

MINUTES

HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE

Monday, October 4, 2021 8:30 a.m.

Present: Supervisor Verno, Leonard, Robusto Jacobs and Miller, County Administrator Rick House, Fiscal Assistants Ken Blake and Brian Sams, Social Services Commissioner Dr. Ellen Wayne, Veterans Service Officer Samantha Wilson and Aging and Youth Director Amy Haskins. Supervisor Johnson was not present for the meeting.

Minutes from the September 7th and 23rd Committee meetings were approved as written.

The agenda included the activities report for the Office of Aging and Youth. Services for the aging population are in high demand; this has resulted in a small waiting list for some services. Medicare reps will be in the Office on October 8th from 10 a.m. – 2 p.m. to meet with beneficiaries about the 2022 plan; appointments are required. The Department is not under the vaccine mandate with respect to their Aide employees at this time; Aides wear their personal protective equipment when in a client's presence. The Office is working to fill a vacant Aide position.

A discussion took place on which staff members are required to have a COVID vaccination. Mrs. Haskins noted Divita Dialysis Center in Newark closed; the Office of Aging and Youth was contacted regarding the need for transportation services for some senior who will need to attend dialysis treatment at facilities outside of Wayne County. The Office is working to make it possible to get seniors to their dialysis appointments if they are personally unable to drive or get transportation.

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

--Authorization for the Chairman of the Board to sign an emergency contract for dialysis transportation for seniors with Dependable Medical Transportation. Mrs. Haskins stated with the closure of the Newark dialysis center some seniors have been instructed to go to a facility in Irondequoit. It is difficult for many senior citizen to drive in Monroe County. The cost will be paid for with COVID grant funding. Emergency transportation services are being requested through November. The Office of Aging and Youth is not set up to bill Medicare for services; however, it is not believed transportation costs are reimbursable through Medicare. Mrs. Haskins said the Office is exploring other means of transportation. She will keep the Committee updated. Approved 4-0.

--Authorization for the Chairman of the Board to sign an emergency contract for dialysis transportation for senior citizens with K&L Medical Transportation. This contractor will be utilized for dialysis services in Geneva. The contract will be paid for with COVID grant funding. Approved 4-0.

PAGE 2

--Authorization for the Chairman of the Board to sign an emergency contract for dialysis transportation with Jet Karriers for the transportation of seniors for dialysis services in Geneva. Approved 4-0.

Mrs. Haskins stated Requests For Proposals for chore services will be open later this month. The Office is working on transitioning new staff.

Monthly statistical reports for the Department of Social Services were distributed with the agenda.

- Caseload: The number of Aid to Dependent Children and Family Assistant caseloads and Home Relief participants were down in August. Participation in the Food Stamp Program remained constant in August at 4,323. There are 3,628 individuals receiving Medicaid only benefits and 2,206 receiving Medicaid through Supplemental Security Income (SSI). When qualification verification for Medicaid benefits will be required has yet to be set by the State. Additional financial benefits issued for Unemployment stopped at the end of August; this is reflected in a higher number of Food Stamp cases in September—this will show in next month's report. The State said they will continue the maximum food stamp benefit through the end of October. With the loss of some COVID supplemental income, more residents qualify for medical assistance. The number of Child Welfare cases increased in September with the opening of schools. The Child Welfare Unit is struggling as they have had a high turnover of staff. Dr. Wayne said downsizing the Department has proven difficult when trends continue to require additional social service programs.
- Financial: Through August, the Department expended 47% of their County budget; this is substantially lower than last year at the same time. Dr. Wayne stated every effort is made to contain costs in the Department. Day Care expenses are down at this time; this is due to the number of day care spots that were shut down during the pandemic. The Department will receive one less Medicaid payment in 2021 due to the way the cycle falls. Family Assistance participation is down; however, the cost per participant increased significantly. The Department continues to operate under COVID waivers.

Social Services' Domestic Violence Program was spotlighted this month. Adult Services completed 61 domestic violence screenings in the first nine months of the year. There were 281 cases of domestic violence reported to criminal justice services in Wayne County in 2020. Domestic violence can include physical, sexual and psychological actions to gain, maintain, or regain power and control in a relationship. In the United States one in every four women and one in nine men experience contact with some form of domestic violence. The COVID-19 health crisis has caused a dramatic increase in domestic violence. Domestic violence is the number one way women ages 18-50 are injured in the United States. Dr. Wayne stated there is a high cost to house individuals in safe housing.

Regular arrears supplemental HEAP (Home Energy Assistance Program) payments were opened on Friday; local DSSs received 24-hour notice of this action that has proved to be very time

PAGE 3

consuming. Dr. Wayne stated she does not have staff assigned to the HEAP program for the entire year; generally, a staff member is assigned to the program in October. The addition of this Supplement created a bit of a staffing and efficiency challenge. This is also costly to the program, as utility payment arrears in some cases are in the thousands. Dr. Wayne said she is concerned that HEAP benefits are not currently made available to individuals who utilize other sources for heating, i.e. wood and coal.

A discussion took place on how the Social Service Office interprets State regulations for payment of indigent burials. If the deceased individual has an insurance policy, those funds are generally utilized toward the cost of the funeral. At issue is the ability to determine the insurance as an available resource when a non-legally responsible relative is named as the beneficiary. One case is currently under review when insurance money was given to a relative that has no fiscal responsibility for the individual's burial. Mr. House noted the financial responsibility to have a body stored in the morgue for a long time is costly.

The local Social Service Department has yet to go through their annual Representative Payee Program Audit. The audit evaluates whether internal controls over eligibility, case management and accounting are being done properly. Due to COVID-19 many programs are allowing participation without the usual verification for services.

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

--Authorization for the Chairman of the Board to sign an agreement with the House of the Good Shepard for the placement of children in child caring institutions for a price not to exceed \$275,000. Approved 4-0.

--Authorization for the Chairman of the Board to sign an agreement with Wayne Behavioral Health Network for the provision of assessment of youth to be conducted by an approved Qualified Individual to determine appropriateness of placements in a qualified residential treatment program for an amount not to exceed \$25,000. Approved 4-0.

--Authorization for the Chairman of the Board to sign a contract with Victim Resource Center of the Finger Lakes for the provision of non-residential domestic violence services for a price not to exceed \$25,000. Approved 4-0.

--Authorization to accept \$24,781 in additional funding from the Finger Lakes Workforce Investment Board for Title 1 Youth Funding and authorization for the Chairman of the Board to sign an amended agreement for receipt of these funds. Approved 4-0.

--Authorization for the Chairman of the Board to sign a contract with the Child Care Council, Inc. for the provision of services required to register and inspect child day care programs for a price not to exceed \$120,149. Approved 4-0.

PAGE 4

Dr. Wayne noted the possibility of a Rule 14 Resolution to fill a service need.

The monthly activities report for the Veterans Service Office was reviewed. During August there were 504 contacts with Veterans and/or family members, six Veterans transported to the Canandaigua VA Medical Center and seven to the Syracuse VA Medical Center. The Office was contacted regarding 74 burials and paid for two indigent burials at a cost of \$3,140. The number of contacts is based on each call or inquiry received about a burial; the number consists of multiple calls regarding the same veterans. Ms. Wilson stated the Department works to obtain burial benefits from the VA when possible.

Distributed with the agenda were two letters the Veterans Service Office received regarding the work they are providing the public. One letter particularly acknowledged the work done by Ms. Wilson. Ms. Wilson stated how much she enjoyed working with Veterans. The new Veterans Service Officer should be on staff by the end of the month. Mrs. Jacobs stated she worked with Ms. Wilson at public events and she is very well like and respected by Veterans. Mr. House acknowledged the good work being done by the Office.

The meeting adjourned at 9:25 a.m. The next meeting of the Human Services Committee is scheduled for Monday, November 1st at 8:30 a.m.