

MINUTES

HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE

Monday, October 2, 2023 9:00 a.m.

Present: Supervisors Donalty, Leonard, Johnson, Verno, Mettler, Groat, Brady and Eygnor, County Administrator Rick House, Fiscal Assistant Brian Sams, Social Services Commissioner Lisa Graf, Veterans Service Director David Phillips, Aging and Youth Department Director Amy Haskins and Purchasing Agent Christopher O'Connor.

Minutes from the September 5th and 22nd Committee meetings were approved as written.

The monthly activities report for the Veterans Service Agency was distributed with the agenda. During August, 188 contacts were made by Veterans and/or family members to the local Office, the majority by telephone. Bus transportation was provided for five Veterans to the Canandaigua VA Medical Center and three to the Syracuse VA Medical Center. The Office was contacted regarding 11 Veteran burial benefits and one indigent Veteran burial.

Both Mr. Phillips and the Veterans Service Officer received their American Legion Accreditations.

Mr. Phillips noted recent memorial contributions the Veterans' Department received; the funds have been deposited into the Misc. line of the Department's budget.

Funds designated for distribution to local VFWs and American Legions from excess van donation monies, cannot be made until the organizations complete a W-9 Form.

Mrs. Haskins reviewed her monthly activities report. At the end of September there were 26 seniors waiting to receive a PERS unit, 11 for legal services, 2 for case management, 4 aide services and 27 home delivered meal service. A Medicare Insurance event is scheduled for October 12th at the Lyons Community Center; open enrollment is from October 15th – December 7th for plan coverage in 2024.

In Youth Bureau news, during the 2023 season, Sodus Point Beach Park had 1,198 patrons between May 27th and August 23rd. Mrs. Haskins reported the two FACT Caseworkers in the Department are currently working with 42 families; Caseworkers not only work with the children assigned to the program, but with their entire family. She informed the Committee, Ontario Resident Ethan Smith, a youth representative on the County's Youth Advisory Board, was appointed to the New York State Governor's Youth Council. Applications are being accepted for Youth Team Sports; there are \$46,860 in grant funds available. Mrs. Haskins said she looked for a funding opportunity for the Summer Lifeguard Program at Sodus Point Beach Park to use these grant funds; but the program does not meet grant criteria.

Mrs. Haskins reviewed answers to some questions that were asked during her budget presentation last month. She listed services the Department has that are required and those that

are not. Although the overwhelming majority of programs are required, the actual number of clients that must be served is not mandated. The only senior program that is not required, but is offered is the PERS program. A PERS unit is a small pendant that seniors can wear. When an emergency occurs (falling, sudden illness, home invasion, etc.) the individual can press the button on the pendant and initiate a conversation with an operator. Mrs. Haskins said the Department received an additional \$260,000, in cost of living increases and private funding after she completed her 2024 budget. During budget discussions, she did not sense the Committee wanted to add staff, so she is recommending these funds be utilized to increase services, i.e. eliminating the waiting list for home delivered meals (\$120,000) and PERS units (\$5,000) and the remaining money placed against existing personnel costs. Mr. Sams noted the large increase in funding since 2020 in Area Agency on Aging budget due to Stimulus funding. Mrs. Haskins said Stimulus funds were used to enhance services to senior citizens in the County. As service levels are not mandated, the County needs to make a decision if they want to fund programs that have a County cost, and if so, to what level. Ms. Leonard said she supported the use of these funds to reduce the waiting list for home delivered meals, believing this is a service many residents of a County need. Mr. Donalty said there are some services this Committee may recommend to support, while they may not recommend other, unfunded, programs. Mr. Sams noted the Department receives funding from a number of grants and the salaries of staff members are tied into many different grants; making it hard to keep track of grant funded positions. Mrs. Haskins said time studies are utilized to decide what hours a staff member charges against grant funded programs. Mr. House said the County will need to decide what services it will provide both now, and in the future with the funding they have. Mrs. Haskins noted senior citizens are 30% of the County's population. With the addition of the \$260,000 in funding, the County cost of the Area Agency on Aging budget would be lowered to about 5%.

Mrs. Haskins informed the Committee it cost \$180,000 to operate the FACT (Families and Communities Together) Program. The program receives \$72,000 from school districts, \$40,000 from the Department of Social Services, \$44,000 from the Mental Health Department and \$21,000 from Youth Development Funding. The County cost to the program is about \$3,000 annually.

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

- Financial: Through August the Department spent 69.4% of their County appropriation; this is \$1.9 million higher than last year at the same time. Many programs are having higher expenses in 2023 than in 2022, especially Medicaid. Recent expenses reflect additional hours worked by staff. If Day Care continues to increase the way it is there will be a County cost of about \$500,000 by end of 2024. Mrs. Graf said the program had 65 cases last summer and now has 140 cases. Qualification requirements for this program were increased during the pandemic and have yet to be lowered. Mr. Donalty questioned if this is a program the Department should start a waiting list for. Mrs. Graf noted the increased cost for Medicare weekly shares; the County must pay this. Foster Care costs

are also up due to the increased number of children in the program and the increased services those children in Foster Care need.

- Child Welfare: At the end of September there were 159 children listed as being allegedly maltreated or abused in the County with 97 reports of abuse being turned into the Department. Eleven Family Court petitions were filed during the month, three abuse reports and three subsequent reports filed.
- Medicaid: At the end of July, there were 3,587 County residents receiving Medicaid; down slightly from the previous month. There were 2,144 residents receiving Medicaid along with SSI benefits.
- Food Stamps: There were 4,431 County residents receiving Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits, 177 receiving SNAP and Public Assistance benefits and 90 receiving SNAP and more than one other Public Assistance benefit.
- Temporary Assistance: The number of cases that include Aid to Dependent Children slightly decreased to 194 and the number of cases including Home Relief/Safety Net slightly increased to 158. The HEAP (Home Energy Assistance Program) season opens on November 1st.

Mr. House informed the Committee of a recent action being taken in New York City to provide members of their homeless population with a rent 'voucher' and bus ticket to upstate counties. By freeing up rooms homeless are taking in New York City, they can move in asylum seekers. Wayne County has not received any members of the homeless population from New York. If the New York City voucher has any value outside of New York City was questioned. Mrs. Graf said if an individual should come to Wayne County and they cannot find a place to live, they become a member of our homeless population. The local Department of Social Services served 21 homeless individuals during September. The single residency home in Lyons is proving to be a cost savings to the Department. Mr. Donalty questioned if the Board of Supervisors should send a resolution or letter of opposition to the Governor and Mayor of New York regarding the rent voucher system and put them on notice that Wayne County will not be taking in their homeless population or asylum seekers, as we do not have a place to put in them.

This month's spotlight was on the Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP). This Federally funded program assist low-income households with their fuel and utility expenses. This benefit can be applied for in person, by mail or on-line. Besides the 'regular' HEAP program to income eligible households, there are Emergency HEAP funds available when individuals are facing a utility shut-off, a component to repair damaged heating equipment or replace an existing heating source, and a cooling assistant program for the purchase and installation of air conditioners to income eligible residents.

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

--Authorization for the Chairman of the Board to sign an agreement with International Data Base Corp DBA BidNet for the provision of additional modules to post, accept, and evaluate RFPs and

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RFQs in an electronic format for a cost of \$92,134. This system adds efficiencies to the Department's bidding process. Approved 5-0.

--Authorization to amend the Social Service budget with a \$700,000 appropriation from the General Fund to cover unanticipated Medicaid costs. Approved 5-0.

--Authorization for the Chairman of the Board to sign an agreement between the Department of Social Services and Wayne County Public Health for the provision of nursing assessments at a charge back cost of \$25,000. Mrs. Graf stated assessments are needed to determine certain client care plans; however, the Department no longer has a Registered Nurse on staff. Approved 5-0.

--Authorization for the Wayne County Child Advocacy Center to use the Wayne County logo for promotional and educational materials. Approved 5-0.

--Authorization for the Chairman of the Board to sign a contract with Northwoods for the provision of hardware and software technology to improve Department efficiencies for a cost of \$465,000. Mrs. Graf noted grant funding sought to offset this expenses was not received. Approved 5-0.

The meeting adjourned at 9:55 a.m. The next meeting of the Human Services Committee is scheduled for Monday, November 6th at 9:00 a.m.