

WARREN COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

COMMITTEE: SOCIAL SERVICES - *SOCIAL SERVICES, COUNTRYSIDE ADULT HOME & YOUTH BUREAU*

DATE: JULY 28, 2011

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

SUPERVISORS LOEB
KENNY
BENTLEY
STRAINER
WOOD
MCDEVITT

OTHERS PRESENT:

SHEILA WEAVER, COMMISSIONER, DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES
DEANNA PARK, DIRECTOR, COUNTRYSIDE ADULT HOME
MARGARET SING-SMITH, DIRECTOR, WARREN COUNTY YOUTH BUREAU
DANIEL STEC, CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD
PAUL DUSEK, COUNTY ATTORNEY/ADMINISTRATOR
JOAN SADY, CLERK OF THE BOARD
KEVIN GERAGHTY, BUDGET OFFICER
SUPERVISOR TAYLOR
SUPERVISOR THOMAS
JOANN MCKINSTRY, ASSISTANT TO THE COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR
DON LEHMAN, *THE POST STAR*
THOM RANDALL, *ADIRONDACK JOURNAL*
CHARLENE DiRESTA, SR. LEGISLATIVE OFFICE SPECIALIST

COMMITTEE MEMBER ABSENT:

SUPERVISOR SOKOL

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

Motion was made by Mrs. Wood, seconded by Mr. McDevitt 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 Sheila Weaver, Commissioner of the Department of Social Services (DSS), who distributed copies of the agenda to the Committee members; *a copy of the agenda is on file with the minutes.*

Mr. Loeb suggested that Ms. Weaver begin by reviewing the report from Dr. Barbara Walker, of COPE Consulting Services. Ms. Weaver explained the agenda packet contained a letter from Dr. Walker pertaining to the "Solving the Mystery of Communication" training which had been conducted by COPE Consulting Services. She said the staff that attended the training had given positive feedback and other staff members had requested the same training. She noted that approximately 1/3 of the staff had completed the training and Warren County DSS ranked in the top 3% for their willingness to learn, grow and work together as a team, when compared to the other 43 counties in New York State that participated in the training. Mr. Kenny pointed out that the cost of the training was expensive and added the requests for this training listed on the agenda totaled almost \$10,000 for six days. Mr. Strainer questioned if the cost was per employee and Ms. Weaver replied in the negative and added that the two day training was a set fee which included the cost of mileage, meals and accommodations for the two trainers, as well as the training and supplies. Mr. Kenny asked if the cost of the training was reimbursable and Ms. Weaver replied affirmatively and explained that the Department had not reached the cap for training for 2011, which meant the cost of the training would be 100% reimbursable. Mr. Strainer asked how many staff members had completed the training thus far and Ms. Weaver replied 47 out of 127 employees.

Following a brief discussion, Ms. Weaver requested authorization for 90 staff members to attend the aforementioned "Solving the Mystery of Communication" training in the DSS Offices on August 23-24, 2011; August 25-26, 2011; and September 13-14, 2011 at a total cost of \$9,957.99. She noted that 30 staff members would attend the training on each of the above mentioned dates and the training included a three month follow up consultation. Mr. Taylor asked if there had been

measurable results seen from the 47 staff members who had already attended the training. Ms. Weaver replied affirmatively and added that there was better communication between the supervisory staff, as well.

Motion was made by Mr. Kenny, seconded by Mr. McDevitt and carried unanimously to authorize attendance at the training as outlined above. *Copies of the Authorization to Attend Meeting or Convention forms are on file with the minutes.*

Ms. Weaver requested authorization to attend the New York State Association of Counties (NYSAC) 2011 Fall Seminar in Lake Placid, New York on September 21-23, 2011 at a cost of \$519 including accommodations and meals. She said that beneficial workshops were being offered and valuable information would be presented.

Motion was made by Mr. Bentley, seconded by Mr. Kenny and carried unanimously to authorize attendance at the Seminar as outlined above. *A copy of the Authorization to Attend Meeting or Convention form is on file with the minutes.*

Ms. Weaver requested authorization for a newly hired staff member to attend the Chronic Care Training Institute in Rochester, New York on September 12-16, 2011 at a cost of \$48 per night for accommodations plus the cost of meals. Mrs. Wood asked if this was required training and Ms. Weaver replied affirmatively.

Motion was made by Mr. Kenny, seconded by Mr. Strainer and carried unanimously to authorize attendance at the training as outlined above. *A copy of the Authorization to Attend Meeting or Convention form is on file with the minutes.*

Ms. Weaver requested to create a new position of Account Clerk, part-time, base salary of \$24,480, effective August 22, 2011 and to delete the position of Administrative Assistant, part-time, base salary of \$29,199. She noted that the current Administrative Assistant, who worked part-time for the DSS and part-time for the Youth Bureau, was retiring and she felt it was the best time to delete the position and create a lesser position which would generate a savings of \$4,719. She explained that the Account Clerk position would be assigned to the Child Support Collections Unit and the position was 50% reimbursable from the Federal government and 27.5% from the State. She further explained that the DSS Accounting Unit would assume the fiscal responsibilities previously performed by the Administrative Assistant.

Motion was made by Mr. Strainer and seconded by Mr. Bentley to create a new position of Account Clerk, part-time and delete the position of Administrative Assistant, part-time as presented.

Mr. Strainer asked how this would affect the Youth Bureau and Ms. Weaver reiterated that the DSS would assume fiscal responsibilities that had been performed by the Administrative Assistant and added that she would meet with Paul Dusek, County Attorney/Administrator and Margaret Sing-Smith, Director of the Youth Bureau, to discuss delegation of the remaining responsibilities. Mr. Dusek mentioned that he had suggested the abolishment of the Administrative Assistant position since it seemed logical that the majority of the responsibilities would be assumed by the DSS Accounting Unit. He said the goal was to decrease the number of employees in Warren County if it was possible by consolidating the responsibilities with the job duties of existing employees. By abolishing the part-time Administrative Assistant position and reassigning the job responsibilities, he continued, they were maximizing the effectiveness of the staff in the DSS Accounting Unit. Mr. Strainer asked if the part-time Account Clerk position would be entitled to benefits and Mr. Dusek

replied in the negative. Mr. Strainer queried if part-time employees had the ability to purchase health insurance through Warren County and Mr. Dusek replied in the negative and added that he would be completing an insurance review in the near future and could look into the possibility of allowing part-time employees to purchase health insurance through the County. Mr. Loeb asked Ms. Sing-Smith how the abolishment of the Administrative Assistant position would affect the Youth Bureau and she replied that the ability to write and compete for grant funding would be affected. She added that she understood the need to consolidate positions when possible but she felt it was important for the Board to understand the impact to the Youth Bureau by eliminating this position. Mr. Dusek countered that the Accounting Unit in the DSS dealt with complicated State and Federal funding and he felt there would be no problems with assuming the fiscal duties of the Youth Bureau. He said it was important to consolidate labor whenever possible as the labor costs of the County were significant.

Following further discussion on the issue, Mr. Loeb called the question and the motion was carried unanimously to create a new position of Account Clerk, part-time and delete the position of Administrative Assistant, part-time as outlined above and to forward same to the Personnel Committee. *A copy of the resolution request form is on file with the minutes.*

Ms. Weaver requested to fill the vacant position of Account Clerk, part-time, base salary of \$24,480, due to creation. She noted that this was a Union position which was mandated and 50% reimbursable from the Federal government and 27.5% from the State. Mr. Strainer asked if the aforementioned savings of \$4,719 included the amount of reimbursement and Ms. Weaver replied affirmatively. Mr. Strainer questioned the actual savings to the County budget and Ms. Weaver replied approximately \$1,000.

Motion was made by Mr. Strainer, seconded by Mr. McDevitt and carried unanimously to approve the request to fill the vacant position of Account Clerk, part-time as outlined above and to forward same to the Personnel Committee. *A copy of the Notice of Intent to Fill Vacant Position form is on file with the minutes.*

Ms. Weaver requested authorization for two staff members to attend the New York State Adult Abuse Training Institute and National Adult Protective Services Association (NAPSA) Conference in Buffalo, New York on September 18-23, 2011. She said the training was mandated and was only offered once a year. Mr. Strainer asked if the funds were available in the budget and Ms. Weaver replied affirmatively.

Motion was made by Mr. Bentley, seconded by Mr. Strainer and carried unanimously to authorize attendance at the training as outlined above. *A copy of the Authorization to Attend Meeting or Convention form is on file with the minutes.*

Ms. Weaver requested authorization for out-of-State travel to allow one staff member to attend the 12th Annual National Conference on Child Sexual Abuse and Exploitation Prevention in New Orleans, Louisiana on August 23-26, 2011. She noted that the Conference was mandated and the cost would be covered by the Warren-Washington C.A.R.E. Center.

Motion was made by Mr. Strainer, seconded by Mrs. Wood and carried unanimously to authorize out-of-State travel as outlined above. *A copy of the resolution request form is on file with the minutes and the necessary resolution was authorized for the August 19, 2011 Board meeting.*

Ms. Weaver noted there were no pending items this month. Pertaining to the overtime report included in the agenda packet, she reported that overtime usage had decreased compared to the previous pay period. She said that the Food Stamps and Temporary Assistance Units currently had the highest level of overtime usage and added that new staff had been hired for those Units and overtime usage would decrease once they were fully trained.

Ms. Weaver reviewed the Revenue and Expense Budget Performance Reports in detail with the Committee members. She said the Department was within budget and she did not anticipate that they would exceed the budgeted expenditures. She apprised that the Department was at 48% of the amount budgeted for expenses and 30% of the amount budgeted for revenue. Mr. Strainer asked if the percentage of revenue collected was typical for this time of year and Ms. Weaver replied affirmatively and attributed the percentage to the lag time in receiving payments from the State.

Discussion ensued.

This concluded the Social Services portion of the Committee meeting and the Countryside Adult Home portion of the meeting commenced at 10:02 a.m.

Privilege of the floor was extended to Deanna Park, Director of Countryside Adult Home, who distributed copies of the agenda to the Committee members; *a copy of the agenda is on file with the minutes.*

Mr. Loeb suggested that the Committee continue the discussion on the future of Countryside Adult Home prior to commencing the agenda review. Mr. Strainer recalled there had been a motion at the previous Committee meeting to retain the Countryside Adult Home for two years to allow Ms. Park an opportunity to increase the census and reduce the cost to the County for operation of the facility. Mr. Loeb pointed out that the motion had failed due to lack of a majority vote and he added that Mrs. Wood had suggested additional information was needed before making a decision. Mr. Kenny opined it would be premature to make a decision on the future of the Countryside Adult Home, as budget discussions would begin in the next few weeks. He added that he had read in *The Post Star* that Washington County was looking into privatizing their nursing homes and had received much interest; however, he added, he was not prepared to do the same with Warren County's nursing homes at this time. Mrs. Wood stated that she had toured the Countryside Adult Home last month and had reviewed the 2010 DSS report which included information on Countryside. She questioned the process for out-of-County residents whose Temporary Assistance and Medicare were paid by the home county. Ms. Park explained that if a resident of Countryside was from another county, that county would have to be agreeable to paying 50% of the cost of staying at Countryside and she added in most cases the other county was not agreeable. Mrs. Wood said it was important to promote the specialized services offered by Countryside. She added that it was her understanding that there was an issue with the heat last winter and she questioned why it had not been fixed during the summer. She pointed out that a 15 passenger van had been purchased in 2010 and the cost of another vehicle was listed as a future expense and Ms. Park explained that the expense was to replace the existing car, if necessary. Mrs. Wood stated that if the County decided to keep the Countryside Adult Home open, they needed to accept the fact that it would operate at a loss. She said the Board needed to decide if the impact on the budget was more important than the service to the community.

Mr. Strainer questioned the reluctance of other counties to pay 50% of the costs to stay at Countryside and Ms. Park responded that the other counties had options available to their residents. She explained that the residents monthly income was subtracted from the monthly fee for

Countryside and 50% of the balance was the responsibility of the home county. Mr. McDevitt asked the amount that Countryside operated at a loss annually and Mr. Dusek replied that in the 2011 budget it had been assumed that the operation of Countryside would result in a loss of \$311,000; however, he added, it was now projected that the amount of loss would be \$526,000 and the projected loss for 2012 was anticipated to be the same. Mr. Dusek stated that the amount of loss could be reduced slightly with the initiation of the Adult Social Day Care Program; however, he added, the facility would never operate in a manner which would allow it to break even. Mr. Geraghty pointed out that the relocation of the Warrensburg Meal Site to the Countryside Adult Home would generate additional revenue.

Discussion ensued.

Mr. Geraghty advised that there would be a loss to the County from Countryside regardless of whether or not it remained open as it would be necessary for the County to cover the costs of relocating the current residents. Mr. Dusek advised that many of the residents would be relocated to facilities which would result in a cost the County as there would be caps in place as to liability. Chairman Stec said he had seen a report that showed that a county owned facility was the most expensive type and he noted not that many counties remained in the nursing home business. He opined a long term plan should be developed to privatize Warren County's nursing homes. Mr. Strainer stated if the County intended to privatize their nursing homes they should commence doing so now. He said that closing the facility would cause a loss of dollars into Warren County's economy and would displace 40 residents and the employees of Countryside. Mr. Bentley opined that the right thing to do was to retain the Countryside Adult Home. Mr. Thomas stated that various programs were available that entitled able-bodied people to collect money from the County even if they were capable of working and the residents of Countryside had worked their entire lives, had paid their taxes and they should be taken care of by the County. Mr. Taylor said it was a difficult decision; however, he pointed out that the taxpayers of Warren County were paying approximately \$500,000 a year to take care of 40 people.

Mr. Loeb apprised that he had received a call from a northeast company interested in the Countryside Adult Home and Ms. Park responded that she had spoken to the gentleman who did not indicate that he was interested in privatizing the facility, he merely advocated to keep the facility open. She noted that every facility that closed decreased the amount of Social Security Insurance reimbursement to the facilities that remained open. Mr. Geraghty commented that the facility was in his community and many constituents talked to him about keeping it open. He said closing the facility would impact both the employees and the residents and the County owed it to those people to reach a decision quickly. Mr. Geraghty said he was not opposed to Chairman Stec's suggestion to privatize the facility as long it remained open.

Mr. Bentley exited the meeting at 10:27 a.m.

Discussion ensued.

Ms. Park voiced her opinion that most of the residents of Countryside were Warren County taxpayers who had lived in the County their entire lives. Mr. Strainer suggested further research was necessary to determine the possibility of privatizing the facilities. Chairman Stec commented that a decision would not be reached today and he agreed that research should be completed as to the process and options of privatizing the facilities. Mr. Dusek pointed out that most counties hired a consultant to look into the marketplace. He said they were in the process of studying Westmount Health Facility as it was an 80 bed facility and typically facilities that had less than 120 beds didn't make a profit.

He stated that the County could release a Request for Proposal (RFP) to determine if there was anyone interested in privatizing the facility but without the assistance of a consultant, the County would not know what to ask for. Mr. Dusek advised that Washington County had hired a consultant to look into privatizing their facilities. Mr. Strainer inquired as to the possibility of Washington County sharing information received from their consultant and Mr. Dusek said he could make the request; however, he added, the situations differed in that Washington County's nursing home and resident care facility were located next to each other and Warren County's were located miles apart. It was the consensus of the Committee to refer the issue to the County Administrator to contact Washington County pertaining to the information they received from their consultant and to release an RFP for a consultant to research the possibility of privatizing Warren County's nursing homes, in order to determine the cost.

Commencing the agenda review, Ms. Park requested to fill the vacant position of Cleaner, base salary of \$23,706, Employee No. 10221, due to retirement. She said this was a Union position which was mandated and 50% reimbursable by the State. She explained that New York State Department of Health (NYS DOH) regulations called for one hour of housekeeping per resident per week. She added that since it was a 48 bed facility, a minimum of 48 hours per week was necessary for housekeeping purposes. She further added that due to the size of the facility, it was necessary to have a Cleaner on staff seven days a week.

Motion was made by Mr. Strainer, seconded by Mrs. Wood and carried unanimously to approve the request to fill the vacant position of Cleaner as outlined above and to forward same to the Personnel Committee. *A copy of the Notice of Intent to Fill Vacant Position form is on file with the minutes.*

Ms. Park requested authorization to utilize space at the Countryside Adult Home for the purpose of relocating the Warrensburg Meal Site operated by the Office for the Aging. She said she was working with the County Attorney's Office and the Office of the Aging to determine the fee for the space and she would submit documentation to the NYS DOH for approval.

Motion was made by Mrs. Wood, seconded by Mr. Strainer and carried unanimously to authorize the request as presented. *A copy of the resolution request form is on file with the minutes and the necessary resolution was authorized for the August 19, 2011 Board meeting.*

A brief discussion ensued.

Pertaining to the previous issue with glycol relative to the boilers, Ms. Park said there had been no further issues and Mr. Dusek had sent a letter to Technical Building Services concerning reimbursement to the County. Mr. Loeb suggested the issues with the heating system be repaired and Ms. Park clarified that both boilers were working but the heat was not reaching a few rooms on the west wing due to an issue with valves. She said she was unsure of the cost of repairing the issue but she did not anticipate it would be significant. Mr. Kenny suggested the cost should be determined prior to repair. Mr. Loeb pointed out that the issue should be repaired regardless of whether or not the facility was privatized. It was the consensus of the Committee that the cost of repairs should be determined in order to discuss the issue at the next Committee meeting.

Ms. Park stated that overtime usage for the past two pay periods was 123.5 hours which she noted included a holiday. She said the current census was 39 residents: 15 men and 24 women. She noted there had been 8 referrals this month: three had not been interested; one was on hold; two were discussing the possibility with family members and friends; and two were awaiting Temporary

Assistance approval. She added there had been one admission and one discharge for the month. Ms. Park reported that she had received approval from the NYS DOH for Countryside Adult Home to operate a six bed Adult Social Day Care Program and it was necessary to determine a fee. Mr. Strainer asked if it would be possible to attract six participants and Ms. Park replied affirmatively and added that more than six participants would require an additional employee. She advised the cost of operating the Adult Social Day Care Program was \$4 per person per day for lunch and two snacks and she recommended a fee of \$40 to \$45 per day for the Social Day Care Program.

Motion was made by Mr. Strainer, seconded by Mrs. Wood and carried unanimously to authorize the Countryside Adult Home to provide Adult Social Day Care services for up to six people at a rate of \$45 per person per day. *A copy of the resolution request form is on file with the minutes and the necessary resolution was authorized for the August 19, 2011 Board room.*

Ms. Park announced that the Countryside Adult Home Family Picnic would be held on Sunday, September 11, 2011 from 11:30 a.m. until 4:00 p.m. and she invited the members of the Board of Supervisors to attend.

This concluded the Countryside Adult Home portion of the Committee meeting and the Youth Bureau portion of the meeting commenced at 10:48 a.m.

Privilege of the floor was extended to Margaret Sing-Smith, Director of the Warren County Youth Bureau, who distributed copies of the agenda to the Committee members; *a copy of the agenda is on file with the minutes.*

Ms. Sing-Smith reported that the Administrative Assistant, previously discussed during the Social Services portion of the Committee meeting, would be retiring as of August 12, 2011. She noted that the fiscal capacity and the accomplishments of the Youth Bureau pertaining to grant funding received were mostly attributed to the efforts of this employee. She added that the employee had also completed program monitoring and community outreach. Ms. Sing-Smith stated that she appreciated the time that Mr. Dusek had spent looking into the Youth Bureau and the Warren County Youth Court. She added that she understood the benefit to the County in choosing to abolish the Administrative Assistant position.

Ms. Sing-Smith said that the agenda contained a final report on the contributions to the Warren County Youth Court which were derived by the efforts of the Youth Court Ad Hoc Committee. She commented that she would continue to operate the Youth Court meetings in conjunction with the Citizens Advisory Board at a frequency of 4 to 6 times per year. She added that another 5 Year Children and Family Services Plan would be completed in conjunction with the DSS. Ms. Sing-Smith advised that Mr. Dusek had been requested to look into the possibility of locating office space for the Youth Bureau in order to save the expense of rent.

Mr. Loeb stated that with the contributions made to the Youth Court Program, an additional \$10,000 was needed to continue to operate the Program until the end of the year. He added that a Youth Court Comparative Analysis prepared by Robert Iusi, Director of Probation, had been provided at the May 26, 2011 Committee meeting pertaining to the costs of the justice system with and without Youth Court. He said that Kate Hogan, District Attorney, and Mr. Iusi had both voiced their desire to see the Program continue. Mr. Kenny asked where the funds would be allocated from and Mr. Dusek suggested a transfer from the Contingent Fund.

Following a brief discussion, motion was made by Mr. Kenny, seconded by Mr. McDevitt and carried unanimously to refer the issue of allocating \$10,000 from the Contingent Fund to cover the cost of continuing the Youth Court through the end of the year, to the Finance Committee.

Mr. Dusek stated that an executive session was needed to discuss the employment history of a particular person.

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

Executive session was declared from 11:01 a.m. to 11:35 a.m.

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

As there was no further business to come before the Social Services Committee, on motion made by Mr. Kenny and seconded by Mrs. Wood, Mr. Loeb adjourned the meeting at 11:36 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Charlene DiResta, Sr. Legislative Office Specialist