

MINUTES

HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE

Monday, May 1, 2023 9:00 a.m.

Present: Supervisors Donalty, Leonard, Johnston, Verno, Mettler, Groat, Chatfield and Eygnor, County Administrator Rick House, Fiscal Assistant Brian Sams, Social Services Commissioner Lisa Graf, Veterans Service Officer David Phillips, Aging and Youth Department Director Amy Haskins, Aging and Youth Department Deputy Director Kelly Beaudette, Treasurer Patrick Schmitt and Purchasing Agent Christopher O'Connor.

Members approved minutes from the April 3rd meeting.

During March, 363 Veterans and/or family members contacted the Veterans Service Agency, the majority of contracts were by telephone, mail and e-mail. Last year the Office received many contacts in regard to the PACT Act—a law to expand VA health care and benefits for Veterans exposed to burn pits, Agent Orange and other toxic substances; the number of contacts is down so far in 2023. There were five Veterans transported to the Canandaigua Veterans Medical Center during the month and two to the Syracuse VAMC. The Office was contacted regarding burial benefits for 45 Veterans.

Mr. Phillips gave a brief review of the Clear Path for Veterans Program that began offering services in Wayne County on April 1st. Through the program area Veterans are provided the opportunity to feel like they belong in their community, regardless if these are active duty, retired, or a military family member. He will meet with the Program Rep. after the program is in operation for a few more week to review services being provided.

Mr. Phillips noted the Veterans Department has \$14,000 remaining in a donations account; funds were raised to offset the cost of a Department van. The Department now contracts for transportation services, not owning their own van. Mr. Schmitt said it would be difficult to return the donations, as some of the funds were spent. He recommended funds be spent on another Veteran related service(s). The Committee approved his recommendation. Mr. Phillips said he would look into a useful program for the money.

March reports for the Department of Social Services were reviewed:

- Financial: Through the first quarter of the year, the Department spent 16.5% of their \$19.3 million County budget. Medicaid weekly shares are slightly over budget as three payments were made in March. The average caseload for Day Care increased from last year, this is good as more individuals are receiving assistance with childcare so they can return to work. Mrs. Graf said the tentative State budget reflects an increase in the County contribution for Weekly Medicaid Share; the State will take two years to implement counties taking over the entire cost of the program, this will cost counties

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millions of dollars. The State receives Federal funding that is supposed to be passed on to counties to offset their Medicaid costs; the Governor does not want to pass on these funds. Currently, Wayne County has a \$12 million Medicaid Weekly Share budget; this could go up to \$20 million in 2025. The number of children in Foster Care increased sharply during the first quarter of the year, increasing expense in that budget line.

- Child Welfare Services: There were 139 abuse reports received during the month, seven abuse investigations, seven petitions filed and nine subsequent reports filed.
- Medicaid: There are 4,060 County residents receiving Medicaid benefits and 2,159 receiving Medicaid and SSI benefits. Participation in the program continues to increase. Recertification for benefits is underway.
- Food Stamps: There are 4,443 County families receiving SNAP benefits, 85 receiving SNAP and other benefits through the Department of Social Services and 173 receiving SNAP benefits and Public Assistance. The SNAP caseload remains steady.
- Temporary Assistance: There are 181 Aid to Dependent Children and 166 Home Relief cases open.

This month's spotlight was on World Elder Abuse Day, a time to raise awareness of abuse, neglect and exploitation of vulnerable adults. The County's Department of Social Services Adult Protective Unit consist of nine Caseworkers, one Senior Caseworker, one Supervisor and one Registered Professional Nurse. The Unit assist individuals 18 years of age and older with home management, aide services, preventive services, adult preventive referrals and utility shut off notices. They assist the homeless population with housing, food referrals, domestic violence and coordinate services with other agencies.

Mrs. Graf informed Supervisors the four-county Workforce Investment Board (WIB) recently issued requests for proposals for youth programs. She voiced concern with the amount of stipulations WIB requires for the agency administering the plan. Mrs. Graf recommended Wayne County breakoff from the WIB and administer their own Youth Program; Seneca County has already taken this action. The Wayne County Department of Social Services can meet the expectations of the program without all the tedious and time-consuming stipulations set forth by the WIB. The local program would be funded through Workforce Development. The possibility of the County's Workforce Development Program taking over direct administration of Adult Programs will be looked into.

An update was given on Social Service staffing. Mrs. Graf thanked Supervisors for approving part-time workers; they have been a great assistance during staff shortages and making sure application responses are handled within the State's timeframe. As of today, all Caseworker and Social Welfare Worker positions in the Department are filled. Staff retention events are plans in May, June and July. The building will be holding a 'spring cleaning' event during an afternoon in May. Offices will be closed, except for emergency cases. All staff will take the opportunity to give an especially good cleaning to their work area.

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An updated out-of-state travel request was made for Katherine Schneider to participate in an Article 81 Services to an Incapacitated Adult meeting on April 17th and 18th and November 6th and 7th in Fairfield, New Jersey, for a cost of \$719. Mrs. Graf noted the cost of the meals has changed from the original request. Approved.

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

--Authorization for the Chairman of the Board to sign a contract with ARC Wayne for the provision of outreach services for the Home Energy Assistance Program. The two-year contract is for \$121,793. Approved 5-0.

--Authorization to amend Board Resolution #198-23 for the appointment of an Assistant Department of Social Services Attorney. Mrs. Graf noted no budget amendment was needed in the original request, as there are funds in the budget due to staff shortages, to cover the additional expense. Approved 5-0.

--Authorization to purchase tables and chairs for the newly renovated lunchroom and transfer funds to allow for the purchase. The amount included for this purchase in their 2023 budget will not cover the entire cost resulting in the need for a \$6,027 transfer from the General Fund. A portion of the \$24,110 cost is reimbursable. Approved 5-0.

Mrs. Haskins reviewed activity in her Department. In the first three months of the year staff had contact with 315 seniors regarding the NY Connects program, 200 for insurance counseling, 145 for home delivered meals, 112 for Lunch Club 60, 273 for PERS Units, 69 for aide services and 106 for case management. The waiting list for home delivered meals grew by 11 during March; bringing that waiting list up to 58 seniors. Mrs. Haskins noted the number of home delivered meals provided through the Department reduced once Federal stimulus funding was lost. There are 26 seniors on the waiting list for PERS units. The procedure for obtaining a PERS will now include an in-home assessment, so those with the greatest need can obtain one. The full-time Home Health Aide position is no longer vacant and the Account Clerk and Caseworker positions will be filled soon.

Mrs. Haskin informed Supervisors she reached out to the Rochester Area Community Foundation requesting funding to expand the home delivered meals program; as the County is not a charity they do not have to complete the normal application. She is waiting to hear back from the organization. The 2023 home delivered meals budget is about \$360,000, with meals costing \$9.37 each. Mrs. Haskin noted the cost per meal increased greatly and stimulus funding is no longer available, both resulting in a participant waiting list. She is looking for additional nutritional services funding from State and Federal sources. Mr. Verno said he would like to know how many home delivered meals are served in surrounding counties and the cost they pay for their meals. Mrs. Haskins will have this information for the June meeting. Mr. Verno questioned what amount of Wayne County's population is elderly. Mrs. Haskin said about 30% of the County's population is over 60.

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The Department of Aging and Youth is planning a Senior Health Day on May 31st.

The Department has an applicant for the Governor's Youth Council. The Council is made up of 62 young people ages 13-21—one representative from each county. Wayne County has not had a rep. on the Council. The Council is youth-run and adult supported; its members work to identify and prioritize issues that matter to New York State youth.

The Committee was informed Ms. Beaudette passed her Civil Service test to officially be named the Department of Aging and Youth Deputy Director.

Mrs. Haskins informed Supervisors additional hurdles have been placed for the Congregate Meal Site in Sodus. She will be looking into other locations to hold the noontime program. There used to be transportation service available to the meal site on Fridays; that may be looked into again.

Supervisor Miller arrived at the meeting at 9:38 a.m.

A transmittal was presented regarding authorization for the Chairman of the Board to sign a three-year contract with Liturgical Publications for printing the Three-Score quarterly newsletter for a cost of \$3,000 annually. Mrs. Haskin noted the printer no longer receives ample revenue from advertising to pay printing costs. She would like to have these funds utilize to purchase advertisements in the paper for County programs. Approved 5-0.

The meeting adjourned at 9:41 a.m. The next meeting of the Human Services Committee is scheduled for Monday, June 5th at 9:00 a.m.