

WARREN COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

COMMITTEE: SOCIAL SERVICES - SOCIAL SERVICES & COUNTRYSIDE ADULT HOME

DATE: SEPTEMBER 23, 2011

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

SUPERVISORS LOEB
KENNY
BENTLEY
STRAINER
MCDEVITT
SOKOL

OTHERS PRESENT:

SUZANNE WHEELER, DEPUTY COMMISSIONER, DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES
JULIE MONTERO, FISCAL MANAGER, DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES
DEANNA PARK, DIRECTOR, COUNTRYSIDE ADULT HOME
DANIEL G. STEC, CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD
PAUL DUSEK, COUNTY ATTORNEY/ADMINISTRATOR
JOAN SADY, CLERK OF THE BOARD
KEVIN GERAGHTY, BUDGET OFFICER
SUPERVISORS TAYLOR
THOMAS
DON LEHMAN, *THE POST STAR*
CAMERON TESSIER, WARREN COUNTY RESIDENT
AMANDA ALLEN, SR. LEGISLATIVE OFFICE SPECIALIST

COMMITTEE MEMBER ABSENT:

SUPERVISOR WOOD

Mr. Loeb called the meeting of the Social Services Committee to order at 10:30 a.m.

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

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

Beginning with Agenda Item 1, Ms. Park apprised 156.2 hours of overtime had been incurred during the past two pay cycles, which included the Labor Day holiday, and she noted that this total reflected an overall decrease of 260 hours as compared to the prior years figures for the same time period. She stated Agenda Item 2 pertained to the current census of Countryside Adult Home, which was comprised of 16 men and 24 women.

Moving on to Agenda Item 3, Ms. Park addressed the Monthly Statistics for the facility, beginning with the Long Term Residents. She noted there had been ten referrals, two of which were not appropriate for the adult home level of care, while one was currently on hold, another was from Saratoga County, four more would be evaluated on the following day and the remaining individual would be admitted within the following week. She further noted there had been no new admissions and one person had been discharged for rehabilitation at The Stanton Nursing and Rehabilitation Center. Referring to Day Care operations, Ms. Park advised three referrals had been received, one of which had been admitted, another was on hold as they were waiting for the proper paperwork to be submitted and the final person had yet to commit to the three day per week facility requirement.

Ms. Park announced Agenda Item 4 referred to the annual Siemens Energy Performance Assurance Report for Countryside Adult Home which had been distributed with the agenda; *a copy of the Report is also on file with the minutes*. She said that typically, a Siemens representative would have been present to provide a presentation on the Report; however, she explained, at Mr. Loeb's request the presentation would be delayed until their next meeting to allow the Committee members the opportunity to perform an independent review of the Report in preparation for the presentation.

Mr. McDevitt questioned whether any actual savings were being attained based on the information provided in the Siemens Report and Ms. Park replied that she was unsure. She noted some stipulations of the Siemens contract were not being adhered to and should not have been included in the original agreement. For example, she cited the requirements included in the heating portion of the contract which they were unable to adhere to based on New York State Department of Health regulations, leading to lower than anticipated savings figures.

Mr. Strainer questioned whether the facility's requirements had been considered when the initial contract was written and Ms. Park replied that it did not appear they had and said she did not know who had been responsible for assisting with the contract when it was developed. Mr. Strainer then asked whether there was anyone responsible for monitoring the energy savings, other than Siemens, and Ms. Park responded in the negative. Mr. Strainer concluded that it would be very difficult to match the initially projected savings, based on the fact that the requirements of the facility were not allowed for in the energy savings contract. Mr. Sokol interjected that Paul Dusek, County Attorney/Administrator, was currently reviewing the matter on behalf of both Countryside Adult Home and Westmount Health Facility and would provide his findings once the inquiry was complete.

Mr. McDevitt compared the Siemens Report to the Energy Savings Improvements analysis provided by National Grid which was recently approved by the Board of Supervisors, noting that while both projected energy savings that could be attained, the National Grid analysis was written in easily understood layman's terms whereas the Siemens Report was nearly incomprehensible to the average person.

Ms. Park questioned whether there were any specific portions of the Report she should request the Siemens representative to speak on and Mr. McDevitt advised they should clarify the actual savings to the County, as well as address the fact that the anticipated savings projected in their initial reports were predicated on conditions that could not be implemented.

A brief discussion ensued.

Resuming the review with Agenda Item 5, Ms. Park advised of an admittance issue concerning a person who currently resided at Westmount Health Facility for rehabilitation services that was ready to be discharged in the near future; however, she said, neither the resident or her family were comfortable with her returning to her home and instead, were seeking adult home placement. She explained the family had visited a number of adult home facilities and determined Countryside Adult Home was the preferred facility. The problem, Ms. Park advised, was that the elderly person was a Saratoga County resident who was unable to pay the full private fee and Saratoga County had refused to pay the County portion to Countryside. She further advised the family of the prospective resident was willing to pay the County share of the costs directly, but Committee approval would be necessary to allow admittance, as well as some type of legal agreement enforcing private payment of the County share. Ms. Park clarified the current admission documents stated the financial responsibilities would be assumed by the patient, with no ability to transfer it to the family.

Mr. Strainer said he felt this matter should be reviewed by the County Attorney's Office to determine whether financial responsibilities could legally be transferred to the family before a decision was made. He cautioned that if the person were permitted to reside at Countryside and the family then refused to pay the bill when it arrived, the County would have no recourse. Mr. Strainer concluded he had no issue with allowing the residency if they were able to develop a legally binding agreement ensuring payment. Mr. Loeb noted there had been many occasions when the County had been forced to absorb residency costs at Westmount Health Facility and this could become a similar situation if the proper procedures were not followed. Ms. Park apprised the County share of the residency costs assumed by the family would be approximately \$1,000 per month and would fluctuate based on Countryside's daily

rate.

Mr. Sokol suggested that the admittance be tentatively approved based on review and approval by the County Attorney in order to expedite the process. Ms. Park interjected the person was currently undergoing the necessary Medicaid approval process through Saratoga County to receive State funding, so a delay in approving the admittance would not be detrimental.

Mr. Dusek entered the meeting at 10:41 a.m.

Following Mr. Loeb's reprisal of the issue, Mr. Dusek advised a contract could be easily developed to indicate the family's consent to pay the County portion of residency costs; the issue, he added, was whether the contract could be legally enforced. He advised the family initially had no legal financial responsibilities, and there were also Medicaid implications to be considered. Mr. Dusek said they could proceed in developing an appropriate contract with the family assuming it was legally binding, but the Committee would need to determine how to proceed in the event it was not.

In response to a question posed by Mr. Strainer, Ms. Park advised the person in question was currently a Westmount Health Facility resident and noted that Medicaid coverage was being sought, but was not currently in place. She added that Medicaid coverage was available for any nursing home stays, regardless of residency. Mr. Strainer then asked what options the County would have if the person was allowed Countryside residency and it was subsequently found that the contract was not legally binding and Mr. Dusek responded there was very little that could be done as proper placement for the resident was required. Ms. Park interjected she did not feel that the contract issue would incur a sufficient reason to terminate a residency agreement; therefore, she said, if the family did not submit payment the County would be forced to fund the residency until placement in an alternate facility could be determined.

Subsequent to additional discussion on the matter, it was the consensus of the Committee that the issue should be tabled for further consideration at the next meeting, following review by Mr. Dusek.

Concluding her agenda review, Ms. Park apprised the Countryside Adult Home had recently held their annual family picnic, and she thanked Mr. Loeb and Suzanne Wheeler, Deputy Commissioner of the Department of Social Services, for attending.

Mr. Geraghty announced he had received communication from a Warrensburg resident who had recently moved to Countryside, commending the facility for their efforts and appreciating their accommodating nature.

Privilege of the floor was extended to Ms. Wheeler to begin the Department of Social Services portion of the Committee meeting. Copies of the meeting agenda were distributed to the Committee members, a copy of which is also on file with the minutes.

Commencing with Agenda Item 1, Ms. Wheeler presented a request to authorize the Youth Bureau Director to attend Youth Development Training in Albany, NY on October 26, 2011.

Motion was made by Mr. Strainer, 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 announced November was National Adoption Month and she pointed out that the agenda included

a copy of the 2010 Presidential Proclamation. She said she and Joan Sady, Clerk of the Board, would be working together to develop an updated version for presentation at the next Board meeting. Mr. Loeb questioned whether Committee action was necessary to approve the Proclamation and Mrs. Sady replied in the negative.

Moving on to Agenda Item 3, Ms. Wheeler detailed a request for authorization to submit the 2012 Five-Year Child Welfare Plan, which was usually submitted every three years and updated annually. She explained a public hearing was required and had been scheduled for October 12, 2011 at the Human Services Building. Ms. Wheeler advised Chairman Stec and Mr. Dusek would sign the final document before submission.

Motion was made by Mr. Kenny, seconded by Mr. Sokol and carried unanimously to approve the aforementioned request and the necessary resolution was authorized for the October 21st Board meeting. *A copy of the request is on file with the minutes.*

Ms. Wheeler said Agenda Item 4 consisted of a request for Lauren Berry, CPS (Child Protective Services) Caseworker, to enroll in a Substance Abuse Training Program Module II at SUNY Adirondack, incurring a cost of \$482.50 to the County.

Mr. Strainer questioned whether the funds were available in the existing budget and Ms. Wheeler replied affirmatively.

Motion was made by Mr. Strainer, seconded by Mr. Sokol and carried unanimously to approve the request and refer same to the Personnel Committee. *A copy of the request is on file with the minutes.*

Agenda Item 5 included a request for Denice Spinoso, CPS Caseworker, and Kristy Neel, Senior CPS Caseworker, to attend the 2011 NY State Police Child Physical Abuse and Neglect Seminar in Albany, NY on November 14 - 17, 2011. She advised there was no cost to the County, other than for meals and travel.

Motion was made by Mr. Kenny, 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 stated Agenda Item 6 referred to a request for three Caseworkers, Rachael DuRose, Elizabeth Fregeau and Janet Baker, to attend Group Preparation and Selection Model II Approach to Partnership in Parenting Leader Certification Training in Albany, NY on November 1 - 4, 2011 and November 14 - 18, 2011. She advised there would be no cost to the County for this travel and the State would provide mileage reimbursement at a rate of \$.21 per mile.

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

Continuing, Ms. Wheeler addressed Agenda Item 7 which included a request to fill the vacant position of Social Welfare Examiner #13, base salary \$30,230, due to resignation, as well as any vacancies resulting from backfill.

Motion was made by Mr. Sokol, seconded by Mr. Bentley and carried unanimously to approve the request to fill the vacant position of Social Welfare Examiner #13, as well as any vacancies resulting from backfill, and refer same to the Personnel Committee. *A copy of the Notice of Intent to Fill Vacant Positions form is on file with the minutes.*

Ms. Wheeler advised Agenda Item 8 consisted of a request to fill the vacant position of Senior Social Welfare Examiner #6, base salary \$33,026, due to retirement, as well as any vacancies resulting from backfill.

Mr. Strainer questioned whether there would be any savings to the County upon filling this position and Ms. Wheeler replied affirmatively, noting there would be a \$1,000 savings. Julie Montero, Fiscal Manager for the Department of Social Services, interjected the position received 50% Federal reimbursement; therefore, she said, the savings to the County would actually be \$500.

Motion was made by Mr. Sokol, seconded by Mr. McDevitt and carried unanimously to approve the request to fill the vacant position of Senior Social Welfare Examiner #6, as well as any vacancies resulting from backfill, 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 9 referred to a request to fill the vacant position of Caseworker #16, base salary \$35,385, due to resignation, as well as any vacancies resulting from backfill, Ms. Wheeler apprised. She noted the vacant position was currently in the CPS Division, but would be moved to the Foster Care Division when filled. Ms. Wheeler explained the position had originated in the Foster Care Division, but had been moved to the CPS Division to meet the increased demand in that Department; she added that because they were slowly stopping referrals to Berkshire Farm, the position was no longer needed in the CPS Division and could be returned to Foster Care.

Motion was made by Mr. Sokol, seconded by Mr. McDevitt and carried unanimously to approve the request to fill the vacant position of Caseworker #16, as well as any vacancies resulting from backfill, 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.*

Moving on, Ms. Wheeler advised the overtime use reported had decreased over the past few pay periods. She advised that as per Mr. Loeb's request, the Overtime Report presented to the Committee was being reformatted to provide more consistency and a better means for comparison. In response to a question posed by Mr. Bentley as to how the overtime use had been successfully reduced, Ms. Wheeler advised a more flexible scheduling procedure had been implemented so that overtime was not being incurred for training and meeting attendance.

As for an update on the status of her Departmental budget, Ms. Wheeler advised they were doing very well with 61% of the budget having been expended and 41% of anticipated revenues received.

A brief discussion ensued.

There being no further business to come before the Committee, on motion made by Mr. Sokol and seconded by Mr. McDevitt, Mr. Loeb adjourned the meeting at 11:02 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Amanda Allen, Sr. Legislative Office Specialist