

WARREN COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

COMMITTEE: HEALTH SERVICES

DATE: JUNE 27, 2007

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COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

SUPERVISORS MASON  
SHEEHAN  
HASKELL  
F. THOMAS  
TESSIER  
CHAMPAGNE  
SOKOL

OTHERS PRESENT:

REPRESENTING THE HEALTH SERVICES DEPARTMENT:

PATRICIA AUER, DIRECTOR  
SHARON SCHALDONE, ASSISTANT DIRECTOR, HOME  
CARE  
TAWN DRISCOLL, FISCAL MANAGER  
PATRICIA NENNINGER, SECOND ASSISTANT COUNTY ATTORNEY  
HAL PAYNE, COMMISSIONER OF ADMINISTRATIVE & FISCAL  
SERVICES  
JOAN SADY, CLERK OF THE BOARD  
SUPERVISORS GABRIELS  
KENNY  
MERLINO  
STEC  
TODD LUNT, DIRECTOR OF HUMAN RESOURCES  
RICHARD KELLY, PERSONNEL OFFICER  
AMANDA ALLEN, LEGISLATIVE OFFICE SPECIALIST

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Mr. Mason called the meeting of the Health Services Committee to order at 9:30 a.m.

Motion was made by Mr. Sokol, seconded by Mr. F. Thomas and carried unanimously to approve the minutes from the May 30, 2007 Committee meeting, subject to correction by the Clerk of the Board.

Privilege of the floor was extended to Patricia Auer, Director of Health Services, who distributed copies of the agenda to the Committee members; *a copy of the agenda is on file with the minutes.*

Ms. Auer began the agenda review with the 'Pending Items' portion, which she detailed as follows:

- 1) Update on Telehealth Program: Ms. Auer apprised that a copy of the most updated Telemedicine Demonstration Program Quarterly Report, submitted as part of the grant deliverables to NYSDOH (New York State Department of Health), was included in the agenda for the Committee's review. She stated that the program was working well and averaging service to 70 - 90 patients per month. Ms. Auer noted that the program was reported on each month, usually with no significant issue, and she asked the Committee if they would like this item to remain on the listing of pending items for status update each month. After some discussion, it was the consensus of the Committee that this item should be removed from the listing of pending items and reported on only as issues arose;
- 2) Point of Care grant application: Ms. Auer reported that she had received no further indication as to the status of the grant application; however, she said that she expected to receive such information by the end of the summer;

- 3) Pandemic flu planning efforts: Ms. Auer advised that a copy of the Pandemic Influenza/Emergency Response and Preparedness Activity Update for the month of June was included in the agenda. She noted that a group of her staff was attending a NYSDOH sponsored Risk Communication Message Mapping session in Lake Placid, NY intended to develop a messaging system for the community. Ms. Auer said that this training session was a new initiative put forth resulting from the Public Health Conference;
- 4) Emergency Response Preparedness Plan: Ms. Auer distributed copies of the 2007 Emergency Response and Preparedness Plan for Warren County Health Services to the Committee members, *a copy of which is on file with the minutes*. She noted that this document was required annually by the NYSDOH and approval, in the form of a board resolution, was required to accept it.

Motion was made by Mr. Haskell, seconded by Mr. Sheehan and carried unanimously to accept the 2007 Emergency Response and Preparedness Plan for Warren County and the necessary resolution was authorized for the July 20<sup>th</sup> Board meeting. *A copy of the request is on file with the minutes.*

Moving to the new business portion of the agenda, Ms. Auer stated that two resolution requests were included to authorize separate contract agreements with Licensed Clinical Social Workers, Nancy K. Carroll and Rita Lombardo Navatka, to provide services to patients in the CHHA (Certified Home Health Agency) and the LTHHCP (Long Term Home Health Care Program). She noted that currently they contracted with only one social worker to provide these services and that person was out of work due to a long-term illness. Ms. Auer added that at this point it was unclear as to whether this person would be able to return to work and it was a requirement of the Health Services Department's operating certificate to provide these services.

Motion was made by Mr. Tessier, seconded by Mr. F. Thomas and carried unanimously to approve the requests for contracts with both Nancy Carroll and Rita Lombardo Navatka to provide social worker services for patients in the CHHA and LTHHCP as outlined above and the necessary resolutions were authorized for the July 20<sup>th</sup> Board meeting. *Copies of both requests for new contracts are on file with the minutes.*

Ms. Auer apprised that the next new business item pertained to a request for a referral to the Personnel Committee to authorize the transfer of a Community Health Nurse Position (Grade 20 base salary \$39,948) from the LTHHCP (A.4016-10 100S) to the CHHA (A.4010-10 100S); the transfer of a Registered Professional Nurse Position (Grade 19 base salary \$38,308) from the CHHA to the LTHHCP; thereby amending the Department's Table of Organization accordingly. She noted that although all of the positions in question had already been approved, the transfer of titles was necessary to place the positions in the correct area for salary purposes. Ms. Auer added that these transfers would have no affect on the Budget.

Motion was made by Mr. Champagne, seconded by Mr. Tessier and carried unanimously to approve the transfer of positions as outlined above and refer same to the Personnel Committee. *Copies of the requests are on file with the minutes.*

Todd Lunt, Director of Human Resources, entered the meeting at 9:40 a.m.

Proceeding with the agenda review, Ms. Auer advised that the next item listed referred to the Report of Revenues and Expenditures and the Free/Reduced Care Report, both of which, she said, were included in the agenda. She noted that the Report of Revenues and Expenditures was deceiving as it reflected only the actual revenues received and not those that had been billed but not yet received. Ms. Auer said that, as in most months, the Department was behind in receipt of expected revenues. She added that the full Budget Performance Report had also been included in the agenda for the Committee's review. Sharon Schaldone, Assistant Director of Home Care, suggested that because revenues were continuously delayed they would be better served to provide the revenue reports on a semi-annual basis, along with the full annual report, allowing for the reflection of revenues received with greater accuracy.

Discussion ensued.

Referring to the Report of Revenues and Expenditures, Mr. Sokol noted that the total for Employee Benefits in 2006 totaled \$41,260 while nothing was budgeted for 2007 and he asked what the reason for this was. Tawn Driscoll, Fiscal Manager, explained that these employee benefits referred to Worker's Compensation/Disability insurance which was billed to each Department by the Self-Insurance Department and had not been done as of yet. She added that she anticipated that this figure would be included on the next month's report. Ms. Auer noted that there had been several Worker's Compensation and Disability claims reported in 2007 and she expected the cost of that coverage to increase accordingly.

Ms. Driscoll apprised that in reviewing the Budget Performance Report she had noticed a shortage in the salary codes for the Bio-Terrorism after-hours call pay. She explained that an after-hours hotline was required to be in operation 52 weeks per year, utilizing two full-time and one part-time employee at a cost of \$150 per week for a grand total of \$7,800 per year. Ms. Driscoll advised that only \$3,500 had been budgeted in this Code, which, she noted, may have been her mistake as she had mistakenly used the shorter grant year to determine the total needed rather than a calendar year. In order to rectify the situation, Ms. Driscoll said that a request for transfer of funds had been included in the agenda to transfer funds from the Bio-Terrorism Telephone Expense code (A.4189.423) in the amount of \$4,300 to Bio-Terrorism-salaries to cover the balance of the salaries of the full and part-time positions needed to address any after-hours Bio-Terrorism related telephone calls.

Ms. Auer noted that the Bio-Terrorism after-hours hotline was experiencing test drills from the State frequently. She said that this was excellent as it ensured that in the event of an after-hours

emergency personnel could be reached; however, it incurred additional expenses as someone would be required to address any incoming calls.

Motion was made by Mr. Sheehan, seconded by Mr. Sokol and carried unanimously to approve the request for a transfer of funds in the amount of \$4,300 as outlined above and refer same to the Finance Committee. *A copy of the request is on file with the minutes.*

Ms. Auer apprised the Committee that over the weekend of June 14 - 17, 2007 a group of Canadian tourists had visited the area, potentially exposing others to the measles. She said that although they now considered this to be a mute issue, as the incubation period for the measles had passed with no reports of its spreading, she was very concerned as to how the issue would be reported in the local newspapers. Contrary to her fears, Ms. Auer stated that she was very pleased with the way the occurrence had been portrayed in *The Post Star* article printed that morning, and copies of the article were distributed to the Committee members; *a copy of the article is also on file with the minutes.* She explained that the Canadian visitors had camped in a Lake George area campground during their stay and upon returning to their home had been diagnosed.

Measles outbreaks had occurred in the area during prior years, Ms. Auer stated, and she reminded the Committee of the outbreak that had occurred in 1993 which led to the confirmation of 49 cases of measles. She noted that although they did not feel this was an imminent threat, the Health Department had performed due diligence in informing all Warren County medical facilities of the occurrence, asking that they watch for symptoms indicative of the measles and that any such symptoms be reported accordingly, if discovered.

Mr. Gabriels entered the meeting at 9:49 a.m.

Ms. Auer stated that in light of the many international visitors to the area during the summer months it was very realistic that an outbreak of the measles, or some other contagious condition, could occur because it was unknown what vaccinations were required, and in what stages, in other countries.

Discussion ensued with respect to the matter.

Ms. Auer announced that an executive session was necessary to discuss a contractual issue.

Motion was made by Mr. Haskell, seconded by Mr. Tessier and carried unanimously that executive session be declared to discuss the employment history of a particular person pursuant to Section 105(f) of the Public Officers Law, as well as attorney/client privilege.

Executive session was declared from 9:54 a.m. to 10:25 a.m.

Messrs. Kenny and Stec entered the meeting during executive session at 10:15 a.m. and Mr. Merlino entered the meeting at 10:25 a.m.

Upon reconvening, motion was made by Mr. Haskell, seconded by Mr. Champagne and carried unanimously to reform the contract agreement with Joseph Hickey, Physical Therapist, to reflect changes in rates paid per visit, and the necessary resolution was authorized for the July 20<sup>th</sup> Board meeting. *A copy of the request is on file with the minutes.*

Mr. Haskell stated that he had been contacted by a resident of the Town of Thurman, who was also a personal friend, commending the efforts of the Public Health nurse that had attended to him pursuant to his hip replacement surgery. He noted the excellent services of the nurse, explaining that during her first visit she had recommended that the patient receive treatment as she recognized the early symptoms of pneumonia setting in. Her early detection of these symptoms lead to a significant reduction in the length of hospitalization, Mr. Haskell added. He stated that this was an example of the services provided by the Health Services staff which made a difference in the lives of their patients.

Ms. Auer thanked Mr. Haskell for his statement and she noted that they had received many similar letters commending the Department from other patients, which they kept on file.

Mr. Mason apprised that himself, Mr. Champagne and Mr. Geraghty had also benefitted from the services provided by the Health Services Department and all of them had also given accolades for the care received.

Mr. Sokol said that he had received a call from Maury Thompson, of *The Post Star*, with respect to the use of trans-fats and the fact that Albany County had passed a resolution banning the use of them in Albany County restaurants and he asked Ms. Auer if she had any information on that subject. Ms. Auer replied that she had received such information and would be sure to add this topic to the agenda for discussion at the next month's Committee meeting.

Discussion ensued with respect to the matter.

Mr. Champagne asked Ms. Auer how things were working with the fleet maintenance procedures and she replied that there were some prevalent issues with the system. She said she would be sure to add this item to the agenda for discussion at the next month's Committee meeting also.

As there was no further business to come before the Health Services Committee, on motion made by Mr. Haskell and seconded by Mr. Sokol, Mr. Mason adjourned the meeting at 10:27 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Amanda Allen, Legislative Office Specialist