit Authority continues to have a representative at the local Office that will process free bus passes for Veterans; eligibility requirements for these passes are available through RTS (518-546-1081) and the Wayne County Veterans Service Office (315-946-5993).

The Committee was updated on the Save Lives Act that was signed into law by President Biden. This will allow the Veterans Administration to vaccinate all veterans, veterans' spouses, caregivers and civilian health and medical program recipients, regardless of their VA eligibility. Mrs. Maybee noted the difficulty for some Veterans to get to a vaccination appointment.

Mrs. Maybee presented a transmittal requesting authorization to fill the position of part-time Motor Vehicle Operator. The position will be paid \$16.54 an hour. The Department's 2021 budget had transportation costs to the Syracuse VA budgeted under contractual expenses, as RTS was providing transportation services. A transfer of funds within the budget is needed to accomplish the hiring. Mrs. Jacobs asked if a Motor Vehicle Operator, who was laid off from the County due to budget reductions, would be asked if they were interested in the position. She was informed they were made aware of the position. Approved 5-0.

The following monthly reports for Social Services were presented and reviewed:

- Caseload: Temporary Assistance cases have declined since their high in May at 282 to under 200 at this time. The number of Food Stamp recipients remained constant over

the past year; Dr. Wayne noted many COVID financially affected individuals are not eligible for Food Stamps due to Stimulus funding they received.

- Caseload: The number of individuals receiving Medical Assistances continued to increase from 2,942 in February of last year to 3,440 this year. The number of child welfare cases has been fluctuating during the year, with 144 reports to the local Office during February, eight of these were child abuse cases. Trends since the pandemic continue with Medicaid costs increasing. Dr. Wayne remains concerned on how the State will mandate certification of individuals that are currently receiving Medicaid due to the pandemic; however, were not prior to that time.
- Financials: Through February the Department expended 14.3% of their County budget, this is lower than last year at the same time by \$504,983. The Medicaid weekly share is down, as one less payment was received this year for the first quarter. An increase in the weekly share is anticipated once the pandemic is over; the State has not announced the amount of the increase. The cost to house youth in detention facilities is higher this year. First, because Hopewell closed at the end of 2020 and sent a final bill to the County, second, other facilities being utilized are farther away--transportation expenses are high and third, there is more activity with youth. The facility a child is sent to depends on the reason for their detainment. Mr. Verno noted this is a national issue. Salary expenses in the Department are lower than at the same time last year; this includes overtime costs. The Office of Children and Family Services has stated they will be making reimbursements without the 20% claw back that was put in place after the pandemic was declared. If payments will return to the original amount is not known.

An out of State travel request was made for a Social Service employee to perform Article 81 Services to an incapacitated adult on April 19th and 20th and October 18th and 19th in New Jersey for a cost of \$441. The local Social Services Office is responsible to provide these services, as they are the individual's legal guardian. Approved.

Supervisor Groat joined the meeting at 8:50 a.m.

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

--Authorization for the Commissioner of Social Services to sign an agreement with the Wayne County Probation Department for the provision of an intensive school-based oversight plan for youth in the Persons In Need of Supervision (PINS) program. This is a preventive program for youth in need of positive direction. Approved 5-0.

--Authorization for the Commissioner of Social Services to sign an agreement with the County's Department of Aging and Youth for administration of the Families And Communities Together (FACT) program for a cost of \$40,000. This program provides interaction with young children in an effort to keep them out of criminal justice and/or public assistance systems in the future. Approved 5-0.

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--Authorization for the Chairman of the Board to sign a contract with the New York State Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance for Code Blue Funding. Dr. Wayne said the County has been approved by the State for \$18,000 through this program. This is an annual appropriation the County receives; however, this year the State is requesting a separate contract for funding. Approved 5-0.

--Authorization for the Chairman of the Board to sign a renewal contract with Self-Direct Inc. for the provision of personal emergency response systems. Dr. Wayne said these units are utilized to assist Medicaid eligible individuals remain in their homes, preventing the need for a higher level of care. Approved 5-0.

--Authorization to accept \$383,957 from the State Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance to address local housing and homeless needs. Funds are for the development of strategies to limit homelessness in the County and work on solutions. Approved 5-0.

--Authorization for the Chairman of the Board to sign a contract with the State Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance for the purpose of funding local programs that comply with responses to the pandemic. Approved 5-0.

--Authorization for the Chairman of the Board to sign a contract with Wayne County Action Program for the provision of supporting local County efforts to respond to the pandemic through assisting with homelessness and housing problems. Wayne CAP will expend this \$378,400 contract to provide additional shelter beds for the homeless. Approved 5-0.

--Authorization to abolish the position of full-time Senior Caseworker and create and fill the position of full-time Caseworker. Dr. Wayne said efforts to reduce personnel costs in the Department continue. This change will result in a County cost savings of \$1,158. Approved 5-0.

--Authorization to appoint Randi DiAntonio and Robert Coyne to the Finger Lakes Workforce Investment Board. Approved 5-0.

--Authorization for the Chairman of the Board to sign a contract with Finger Lakes Area Counseling and Recovery Agency for co-located alcohol and other drug services. Services are offered to assist families stabilize so they can properly care for their children. The contract is for \$75,848. Approved 5-0.

Dr. Wayne informed Supervisors the New York State Children's Support Enforcement System was down last week and payments that come from salary garnishments were not made. This is a statewide issue. The Department's Facebook page will continue to update recipients on the status of their checks.

A program spotlight on the Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP) was distributed with the agenda. Early outreach for this program began in August with applications being directly sent

from the State to eligible households that received HEAP benefits the previous season. HEAP is available to individuals who receive Temporary Assistance and/or Food Stamps. For individuals over 60, applications for HEAP are accepted at the Social Service Office or by the ARC of Wayne. HEAP funding is also available for individuals on an emergency basis is. The local Department of Social Services has over 5,000 active HEAP cases. This year a second distribution of HEAP funds occurred in March.

Dr. Wayne noted Department of Social Service staff continue to work with the Departments of Aging and Youth and Public Health assisting in vaccination clinics.

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

--Authorization for the Chairman of the Board to sign a contract renewal with Genesee Region Home Care of Ontario County for the provision of personal care services for a price of \$130,454. Mrs. Haskins noted the rates increased substantially since the last contract. It is anticipated in-house staff aid services will be available and lower the cost. Approved 5-0.

--Authorization for the Chairman of the Board to sign a renewal contract with Newark Emmanuel United Methodist Church for the provision of housing the Senior Congregate Meal Program for a cost of \$5,000. Approved 5-0.

In other business, Mrs. Haskins reported the Department will be accepting applications for seasonal Lifeguard positions through the end of the month. She will be preparing a transmittal for next month's meeting that will allow for the expenditure of \$40,000 of Stimulus funding the Department received. A full-time Home Health Aid position has been filled and staff continue to work to register the elderly and Veterans for COVID vaccinations. Staff have been assisting with COVID vaccination clinics when requested and available.

Dr. Wayne noted the administrative services contract the County had with Wayne CAP for emergency homeless housing is no longer in place because the agency lost their license. The State assigned a program administrator from Saratoga Springs. Dr. Wayne said she has yet to be contacted from the new agency and is concerned about their distance from Wayne County to understand our vulnerable housing needs.

The meeting adjourned at 9:22 a.m. The next meeting of the Human Services Committee is scheduled for Monday, May 3rd at 8:30 a.m.