

**WARREN COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS**

**COMMITTEE: HEALTH SERVICES**

**DATE: APRIL 25, 2008**

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**COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:**

SUPERVISORS SOKOL  
HASKELL  
THOMAS  
TESSIER  
CHAMPAGNE  
O'CONNOR

**COMMITTEE MEMBER ABSENT:**

SUPERVISOR SHEEHAN

**OTHERS PRESENT:**

REPRESENTING WESTMOUNT HEALTH FACILITY:  
BETSY HENKEL, COMPTROLLER  
REPRESENTING THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH:  
PAT AUER, DIRECTOR  
SHARON SCHALDONE, ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF  
HOME CARE DIVISION  
TAWN DRISCOLL, FISCAL MANAGER  
GINELLE JONES, ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC  
HEALTH DIVISION  
TAMMY DELORENZO, CLINICAL & FISCAL  
INFORMATICS COORDINATOR  
REPRESENTING COUNTRYSIDE ADULT HOME:  
BRENDA HAYES, DIRECTOR  
FREDERICK MONROE, CHAIRMAN  
AMY BARTLETT, FIRST ASSISTANT COUNTY ATTORNEY  
TRISH NENNINGER, SECOND ASSISTANT COUNTY  
ATTORNEY  
HAL PAYNE, COMMISSIONER OF ADMINISTRATIVE AND  
FISCAL SERVICES  
JOAN SADY, CLERK OF THE BOARD  
KEVIN GERAGHTY, BUDGET OFFICER  
TODD LUNT, DIRECTOR OF HUMAN RESOURCES  
CHARLENE DiRESTA, LEGISLATIVE OFFICE SPECIALIST

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Mr. Sokol called the meeting of the Health Services Committee to order at 9:05 a.m.

Motion was made by Mr. Thomas, seconded by Mr. Champagne and carried unanimously to approve the minutes of the previous Committee meeting, subject to correction by the Clerk of the Board.

Privilege of the floor was extended to Betsy Henkel, Comptroller for Westmount Health Facility, who distributed copies of the agenda to the Committee members; *a copy of the agenda is on file with the minutes.*

Ms. Henkel said that the first item on the agenda was to report on the status of the air handler project at Westmount Health Facility. She noted that the Facility

was currently operating using air handler #1. She added that air handler #2 had been installed two weeks ago, had been tested and would be functioning as of Monday, April 28, 2008. She informed the Committee that air handler #1 would be replaced the following week.

Ms. Henkel requested to amend the 2008 County budget to increase estimated revenues and appropriations to reflect the receipt of Health Care Reform Act (HCRA) Recruitment and Retention Grant funds, as follows:

- in the amount of \$600 for Administration Supplies;
- in the amount of \$324 for Nursing Advertising; and
- in the amount of \$200 for Nursing Conferences.

Ms. Henkel explained that the Administration Supplies reflected the cost of 150 lunch coolers that would be presented to the employees of Westmount Health Facility during National Nursing Home Week to express appreciation to the staff. She said that the Nursing Advertising reflected a three-day advertisement in *The Post-Star* for the six vacant nursing positions at Westmount, and she noted that the Nursing Conferences reflected the cost of sending four CNA's (Certified Nursing Assistant) to a one-day conference for MDS education.

Motion was made by Mr. Tessier, seconded by Mr. Thomas and carried unanimously to amend the 2008 County budget, as outlined above and to forward same to the Finance Committee. *Copies of the resolution requests are on file with the minutes.*

Ms. Henkel requested transfers of funds, as follows:

- in the amount of \$256, from the Plant Operation and Maintenance-Supplies Code (EF.82200.5906 410) to the Plant Operation and Maintenance-Other Equipment Code (EF.82200.5803 260), to reflect the cost of a wall exhaust fan; and
- in the amount of \$100, from the Activities Program-Supplies Code (EF.72600.5906 410) to the Activities Program- Other Equipment Code (EF.72600.5803 260), to reflect the cost of replacing a digital camera.

Motion was made by Mr. O'Connor, seconded by Mr. Champagne and carried unanimously to approve the transfers of funds, as outlined above and to forward same to the Finance Committee. *Copies of the resolution requests are on file with the minutes.*

Ms. Henkel requested approval to pay an invoice from Siemens Building Technologies, Inc. for emergency work that was performed on March 21, 2008. She added that there had been a compressor oil leak that had drained into the

Facility's thermostats. She noted that the incident had happened in the middle of the night and the decision had been made to call Siemens. Mr. Sokol asked who had the current contract for the building and Ms. Henkel replied it was D & E Technologies. Hal Payne, Commissioner of Administrative & Fiscal Services, explained that the system was pneumatic and had blown a seal, which had caused oil to be pumped into the thermostats. He noted that Siemens was in the building when the problem was discovered. He said that the system had to be shut down and the oil had to be drained from the lines. He added that Siemens had made the repairs immediately and had replaced the damaged thermostats. Mr. Sokol asked if the contract between Westmount and D & E Technologies was the same as the one for Countryside and Mr. Payne replied that the contract was County-wide. Mr. Sokol noted that Siemens' services had also been used to repair the boiler at Countryside Adult Home. Mr. Payne said that D & E Technologies had been at Countryside for three days working on the boiler and had not been able to find the problem and he added, Siemens had come in for six hours and had fixed the problem with the boiler.

Trish Nenninger, Second Assistant County Attorney, entered the meeting at 9:12 a.m.

Mr. Sokol expressed his concern that the County should review the contract with D & E Technologies. Mr. Champagne asked if the contract could be reviewed now or if the County would need to wait for the contract to expire and Mr. Payne replied that he would check with the County Attorney's Office.

Discussion ensued.

Motion was made by Mr. Champagne, seconded by Mr. Tessier and carried unanimously to authorize payment of the invoice from Siemens Building Technologies, Inc., in the amount of \$1,566.67, for emergency work performed to repair an oil compressor leak at Westmount Health Facility. *A copy of the resolution request is on file with the minutes and the necessary resolution was authorized for the May 16, 2008 Board meeting.*

Ms. Henkel stated that the next item on the agenda was to report on the staffing levels and overtime usage for Westmount Health Facility. She noted that there were five employees on medical leave and six vacancies in the Nursing Department and she added that the Nursing Department had incurred a significant amount of overtime as a result. She apprised that the Dietary Department had two employees on medical leave and two on vacation. She noted that there were two new employees training in her Department. Mr. Payne asked if the employees who were out on medical leave were on maternity leave and Ms. Henkel responded that some of them were on maternity leave and some were out

due to back injuries. Mr. Sokol asked why the advertisement in the newspaper stated that there were new salary rates for 2008 but did not list the rates and Mr. Payne responded that listing the salaries made the advertisement too large due to the shift differentials. Mr. Sokol asked if any responses had been received from the advertisement and Ms. Henkel responded that there had been a few CNA's (Certified Nursing Assistants) and one LPN (Licensed Practical Nurses), and she added that there had not been any response from RN's (Registered Nurses).

Ms. Henkel distributed copies of the Westmount Health Facility Spring Newsletter to the Committee members, a copy of which is on file with the minutes. She said that the Newsletter was sent out to the residents family members and listed all of the activities for National Nursing Home Week.

Ms. Henkel distributed copies of the Revenue Budget Performance Report to the Committee members; a copy of which is on file with the minutes. She noted that the report reflected the sales for the first quarter. She apprised that she had only had time to do the figures on the Medicaid, Medicare and Private Pay Revenue, which accounted for the majority of the revenue for the Facility. She added that they were in the 25% range for the revenues, which was right on track.

The representatives from the Health Services Department entered the meeting at 9:20 a.m.

General discussion ensued.

The Westmount Health Facility portion of the meeting ended and Ms. Henkel exited the meeting at 9:23 a.m.

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

Ms. Auer stated that the first item on the agenda was to update the Committee on the Point of Care Initiative. She said that they had not secured the executed contract with Delta Healthcare Technologies yet. She stated that there had been a FOIL (Freedom of Information Law) request from one of the bidders and added that Mrs. Nenninger had informed her that this was not unusual. Mrs. Nenninger apprised that there was a proposed contract from Delta Health Technologies, and added that as a result of the FOIL request the attorneys for Delta Health Technologies had requested that part of their proposal be redacted. She said that the FOIL request had been sent out with the requested information redacted and they would wait to see if there was an appeal. She apprised that contract negotiations were underway with the Delta Health Technologies attorneys;

however, she said nothing was finalized at this time. She added that they should have an executed contract in the next couple of weeks.

Ms. Auer said that the Emergency Response and Preparedness Activities for April had been included in the agenda packet for the Committee's review.

Ms. Auer noted that the Warren County Health Services Department had been awarded a Community Goodworks Grant from Walmart in the amount of \$1,000 and she requested authorization to accept the grant funding.

Motion was made by Mr. Tessier, seconded by Mr. Thomas and carried unanimously to authorize acceptance of grant funding in the amount of \$1,000, as outlined above. *(Subsequent to the meeting it was determined that a resolution was not necessary as this action was authorized by Resolution No. 133 of 2008.)*

Ms. Auer requested authorization for a contract with Cathy Joss to provide speech therapy services, commencing May 19, 2008 and terminating with 30 days written notice by either party, to be paid on a bi-monthly basis at the agreed upon established per individual visit or meeting rates, upon receipt of the required documentation for each visit.

Motion was made by Mr. Champagne, seconded by Mr. Tessier and carried unanimously to authorize a contract with Cathy Joss, as outlined above. *A copy of the resolution request is on file with the minutes and the necessary resolution was authorized for the May 16, 2008 Board meeting.*

Ms. Auer requested authorization for a contract with Gail Rosselot, to provide a one day training course with regards to travel medicine for the nurses in the Division of Public Health, commencing and terminating May 30, 2008, for a lump sum amount of \$1,400. She noted that this had been one of the Department's goals for 2008 and that they would use the funds that had been received from Sanofi Pasteur, Inc.

Motion was made by Mr. Tessier, seconded by Mr. Thomas and carried unanimously to authorize a contract with Gail Rosselot, as outlined above. *A copy of the resolution request is on file with the minutes and the necessary resolution was authorized for the May 16, 2008 Board meeting.*

Ms. Auer expounded that the next item on the agenda was to discuss the co-pay policy for the Health Services Department. She noted that they had discussed this topic last year, at which time she had informed the Committee that two separate letters were sent out to each patient requesting payment. The first letter, she continued, was a bill and the second was a reminder notice. She said that if a

patient did not pay after the second letter, the Department did not pursue the debt any further. The reason for this, she continued, was that some of these patients received twice a day wound care, were elderly and the co-pay was cost prohibitive to those patients. She stated that there was a co-pay information sheet included in the agenda packet that showed that in 2007, Senior Blue had eliminated their co-pay. She apprised that the plan for 2008 was to present the patients with a letter to inform them that the Department was obligated to bill co-pays. She voiced her opinion that she did not feel it would be a good idea to have the County Attorney's Office pursue patients with a co-pay debt. She added that she felt it would cause bad feelings within the community.

Tammy DeLorenzo, Clinical & Fiscal Informatics Coordinator, apprised that the Department had researched co-pays a few years ago, at which time she had called Washington County to see how they were handling their co-pays. She said that she had been informed that Washington County had billed co-pays because they were required to do so; however, she added, they had also said that collecting the co-pays was difficult. She stated that the Department had a 60% return on the bills that were sent out. Mr. Champagne apprised that for the first quarter the collections were down from 60% to 38%.

Chairman Monroe entered the meeting at 9:30 a.m.

Discussion ensued.

Ms. DeLorenzo noted that the Department sent out the bills at the end of the month and they waited for the insurance company to send in the remittance prior to sending out the co-pay bills. She added that last year 173 invoices had been sent out, as compared to 16 invoices to date for 2008, which meant that it was difficult at this time to compare the two years.

Todd Lunt, Director of Human Resources, and Mr. Haskell entered the meeting at 9:32 a.m.

Sharon Schaldone, Assistant Director of the Public Health Department, apprised that usually the patients that had not paid their co-payment invoices, were the ones that could not afford to pay. She noted that some of the bills were for \$800 to \$900 for patients that were on fixed incomes. Ms. Auer said that if the Department became more aggressive with the collection of these debts, they would receive many unfavorable phone calls from the community. Mr. Tessier noted that sometimes the patients did have the means to pay and did not do so. Ms. Schaldone responded that the Department made every effort to collect on the debts. Ms. Auer said that when the Department performed the quarterly report on free and reduced care, they would keep the Committee informed on the results.

Ms. DeLorenzo apprised that if the Committee decided to pursue the debts through legal means, there would be a cost involved with those actions. Mr. Tessier said that if the patients had a legitimate reason for not being able to pay, the courts would not make them pay the debt.

Mr. Payne stated that Westmount Health Facility had liens put on the property of patients who owed a debt, so that when the patient passed away, the money would be recouped. Ms. Schaldone responded that the highest debt owed to Health Services was \$800 to \$900, which was not high enough to warrant placing a lien on property.

Tawn Driscoll, Fiscal Manager of Health Services, apprised that if there were patients who could not make the full payment, the Department would work with them on a payment plan. Mr. Champagne asked about the bottom line amount of loss to the Department and Ms. Schaldone replied that it was minimal and added that 3/4 of the bill was paid by insurance. Mr. Thomas stated that as long as the average stayed in the 60% range it should not be an issue. Ms. Schaldone noted that for years the Department never collected co-pays; however, she added, it was now illegal to treat patients without collecting co-pays. Mr. Sokol asked if another sampling could be prepared in a few months and Ms. Auer replied affirmatively.

Ms. Driscoll referred to the Revenues and Expenditures Report for 2008 as of April 23, 2008, which was included in the agenda packet. She said that the expenses were current and the preschool billing to the end of February was due today. She apprised that the Department could bill up to \$2,060,551.82 for the preschool; however, she added, the Department would only receive 59.5% or \$1,226,028.33 of that amount. She said that the January Maternity Child Health and Long Term Care programs were final and totaled \$466,398.36. She added that February had just been closed and those numbers would be available for the next meeting. She noted that overall the Department was on track with the budget. Ms. Auer said that she had been concerned with the amount of overtime that had been used to date; however, she added, they had recruited a new per-diem and they would use the services of per-diems as much as possible.

Ms. Auer noted that a free and reduced care report had been included in the agenda packet for the Committee's review. She informed the Committee that *The Post Star* had presented the Warren County Health Services Department with a plaque in honor of being named #1 in Home Care in the region. Ms. Schaldone stated that the report would be in the May 14, 2008 edition of *The Post Star*.

Ms. Auer apprised that she would present the Annual Report at the next Committee meeting, which could be discussed at the June meeting, if there were any questions. She added that a resolution would be needed to accept the Annual

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Report and that the information would also be available on the website.

Mr. Sokol noted that the next Committee meeting would be held at Countryside Adult Home.

The representatives from the Health Services Department exited and Amy Bartlett, First Assistant County Attorney, and Brenda Hayes, Director of Countryside Adult Home, entered the meeting at 9:42 a.m.

Mr. Sokol stated that the Committee would need to enter into an executive session in order to discuss the employment history of a particular person at Countryside Adult Home.

Motion was made by Mr. Haskell, seconded by Mr. Thomas and carried unanimously, that executive session be declared pursuant to Section 105 (f) of the Public Officers Law.

Executive session was declared from 9:43 a.m. to 10:02 a.m.

The Committee reconvened and Mr. Sokol noted that no action was necessary pursuant to the executive session.

As there was no further business to come before the Health Services Committee, on motion made by Mr. Haskell and seconded by Mr. Champagne, Mr. Sokol adjourned the meeting at 10:03 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Charlene DiResta, Legislative Office Specialist