

WARREN COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

COMMITTEE: SOCIAL SERVICES - DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES & COUNTRYSIDE ADULT HOME

DATE: AUGUST 24, 2011

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COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

SUPERVISORS LOEB  
KENNY  
BENTLEY  
STRAINER  
WOOD  
MCDEVITT  
SOKOL

OTHERS PRESENT:

SUZANNE WHEELER, DEPUTY COMMISSIONER, DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES  
JULIE MONTERO, FISCAL MANAGER, DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES  
DANIEL G. STEC, CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD  
PAUL DUSEK, COUNTY ATTORNEY/ADMINISTRATOR  
JOAN SADY, CLERK OF THE BOARD  
SUPERVISORS TAYLOR  
THOMAS  
DON LEHMAN, THE POST STAR  
AMANDA ALLEN, SR. LEGISLATIVE OFFICE SPECIALIST

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Mr. Loeb called the meeting of the Social Services Committee to order at 10:05 a.m.

Motion was made by Mrs. Wood, seconded by Mr. Sokol and carried unanimously to approve the minutes from the prior meeting, subject to correction by the Clerk of the Board.

Privilege of the floor was extended to Suzanne Wheeler, Deputy Commissioner of the Department of Social Services (DSS), who distributed copies of the meeting agenda to the Committee members; *a copy of the agenda is also on file with the minutes.*

Agenda Item 1, Ms. Wheeler announced, consisted of a request to authorize travel for four Caseworkers to attend "Connecting the Dots Training" in Albany, NY on October 14, 2011, and she noted that funding was available within the existing budget to cover all associated costs.

Motion was made by Mr. McDevitt, seconded by Mr. Bentley and carried unanimously to approve the travel request as outlined above. *A copy of the Authorization to Attend Meeting or Convention form is on file with the minutes.*

Ms. Wheeler advised that Agenda Item 2 also included a travel request, this one for mandated Child Protective Services (CPS) Response Training in Liverpool, NY on October 3 - 7 and 17 - 21, 2011. She explained that one CPS worker would be attending the aforementioned training and that overnight accommodations were being requested due to the distance.

Mrs. Wood recalled previous discussions relative to the development of a policy which would clarify when overnight stays were appropriate and she questioned whether any new information was available on this initiative. Ms. Wheeler responded that she was unsure whether a County-wide policy was being developed, but advised the DSS had instituted its own version which consisted of a comparison of daily commuting costs and accommodation expenses.

Motion was made by Mr. Sokol, seconded by Mr. Kenny and carried unanimously to approve the request for one CPS worker to attend CPS Response Training in Liverpool, NY, as previously noted. *A copy of the Authorization to Attend Meeting or Convention form is on file with the minutes.*

Continuing to Agenda Item 3, Ms. Wheeler outlined a travel request for Patricia Nenninger, 1<sup>st</sup> Social Services

Attorney, to attend Article 81/Guardianship for PSA Clients Training on September 20, 2011 in Buffalo, NY. She said they had intended to include this request in the prior Committee meeting's agenda, but it had somehow been overlooked.

Motion was made by Mr. Sokol, seconded by Mr. Kenny and carried unanimously to approve the travel request as outlined above. *A copy of the Authorization to Attend Meeting or Convention form is on file with the minutes.*

Ms. Wheeler stated that Agenda Item 4 included a request to fill the position of Social Welfare Examiner #8, base salary of \$30,230, which had been vacated due to promotion.

In response to Mr. Sokol's inquiry as to the level of reimbursement received in connection with the Social Welfare Examiner position, Ms. Wheeler advised that it was a Chronic Care position within the Medicaid Unit which received 100% reimbursement.

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

Agenda Item 5 consisted of a request to fill the vacant position of Caseworker #10, base salary \$35,385, due to resignation, Ms. Wheeler apprised. She said she had included a copy of the employee's resignation letter in the agenda packet which indicated the employee had decided to resign from the position due to her impending relocation to San Diego, CA, but offered her assistance subsequent to her resignation date if a replacement for the position could not be found. Ms. Wheeler stated this employee was very valuable to the Department and she was sorry to see her go.

Motion was made by Mr. Bentley, seconded by Mr. McDevitt and carried unanimously to approve the request to fill the vacant position of Caseworker #10 and refer same to the Personnel Committee. *A copy of the Notice of Intent to Fill Vacant Position form is on file with the minutes. (Note: Subsequent to the meeting, the employee withdrew her resignation; therefore, the Deputy Commissioner asked that the request be withdrawn.)*

Ms. Wheeler said Agenda Item 6 included a request to authorize Christina Mastrianni, Caseworker, to enroll in a job-related course entitled "Intro to Forensic Mental Health" at the Sage Graduate School of Health Sciences, which would begin on August 30<sup>th</sup> and terminate on December 13<sup>th</sup>. She noted she had brought the request to the Committee as she was unsure of the County's policy.

Paul Dusek, County Attorney/Administrator, clarified that County policy allowed reimbursement for enrollment in job-related courses according to the rates specified in the CSEA contract, which he believed to be 50%, provided the course specifically related to the employees position. He added that the County generally encouraged this type of further education as it typically raised the employee's interest in their position and provided additional knowledge which could be shared with other employees. Mr. Dusek said the prominent question in this matter was whether the course applied specifically to the employee's position, and Ms. Wheeler advised that it did.

Motion was made by Mr. Bentley, seconded by Mr. McDevitt and carried unanimously to approve the request to enroll in a job-related course, and the necessary resolution was authorized for the September 16<sup>th</sup> Board meeting. *A copy of the request is on file with the minutes.*

Ms. Wheeler announced she had one additional item to present which was not included on the agenda, that being

a travel request for one employee to attend Medicaid New Worker Training in Albany, NY on September 19 - 23, and October 3 - 7, 2011. She explained this was mandated training for a new employee and advised that no overnight stays would be required.

Motion was made by Mr. Kenny, seconded by Mrs. Wood and carried unanimously to approve the aforementioned travel request. *A copy of the Authorization to Attend Meeting or Convention form is on file with the minutes.*

Referring to the Old Business section of the agenda, Mr. Dusek apprised that he had contacted Mike Swan, Director of Real Property Tax Services, to discuss whether any properties would be included in the upcoming tax auction that might be suitable for housing the homeless and had been advised there weren't any. He said they would continue their search for an acceptable property, but noted that the item could be removed from the Referral List for the time being.

Mr. McDevitt noted that a hearing was being held in Washington County relative to laws adopted which limited the ability to house sex offenders and he questioned whether this would lead to any implications for Warren County. Mr. Dusek explained that a number of Counties had repealed restrictive housing laws for sex offenders based on the fact that the State Laws addressed the issue, as well as due to a number of lawsuits being brought forth; he added that at some point, Warren County might elect to repeal the Local Law they had adopted on the matter, as well. Mr. Dusek suggested that the topic be discussed in further detail at a future meeting.

Proceeding to the Topics for Discussion section of the agenda, Ms. Wheeler addressed the Overtime Report, noting that a copy was included in the agenda for the Committee's review.

Mr. Taylor questioned whether the data included in the Overtime Report reflected hourly increments and Ms. Wheeler replied affirmatively. She added her apologies that the prior month's Report had not been included for comparison, but noted that she had not had access to that information.

Concluding the DSS agenda review, Ms. Wheeler pointed out that copies of the Expense and Revenue Budget Performance Reports had been included. She said that although she had no specific areas of concern to point out, she welcomed any questions the Committee might have relative to the Reports.

Referring to the Budget Analysis page, Mr. Loeb noted that the total figure for the 2011 column did not add up appropriately, and Ms. Wheeler advised there might be a problem with the formula used to compute this information which led to the erroneous figure. Mr. Dusek interjected that the Budget Committee was currently reviewing the 2012 Budget and recognized there were some issues with the 2011 Budget which required attention. He said Ms. Wheeler would be meeting with some State officials in the near future relative to Departmental funding and it may be premature to address 2011 Budget discrepancies in detail since they were still trying to uncover the issues causing them. Mr. Dusek then suggested that any discussion on the Budget issues be deferred to a future Committee meeting when these issues had been identified.

Mr. Kenny thanked Ms. Wheeler and her support staff for their efforts in assuming additional responsibilities throughout the recent tumultuous events leading to the absence of the DSS Commissioner. Mr. McDevitt echoed Mr. Kenny's statement, as did Chairman Stec.

Moving on, copies of the Countryside Adult Home agenda were distributed to the Committee members, a copy of which is also on file with the minutes. Ms. Wheeler apprised that she would address the agenda in the absence of Deanna Park, Director of the Countryside Adult Home, who, regrettably, had been unable to attend.

Ms. Wheeler said the agenda was comprised solely of statistical information which she proceeded to read it aloud for the Committee's benefit; the following information was provided:

1. Overtime Use - 2.1 hours used for the past two pay cycles, representing a decrease of 313.7 hours overall in comparison to the prior year's figures;
2. Current Census - 40 residents; 16 men and 24 women;
3. Monthly Statistics -
  - A) Referrals - seven total; two were not interested at that time, two were awaiting temporary assistance approval, one was from Saratoga County, one lived in Florida and one was not appropriate for the adult home level of care;
4. Heating Concerns - work would begin to address the heating issue either during the current or following week at an anticipated cost of less than \$1,500 to replace two heating pumps, if necessary; and
5. All Supervisors were invited to attend the Countryside Adult Home Family Picnic which was scheduled to be held on September 11<sup>th</sup> from 11:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Ms. Wheeler concluded that there were no resolution requests to be presented.

There being no further business to address, on motion made by Mrs. Wood and seconded by Mr. Bentley, Mr. Loeb adjourned the Social Services Committee meeting at 10:26 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Amanda Allen, Sr. Legislative Office Specialist