

MINUTES

HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE

Monday, May 3, 2021 8:30 a.m.

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

Minutes from the April 5th Committee meeting were approved as written.

Veteran's monthly activities report was distributed with the agenda. During March 467 Veterans and/or family members made contact with the local Office; 427 of these contacts were by phone or mail. There were six units of transportation to the Canandaigua VA Medical Center by WATS during March and the Office was contacted regarding 45 Veterans burial related issues. When a Veteran or their family member is unable to come into the local Office, a staff member will go to their home to have the necessary paperwork completed. The position of Motor Vehicle Operator that was approved at the April Board meeting has been officially posted; the position should be filled next week.

Mrs. Maybee informed members a Veteran that passed away in April requested to be buried in Sampson National Cemetery; the request was denied due to the lack of time the Veterans was in service. The Town of Lyons offered a plot in Elmwood Cemetery for this Veteran, as the plot was purchased and donated by a family in the community with the request it be given to an in-need Veteran in the future. Norton Funeral Home made accommodations for the burial and the Veterans Service Office paid \$400 for the opening and closing of the grave.

Jonathan Davis, CEO of Trualta, addressed the Committee via Zoom regarding family caregiver training his company offers. Mrs. Haskins said members of her staff have participated in the interactive training sessions offer by Trualta and were very pleased with the information and assistance they received. Caregiver assistance can be provided through e-learning audio, video and/or print platforms. Trualta would work with the County to develop a process for identifying caregivers. Sessions can be as short as five minutes and as long as three hours and include information on personal care, safety and injury prevention, grandparents raising grandchildren, dementia, brain health, caregiver wellness and music therapy. Mr. Davis believes the use of electronic devices by seniors has increased since the pandemic; however; printed resources are still available for those who do not have accessibility or choose not to utilize computer equipment. Of the number of individuals that have enrolled in these courses, the majority reported they have benefited from the information they gained and used it as they provide caregiver services. Mr. Davis demonstrated how easy it is to utilize the portals available through the Trualta system and what it could offer the user.

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Mrs. Haskins said the Office of Aging would pay an annual subscription that would entitle them to a dedicated portal in the Trualta system. County Case Managers would have access to participant's portals so they could offer assistance as needed. Trualta would assign staff to work with the County on training and marketing. Mrs. Haskins will be working with the County's Purchasing Agent about contracting for this service.

A report on services offered to senior citizens during the first quarter of 2021 was reviewed. Case Management, Home Delivered Meals, Personal Response Units and NY Connects Programs all had increased in the numbers served; there is only a waiting list for aide services. Office of Aging and Youth staff are assisting with County vaccination clinics by registering seniors and providing staff support. The Office also worked with Cayuga County and Kinney Drugs to hold a vaccination clinic in Red Creek in the hopes of bringing a clinic to this hard to serve area; the majority of participants were from Wayne County. Tailored Caregiver Assessment and Referral (TCARE), a State pilot program, is designed to assess and intervene to prevent caregiver burnout; the program should begin in mid-May. Participation in the Meals on Wheels for Pets Program continues to grow. Efforts are underway to open the Clyde Lunch Club 60 Program; the site needs to be modified to meet COVID protocol. Requests for Proposals have been let for cleaning services for senior citizens that come out of the hospital and need temporary assistance. The Department hired both full and part-time aides to assist with this service. In other business, Mrs. Haskins noted interviews have taken place with lifeguards for Sodus Point Beach; she is concerned there may not be an adequate number of lifeguards for a seven day a week operation. Mrs. Haskins has been working with Mr. Haitz and Mr. Hunt to develop Requests for Proposals for mental health services that would target senior citizens.

Mrs. Haskins presented a transmittal requesting authorization to amend the 2021 budget due to receipt of \$40,952 in Federal Stimulus funding through the State Office of Aging. The funds will be utilized to support services for senior citizens during the COVID Pandemic. Approved 5-0.

Dr. Wayne reviewed the following reports for the Department of Social Services:

- Caseload: Aid to Dependent Children numbers increased to 193 in March and Home Relief numbers decreased to 175. The number of individuals receiving Food Stamps increased slightly to 4,276, the number of County residents receiving Medical Assistance continues to increase. There were 14 child abuse reports filed between February 21st and March 21st. Temporary assistance numbers were lower; financial assistance some individuals receive through unemployment benefits make them ineligible. Food stamp recipients are receiving their maximum benefit at this time. The number of Medicaid recipients continues to increase.
- Financials: Through March, the Department had County cost of nearly \$4.7 million, down from last year during the same time by \$700,000. Salary lines show a reduction in expenditures reflecting efforts to right size; the Department is on target to meet this

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financial goal. The State has yet to inform Social Service Departments when they will return to the regular weekly share rate; current payments give the Office a potential inaccurate financial picture. Family Assistance is running under budget, due to a reduction in the average benefit. Foster Care is on par with the number of children placed at this time this year.

A program spotlight on Foster Care was distributed with the agenda. When children are placed in the custody of the Commissioner of Social Services, the Department is responsible for the everyday care and all needs of that child. Foster Parents are entrusted with the care of these children; they are expected to love, nurture, care for, and provide stability for children in their care. There are generally around 30 children involved in foster care at any time. Foster families do receive compensation; a minimal amount based on the age and any special needs of the foster child.

Dr. Wayne noted all Social Service Departments in the State are waiting for the results of the Stewart versus Roberts case, which will decide if an individual's automobile, is considered a resource when making a determination for public assistance benefits.

The Child Advocacy Center in Lyons will be opening June 1st. The Center will centralize services to children involve in the court system to one location.

The State is overhauling all their technology equipment, resulting in many changes in the local Social Service Department computer system. Staff training will occur once the new system is installed; changes will affect all areas of the Department.

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 Sheriff's Office for Welfare Investigation Services at a cost of \$175,000. Approved 5-0.

--Authorization for the Chairman of the Board to sign a contract with a community provider for administration of an emergency rental assistance program and to accept funding from the State Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance in the amount of \$120,000. The Department of Social Services received these funds to provide outreach to eligible households and assist them in applying for rental arrangement payments. Some funds will be expended on public relations and advertising the program. Dr. Wayne stated the need to roll out this program immediately will not allow time to perform Requests For Proposals for a community provider. She has reviewed this professional service contract with the County Attorney and the County's Purchasing Agent. Mrs. Leonard stated the importance of including language in the request that this contract is being approved due to the current State of Emergency the County is in. Approved 5-0.

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--Authorization to accept \$40,000 from the NYS Office of Children and Family Services to develop a system response to commercial sexually exploited children, trafficked and at-risk youth in the County. Approved 5-0.

--Authorization for the Chairman of the Board to sign a lease agreement with the Wayne County Land Bank for property located at 22 Lawrence Street in Lyons to be utilized for housing of a Child Advocacy Center. The facility will provide a central point for operations to coordinate a comprehensive response to child victims and their caregivers. The Land Bank will be the owner of this property and provide maintenance of the property for a monthly rental fee of \$2,000. Mr. Robusto questioned the high rent cost. Dr. Wayne noted the home on this property was renovated to meet the needs of the program; this expense is built into the rental cost. She stated other locations for the Center were looked at, but none provides the benefits this centralized location does. Mr. House stated a Child Advocacy Center has been needed for years in Wayne County. Approved 5-0.

--Authorization for the Chairman of the Board to sign a memorandum of understanding with US Citizenship and Immigration Services to provide background checks on individuals, that are not Social Service employees, who have potential access to confidential information in the Social Service Department. Approved 5-0.

At 9:35 a.m. members of the Health and Medical Services Committee and Mental Health Director Jim Haitz joined the meeting to be updated on the need for additional supportive/crisis housing in the County. Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds are available to develop such a facility. Mr. Haitz voiced concern with the lack of emergency housing in the County and the struggle it has been to find placements for individuals in need of housing in a safe and supportive environment. The State had a group home in the Town of Macedon for over 20 years that could house 14 residents. DePaul Mental Health Services operated the facility before it was purchased by Lakeview Health Services. The facility closed about five years when Woodland Commons Apartments, just down the road, was constructed and mental health services were offered there. Mr. Haitz said the community resident program suggested for the vacated building would have on-site staffing and mental health services 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Each resident would have a private bedroom with a common living room, kitchen, bathrooms and den. Renovations to the proposed building and staffing will be covered with CDBG funding. Mr. Haitz said the facility would be under the auspice of the Mental Health Department but operated by DePaul Mental Health Services or another local community provider agency. CDBG funds would be used to purchase the property and then given to the Wayne County Land Bank, who would be the owners and oversee maintenance of the property; renting it back to a community provider agency for their use. Currently individuals in need of emergency housing are placed in area hotel/motels, this is costing the County hundreds of thousands of dollars a year, and individuals in these situations do not receive needed mental health/counseling services. The proposed facility would offer long-term stability. Mr. Haitz said discussions have occurred with

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the Town of Macedon Code Enforcement Officer about the property. Mrs. Leonard noted Lakeview operates Woodland Commons Apartments, which also houses individuals with mental health issues, and they have had concerns with Lakeview's operations at times. She said the Town Planning Board needs to give approval for a "special use permit" for this project. Dr. Wayne noted situations involving individuals with mental health issues and housing will continue to increase if there is no treatment provided. Mr. Haitz said if the property is owned by the Land Bank, it will be put back on the tax roll under a special code for such projects. Individuals would be housed in this facility up to 60 days; it is not a permanent home. Because of the commercial district this building is located in, Mr. Haitz does not see it being disruptive to the residents of Macedon. Dr. Wayne noted this is an opportunity to assist this incredible vulnerable population and this action will save the County money.

The meeting adjourned at 9:57 a.m. The next meeting of the Human Services Committee is scheduled for Tuesday, June 1st at 8:30 a.m.