

MINUTES

HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE

Tuesday, July 6, 2021 8:30 a.m.

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

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

The agenda included the monthly activities report for the Veterans Service Agency. During May 359 Veterans and/or family members had contact with the local Office. The Office received many requests regarding family member service dates. There were six trips each to the Canandaigua and Syracuse VA Medical Centers. The Office was contacted regarding 32 Veterans burial benefits. Mrs. Maybee noted the amount of time staff spend assisting Veterans or their families to obtain benefits through the VA. Currently there are 40 pending active claims. There is a three-week waiting list for Office appointments. Previously the local Veterans Office submitted all information needed to submit a claim to the regional office, if the claim was denied and the decision appealed, the regional VA Office performed all additional work to resubmit the claim. The regional office is no longer performing the appeal function; it has been placed on local Veterans' offices. The process of gathering additional information on the Veteran for the appeal process is time consuming. Current appeal cases date back three to four years. Mrs. Maybee noted VA personnel reductions following the pandemic at the State and Federal level. Supervisor Verno questioned if there are funds available to supplement the County for the additional work they have taken on. Mrs. Maybee said she would make contact with Congressman Katko's Office regarding possible reimbursement for these services. Every effort is being made now by staff to have the claim application contain all necessary documentation so it is approved. Some surrounding counties have not reopened their Veterans Service Offices completely and Veterans have been turning to Wayne County for assistance. Mrs. Maybee said her Office does not have the staff to perform any additional duties. There are two American Legion accredited staff members in the Office.

A chart showing the usage of Rochester Transit Service rural bus pass was presented. In 2020 one Veterans utilized the service during May, while in 2021 four passes were obtained. A representative from RTS came into the local office every two weeks to provide bus passes for interested Veterans; due to the low response, the representative is only coming to Wayne County upon request. This service is advertise on the Veterans Service Agency web page.

Supervisor Johnson arrived at the meeting at 8:50 a.m.

The monthly activities report for the Department of Aging and Youth was included with the agenda. There are small waiting list for legal services, case management, aide services and home delivered meal services in the Aging Department; participation in programs is exceeding levels

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2019 and 2020 levels. Case managers are taking on more difficult senior citizen issues. Clyde Lunch Club 60 reopened on June 1st and is doing well. Both the Sodus and Palmyra senior meal programs are anticipating reopening very soon. Supervisor Verno has discussed with the Aging and Youth Director and Deputy Director ways to eliminate the backlog of senior service requests. This issue will be discussed in additional detail at the August meeting.

Sodus Point Beach officially opened on June 29th with 15 lifeguards on staff. Ten of the 11 school district in the County have committed to participate in the Families and Communities Together (FACT) Program for the upcoming year.

Ms. McGonigal announced her retirement as of the end of August. The plan is to interview for the position soon and have someone in place for a transitional period.

The following Social Service reports were included with the agenda:

- Caseload: At the end of May there were 205 Aid to Dependent Children and 195 Home Relief cases. This is a gradual increase from the past few months.
- SNAP: At the end of May there were 4,805 individuals receiving food stamps, this is a slight increase from the previous month. Dr. Wayne questioned if this number will decrease once full benefit requirements are imposed.
- MA: There are 3,538 Medicaid cases as of the end of May and 2,237 Medicaid SSI cases.
- Child Welfare: The Department received 158 reports regarding the welfare of a child and 13 child abuse reports in May.
- Financials: Through May the Department expended nearly 36% of their County budget; this is lower than last year at the same time. Salaries are down from 2020 due to reduction in the purchase of services and efforts to meet goals for Department efficiencies. Dr. Wayne stated the Department will not be able to perform effectively with any additional staff reductions. She noted the cost of Foster Care has greatly increased due to the needs of some children placed in the program.

Dr. Wayne submitted a spotlight report on the Summer Youth Employment Program. Wayne County received an allocation of \$196,958 for the program; lower than previous years. The Department was able to place 54 eligible students at 30 worksites around the County. Dr. Wayne stated this is an important program to prepare youth for the workforce.

Supervisor Emmel arrived at the meeting at 9:03 a.m.

With Raise the Age Legislation, the State was seeking locations to establish regional youth detention facilities. The site was under consideration to serve this area of the state is no longer being considered. Dr. Wayne said she is working with the Probation Department and the Sheriff on possible locations in Wayne County that could be utilized. It has not been determined if building a new facility would be less expensive than renovating an existing facility.

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Dr. Wayne noted the amount of COVID funding the Department is receiving for short-term programs. Staff is currently working on emergency shelter and emergency housing programs for when the State's Emergency Rental Assistance Program stops. It is difficult get programs in place to meet the emergency shelter and emergency housing needs of County residents. Close to 200 applications have been received from Wayne County residents wishing to take part in the extended Emergency Rental Assistance Program because of COVID income loss. There still is more time to put in an application for the program.

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

--Authorization for the Chairman of the Board to sign an agreement with Elmcrest Children's Center for the provision of foster care for children at a price not to exceed \$2,190,000. This is for the housing of children. The Department is obligated to place children whether they have a contract with an institution or not. Approved 5-0.

--Authorization for the Chairman of the Board to sign an agreement with the William George Agency for Children's Services for the provision of foster care for children at a cost not to exceed \$3,285,000. Approved 5-0.

--Authorization for the Chairman of the Board to sign a contract with Catholic Charities of Wayne County for the provision of Early Crisis Intervention Services for a price not to exceed \$59,165. Approved 5-0.

--Authorization for the Chairman of the Board to sign an agreement with Hillside Children's Center for the provision of foster care for children at a price not to exceed \$2,190,000. Approved 5-0.

--Authorization for the Chairman of the Board to sign an agreement with the Villa of Hope for the provision of foster care for children at a price not to exceed \$2,190,000. Approved 5-0.

--Authorization for the Chairman of the Board to sign a contract with the Victims Resource Center of the Finger Lakes for the provision of residential domestic violence services for a price not to exceed \$70,000. The Department is obligated to provide residential housing for persons involved in domestic violence. Approved 5-0.

--Authorization for the Chairman of the Board to sign the 2021-2025 Finger Lakes Works Local Plan. Finger Lakes Workforce represents the Counties of Ontario, Seneca, Wayne and Yates. Approved 5-0.

--Authorization to renew membership on the Finger Lakes Workforce Investment Board. Approved 5-0.

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--Authorization for the Chairman of the Board to sign contracts of affiliation with the Regional Institutions of Higher Learning for the provision of intern placement services. Dr. Wayne said having interns in the Department is good for developing a future workforce. Approved 5-0.

--Authorization to amend the agreement with Finger Lakes Community College in relation to staff employee training to increase the amount of funding for this training to \$67,764; the amount of funding change slightly. Approved 5-0.

Dr. Wayne informed members of a date change on an out of State travel request formerly approved to allow a staff member to travel to New Jersey for an adult guardianship review. The cost remains the same.

The meeting adjourned at 9:20 a.m. The next meeting of the Human Services Committee is scheduled for Monday, August 2nd at 8:30 a.m.