

WARREN COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

COMMITTEE: HUMAN SERVICES

DATE: SEPTEMBER 26, 2011

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT: OTHERS PRESENT:

SUPERVISORS STRAINER
GIRARD
VANNESS
SOKOL
BENTLEY
CHAMPAGNE
WOOD

CHRIS HUNSINGER, DIRECTOR, EMPLOYMENT & TRAINING ADMINISTRATION
DANIEL STEC, CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD
KEVIN GERAGHTY, BUDGET OFFICER
JOAN SADY, CLERK OF THE BOARD
SUPERVISOR TAYLOR
SUPERVISOR THOMAS
SUPERVISOR LOEB
SUPERVISOR MCCOY
JOANNE COLLINS, LEGISLATIVE OFFICE SPECIALIST

Mr. Strainer called the meeting of the Human Services Committee to order at 10:02 a.m.

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

Mr. Strainer reported that Denise DiResta, Director of Veterans' Services, had obtained funding and re-instituted the program to honor deceased Veterans and he announced the next ceremony would be held October 3rd at 8:30 a.m. in the Board Room. He commended Ms. DiResta for her efforts to both seek funding and coordinate the program.

With regard to the Office for the Aging, Mr. Strainer stated that Christie Sabo, Director of the Office for the Aging (OFA), had not required a meeting and was working diligently to further reduce her 2012 budget request.

Privilege of the floor was extended to Chris Hunsinger, Director of the Employment & Training Administration (ETA), who distributed copies of the agenda to the Committee members; a copy of which is on file with the minutes.

Mr. Hunsinger presented a request for a transfer of funds within Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), from Regular Salaries and Hospitalization, to Part-time Salaries and Contracts, for a total amount of \$6,429. He advised that youth enrollment was higher than expected and the summer TANF funds enabled the ETA to engage an optimum number of youth.

Motion was made by Mr. Sokol, seconded by Mr. Champagne and carried unanimously to approve the request for a transfer of funds as outlined above and refer same to the Finance Committee. *A copy of the request for Transfer of Funds is on file with the minutes.*

Mr. Hunsinger extended privilege of the floor to Sharon Sano, Senior Employment Counselor, who distributed copies of the Summer Youth Employment Program summary; a copy of which is on file with the minutes. Mrs. Sano reported forty-two youth enrolled in the 2011 summer program and noted that without the TANF funds from the Office of General Services, funding for only thirteen youth would have been possible. She noted funds had been reduced by 60%; thereby rendering the summer program inoperable and she cited *The Post Star* for their excellent coverage of the program.

According to Mrs. Sano, three-hour resume workshops were included in the program and encompassed many aspects of presenting a prospective employee's candidacy.

Mrs. Sano commended Chef Charles Jones, BOCES Culinary Arts Instructor, who coordinated Operation Food Chain and who collaborated with the Key Club to sponsor a special lunch which included generous donations of school supplies from the Kiwanis Club. She said weekly meetings led by Chef Jones offered the opportunity to speak to youth about how service organizations serve as resources and how to get involved.

Mr. Bentley cited a summer program graduate from the Town of Horicon who was planning to attend college. Mr. Champagne asked the income eligibility criteria and Mrs. Sano stated that poverty level income was the qualifier. She explained the Workforce Investment Board (WIA) funds had three criteria which included credentials, high school diploma, employment, and a literacy development criteria.

Mrs. Sano noted that municipalities, such as the Towns of Bolton and Lake George, offered greater employment opportunities in the private sector, as opposed to areas north where transportation was also a deterrent. Mr. Champagne stated that the poverty issue in Warren County centered around transportation and he commended Mrs. Sano for her valuable efforts which benefitted local youth. Mr. McCoy expressed his enthusiasm for the program and stated the year-end picnic and awards ceremony highlighted the pride felt by the recipients. He said the youth employed in Lake George over the summer truly made a difference in the total amount of work accomplished. Mrs. Sano stated that although the students in the program represented a wide academic performance range; most participants had not derived accolades from athletics as many youth do. Overall, she stated, they worked hard in a program where every moment of the time spent in the program were teaching opportunities.

Mr. Strainer thanked Mrs. Sano for her time and dedication and noted the benefits of the program which offered valuable life experience with a support system, which could make a significant difference in the lives of youth by building self esteem. He also cited Mr. Jones who was particularly gifted in developing a rapport with youth in achieving pride in workmanship. Mr. Champagne said he felt that Chef Jones should facilitate motivational programs throughout local schools.

Mr. Hunsinger referenced an email sent recently with regard to disaster relief funds and he reported \$16,000 was available State-wide on a first come, first served basis for applicants who had developed a project outline. Mr. Hunsinger stated that Mr. Conover had suggested he contact the Soil & Water Conservation District with regard to an increased need for eligible and/or dislocated workers as a result of the storm damage. He said the State asked for a list of names of eligible workers who would be placed on the State payroll.

Mr. Champagne asked if program graduates were tracked beyond high school age to measure long term success and Mrs. Sano advised that some tracking was done beyond age eighteen and she credited the program for the fact that most former participants chose to keep in touch with the ETA Office. She acknowledged the dedicated faculty from area schools who were critical to the program's overall success.

As there was no further business to come before the Human Services Committee, on motion made by Mr. Bentley and seconded by Mr. VanNess, Mr. Strainer adjourned the meeting at 10:25 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Joanne Collins, Legislative Office Specialist