

WARREN COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

COMMITTEE: **WESTMOUNT HEALTH FACILITY & COUNTRYSIDE ADULT HOME**

DATE: **October 20, 2006**

Committee Members Present:

Supervisors Haskell
Champagne
O'Connor
Mason
Geraghty

Committee Member Absent:

Supervisor Tessier

Vacant: Town of Queensbury

Others Present:

Representing Westmount Health Facility:

Hal Payne, Administrator
Betsy Henkel, Westmount Health Facility
Comptroller

Representing CSEA:

Mark Stipano, Industrial Hygiene Specialist
Gary China, Safety Specialist
Jon Premo, Labor Relations Specialist

William H. Thomas, Chairman

Joan Parsons, Commissioner of Administrative &
Fiscal Services

Joan Sady, Clerk of the Board

Supervisor Kenny

Supervisor Merlino

Supervisor Bentley

Supervisor F. Thomas

Debra L. Schreiber, Legislative Office Specialist

Mr. Champagne called the meeting to order at 9:30 a.m.

Motion was made by Mr. Mason, seconded by Mr. O'Connor, and carried unanimously to approve the minutes of the September 22, 2006 Westmount Health Facility and Countryside Adult Home Committee Meeting, subject to correction by the Clerk.

Privilege of the floor was extended to Mr. Payne, Administrator of Westmount Health Facility and Countryside Adult Home, who distributed copies of his agenda packet to members of the committee, a copy of which is on file with the minutes.

Commencing with the list of pending items to come before the committee, Mr. Payne advised that a company that had met the necessary criteria would take the final measurements and they anticipated delivery of the windows within the next four weeks. Pursuant to the quote, he said the company would remove, install and caulk the windows but any necessary interior work would be performed by the County. In response to Mr. Champagne's inquiry, Mr. Payne stated there were funds still available in the Siemens project.

Mr. Payne apprised the odor difficulties they had experienced inside the Countryside Adult Home with the new sewer system had been resolved; however, he said, they were in contact with the engineer, Carl Schroeder, with respect to the outside odors. Mr. Champagne said he thought the County hired a reliable and competent engineer to design and install a sewer system but expressed his disappointment after learning the Countryside Adult Home had encountered problems shortly after installation. Mr. Haskell commented it was County employees that resolved the odor issue and not the engineer.

With respect to the timekeeping system, Mr. Payne stated the Kronos system had been upgraded and was working well.

Mr. Payne apprised Mr. Dusek had the contract with B.O.C.E.S. (Board of Cooperative Educational Services) relative to CNA (certified nursing assistant) training. Mr. Champagne commented he did not understand why the process took so long. Mr. Payne replied that only enrolled applicants that completed the training program would become Warren County employees.

Turning to the Countryside Adult Home Agenda, Mr. Payne requested a transfer of funds from Allowances (A.6030 434) to Automotive Equipment (A.6030 230) in the amount of \$4,200 to purchase a new plow for the pickup truck. He said of the three estimates he had obtained, the lowest quote was from T & T Equipment from Latham, New York.

Motion was made by Mr. Mason, seconded by Mr. Champagne and carried unanimously authorizing the request as outlined above and the same be forwarded to the Finance Committee. A copy of the resolution request form is on file with the minutes.

Mr. Payne informed the committee they were attempting to place an ad in The Post Star as they were currently experiencing staffing difficulties at the Countryside Adult Home. He stated the four applicants that had applied either could not or would not work nights/weekends. Subsequently, Brenda Hayes' (Director of Countryside Adult Home) sister expressed an interest in the position but he said was uncomfortable with that situation. Mr. Payne acknowledged the position was per diem; therefore, Mr. Geraghty suggested placing an ad in the newspaper and temporarily hiring this person on a per diem basis.

Mark Stipano, CSEA Industrial Hygiene Specialist, distributed a packet of information to the patient members of the Committee briefly summarizing the cost benefits of the bed-lift proposal. He stated he included a letter from Rob Scholz, Political Action Coordinator, encouraging the committee to either fund the entire project or consider the alternative of a three year step program. Pursuant to a meeting between Mr. Hess (the contractor) and himself, he said they comprised a cost estimate per bed of \$2,455.90. Mr. Stipano asked the committee to consider re-proposing the funds authorized at the previous committee meeting or alternatively, installing these lifts in a phase-in process over a couple years. He discussed some of the "other considerations" that he had included within the packet of information that had been distributed.

Based upon a bill that had passed the Assembly and Senate, Mr. Stipano apprised New York State would offer funding assistance to nursing homes who participated in this lift trial program and was referred to the New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH) to implement the program in January 2007. In addition, he said the funding for the program was \$2.5 million but was only available to nursing homes that demonstrated they were implementing a safe lifting program with these lifts.

Mr. Haskell indicated they recently received a letter from Mr. Caimano, Budget Officer, directing Westmount/Countryside Adult Home to decrease their .2's by 37% and their .4's by 7%. As a result of this correspondence, Mr. Payne, Ms. Henkel and himself decided to reduce their .4's by eliminating an air handler system (\$150,000) and excluding the van. He stated he knew the entire committee was in favor of this lifting system but felt the air handler system was a priority over the lifting system. While he said he was comfortable with the Westmount/Countryside Adult Home

budget when it was presented to the Budget Officer, he stated he had been asked twice by the Budget Officer to make significant cuts, even after pleading with him to make some exceptions. Pursuant to the meeting, Betsy Henkel, Health Facility Comptroller, located some additional revenue in the 2006 budget from IGT (intergovernmental transfers) money, so they would be able to purchase the specialty van in 2006. (Note: Ms. Henkel advised that the cost of an air handler was \$140,000 and not \$150,000 and the .4's had been reduced by \$130,592.)

Mr. Mason stated he understood the importance of maintenance to the nursing home but queried how the committee was to raise these funds. Mr. Haskell responded these funds would be included within the 2007 budget. Once the Budget Officer set the budget, Mr. Champagne asked if the Board had the option to vote the budget down.

Mr. Kenny entered the meeting at 9:50 a.m.

Mrs. Parsons explained the Budget Officer currently "owned" the budget. Upon filing the budget at the end of the month and presenting it at the November 3, 2006 Special Meeting, and prior to adopting it as a tentative budget, she said any necessary changes could be made. Prior to adopting it at the public hearing approximately two weeks later, she stated the full Board had the opportunity to change it.

Mr. Geraghty queried how much a \$50,000 appropriation would impact the County tax rate. Based upon the assessed values and equalization rates, Mrs. Parsons replied the County rate was \$13.07 for every \$1 million. Mr. Mason asked if there was any potential bonding and Mrs. Parsons replied she did not believe so.

With respect to the recent legislation that was passed, Mr. Champagne queried whether it was possible to put the cost of the lift system within the Westmount/Countryside Adult Home budget contingent upon receipt of NYS funding. Mrs. Parsons stated the budget was up considerably and she was doubtful the Budget Officer would add to the 2007 budget.

Mr. O'Connor added there were departments within the County that could decrease their expenses and not affect the overall functioning of the department. Conversely, he said, Warren County provided a service that related to the human element that was far more important than any political motive. Mr. Champagne concurred with Mr. O'Connor's opinion and felt not having an air handler in a nursing home should be considered a crime. In discussions with the Budget Officer, Mrs. Parsons had been instructed to ask the committee to transfer any leftover funds from the 2006 budget into the 2007 budget. Mr. Haskell asked the committee to consider making a motion to keep the air handler within the budget despite the lack of the funds especially considering there was no guarantee.

Motion was made by Mr. O'Connor, seconded by Mr. Champagne and carried unanimously approving the request to keep the air handler request in the 2007 Westmount Health Facility & Countryside Adult Home budget.

Mr. Bentley entered the meeting at 10:00 a.m.

Mr. Geraghty suggested forwarding a letter to Congressman Sweeney asking for appropriations to purchase the lifting system for the Westmount Health Facility. Mr. Haskell said he would contact

Congressman Sweeney on Monday and follow it up with a letter; however, in recent conversations with the Congressman he was apprised they were working on 2008 appropriations.

Motion was made by Mr. Geraghty, seconded by Mr. Mason and carried unanimously requesting the Chairman of the Committee write a letter asking for funds to purchase the lifting system for the Westmount Health Facility.

Mr. F. Thomas entered the meeting at 10:05 a.m.

With respect to Item 2 on the Westmount Health Facility agenda, Mr. Payne requested the following:

- transfer of funds in the amount of \$22,000 from Maintenance/Contract to Dietary/Food (\$20,000) and House./Supplies (\$2,000) for the purchase of food and paper products;
- transfer of funds in the amount of \$2,200 from Maintenance/Contract to Nursing/Furniture/Furnishing for the purchase of air mattresses; and
- amend the 2006 County budget by increasing estimated revenues and appropriations in the amount of \$45,000 to purchase a new van.

Motion was made by Mr. O'Connor, seconded by Mr. Champagne and carried unanimously approving the requests as outlined above and refer same to the Finance Committee for consideration. Copies of the resolution request forms are on file with the minutes.

Mr. Payne asked the committee to approve a contract with Mahoney Notify-Plus, Inc. to perform the annual inspection/monitor of the fire alarm system commencing March 1, 2007 and ending February 28, 2008 in an amount not to exceed \$1,107.

Motion was made by Mr. Geraghty, seconded by Mr. Mason and carried unanimously approving the request as submitted and the necessary resolution was authorized for the November board meeting. A copy of the resolution request form is on file with the minutes.

Continuing on with the fourth item under the Westmount Health Facility Agenda, Mr. Payne informed the committee the staffing levels were approximately the same as last month. In the past when the County experienced a shortage of help at Westmount/Countryside Adult Home, Mr. Haskell suggested CSEA advertise vacant positions in their newsletters.

Referring to the last item on the Agenda, Mr. Payne stated he included information on the type of bus they were looking to purchase including the various options and features available. He apprised the Starlite van could hold four wheelchairs and four walkers compared to the current van which only held two wheelchairs.

Mr. Haskell asked Mr. Payne to include a letter he received from Regina Raymond on behalf of her parents who were residents at Westmount for the committee's review. He said the care the residents receive at Westmount was excellent thanks to the employees who gave 100% plus. Mr. Haskell thanked the representatives from CSEA for attending.

There being no further business before the Committee, on a motion by Mr. Mason and seconded by Mr. Champagne, Mr. Haskell adjourned the meeting at 10:08 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Debra L. Schreiber
Legislative Office Specialist