

WARREN COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

COMMITTEE: SOCIAL SERVICES - COUNTRYSIDE ADULT HOME, DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES AND YOUTH PROGRAMS

DATE: FEBRUARY 3, 2012

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

SUPERVISORS LOEB
KENNY
BENTLEY
SOKOL
WESTCOTT

OTHERS PRESENT:

REPRESENTING THE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES:
SUZANNE WHEELER, ACTING COMMISSIONER
JULIE MONTERO, FISCAL MANAGER
JAMIE BROCHU, PRINCIPAL SOCIAL WELFARE EXAMINER OF THE
MEDICAID UNIT
ASHLEY MCKINNEY, SOCIAL WELFARE EXAMINER OF THE
TEMPORARY ASSISTANCE UNIT
DEANNA PARK, DIRECTOR, COUNTRYSIDE ADULT HOME
MARGARET SING-SMITH, YOUTH BUREAU DIRECTOR
RHONDA ALLISON, UNITED HEALTHCARE
PAUL DUSEK, COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR
JOAN SADY, CLERK OF THE BOARD
KEVIN GERAGHTY, BUDGET OFFICER
SUPERVISORS MASON
TAYLOR
THOMAS
DON LEHMAN, *THE POST STAR*
AMANDA ALLEN, SR. LEGISLATIVE OFFICE SPECIALIST

COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT:

SUPERVISORS STRAINER
WOOD

Mr. Loeb called the meeting of the Social Services Committee to order at 11:12 a.m.

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

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

Mrs. Smith apprised that she had no new business to present and noted that the items listed on her agenda pertained to referral items from prior meetings regarding funding for the Youth Court Program. She said that as per the direction of the Committee, letters had been sent to all of the Towns of Warren County and the Village of Lake George during the first week of January, seeking Youth Court funding assistance. Mrs. Smith pointed out that the second page of the agenda reflected a chart outlining the updated status of funding for the 2012 program year.

Mr. Loeb pointed out that the amount of State funding to be provided would not be known until the State Budget was adopted and Mrs. Smith confirmed this, advising the same State funding situation had occurred during the prior year. Mrs. Smith reminded the Committee of their request for the various Youth Board programs to schedule meetings to discuss the benefits provided by each and she noted that the Youth Court and Youth & Family Counseling programs would be making their presentations on February 15th at 4:00 p.m. Mr. Loeb questioned when Youth Court meetings were held and Mrs. Smith responded that they were held every Thursday, with one meeting per month being held at the Warrensburg Town Hall and the rest in the Municipal Center Board Room. She added that the meetings were set up so that special guests could attend, but walk-in attendance was not permitted. Mrs. Smith advised that any Committee members wishing to attend a meeting of the Youth Court should contact her in advance to schedule permitted attendance.

There being no further Youth Bureau business to present, privilege of the floor was extended to Deanna Park, Director of the Countryside Adult Home, who distributed copies of her agenda to the Committee members; *a copy of the agenda is also on file with the minutes.*

Commencing her review with the Action Agenda section, Ms. Park presented a request for authorization for herself to attend the Empire State Association for Assisted Living annual conference and trade show on April 29 - May 2, 2012 at a cost of \$699, which was the "early bird special" fee. She noted that the conference attendance would provide 26.5 of the 28 continuing education credit hours required by the New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH) at a fraction of the cost of other conferences.

Motion was made by Mr. Kenny, seconded by Mr. Sokol 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.*

Ms. Park proceeded to the Old Business/Pending Items section of the agenda, which she reviewed as follows:

1. Relative to the repair of valving which was preventing heat from reaching certain rooms in the west wing of the Countryside facility, Ms. Park advised the valve had been replaced at a cost of approximately \$200 and heat had been restored to all areas of the building;
2. No updated information was provided relative to the request for Paul Dusek, County Administrator, to contact Washington County pertaining to the information they received from their consultant with regards to nursing home privatization;
3. No updated information was provided relative to the request for the County Attorney's Office to determine whether the County had the ability to enter into legally binding contracts for private payment of the County portion of residency costs for non-Warren County residents; and
4. Ms. Park said they continued to review the current contract with Technical Building Services to ensure there would be no contract violations if boiler cleaning services were sought from Northern Mechanical Services.

Respective to the second pending item, Mr. Loeb announced that during the following two weeks, Washington County would be holding public hearings regarding the nursing home privatization issue. He said that he would be out of the area and unable to attend these meetings, but encouraged other Committee members to attend. Mr. Westcott said he would be interested in attending the meetings, and Mr. Loeb thanked him for volunteering.

Continuing, Ms. Park addressed the Topics for Discussion section of the agenda, reading the following information aloud:

1. Overtime - 85.9 hours were incurred over the past two pay cycles which included the Martin Luther King Jr. Holiday. This total reflected a 27.2 hour decrease from the prior year;
2. Overtime for 2011 - 1110.6 hours total incurred for the year, representing a 498 hour decrease;
3. Current Census - 40 residents; 16 men and 24 women;
4. Monthly Statistics -
 - a. Long Term Residents -
Referrals - 5; 1 has just started the approval process, the other 4 were at a skilled level of care
Admissions/Discharges - 0 admissions; 1 discharge
 - b. Day Care -
Referrals - 0;
5. Veterans' Administration Applications -
 - a. Original Applications - 23 submitted; 11 denied, 2 private pay that did not apply, 8 approved and 2 pending approval
 - b. New Applications - 3; 2 approved, 1 pending
 - c. Documentation submitted on all applications

- d. Monthly awards totaled \$10,612
- e. Total amount received from Veterans' Administration to date was \$134,098;

Mr. Bentley questioned if the Veterans' Administration benefits were new revenues to the facility and Ms. Park replied affirmatively, noting that these benefits had not been accessed in the past.

Mr. Dusek entered the meeting at 11:20 a.m.

7. Pro Fire Suppressions, LLC Recommendations -
 - a. Install fire protection in storage area
 - b. Change out broken 1" ball valve at the exit of the building; this correction has already been made as it was classified as an urgent repair
 - c. Provide back flow prevention to protect city water supply; this was to prevent any contaminants in the building from entering the Warrensburg water system.
 - d. Estimated price of \$6,228.39 for Pro Fire Suppressions, LLC to make these corrections;

Ms. Park advised they intended to delay this work because the Town of Warrensburg was installing water meters in all residential and commercial areas. She said they preferred to implement the back flow prevention measures at the same time as the meter installations because it did not make sense to do these things separately.

8. Meal Site Relocation
 - a. A meeting had been scheduled with the NYSDOH on February 9th to discuss plans to move the Warrensburg mealsite to the Countryside facility, as well as to address any concerns they might have
 - b. A formal written request would be submitted to the State for their approval following the meeting with NYSDOH representatives.

Mr. Loeb noted that because there had been a lot of confusion on the mealsite relocation plans at the last Human Services Committee meeting, a special meeting had been scheduled to further discuss the issue. He noted that Ms. Park had recently forwarded an email to the members of the Board of Supervisors concerning the matter, clearing up most of the questions; therefore, he said, he wondered whether the special Committee meeting would still be necessary. Mr. Dusek interjected that there were other issues to be discussed, such as the concept of whether or not the County should advance the centralization of meal preparation at the sites, as well as whether there was a more cost effective approach available; he added that he felt the discussions planned for the upcoming meeting would extend beyond the clarifications provided in the email. Mr. Dusek said this matter had been a very sensitive subject, requiring further consideration of the alternatives available.

There being no further business to present relative to the Countryside Adult Home, privilege of the floor was extended to Suzanne Wheeler, Acting Commissioner of the Department of Social Services (DSS), who distributed copies of her agenda to the Committee members; *a copy of the agenda is also on file with the minutes.*

Ms. Wheeler began the agenda review with section I, Announcements. She advised that each month, DSS staff nominated two of their peers to be recognized as Team Leader or Team Player; she added that this nomination program had started in 2010, and she intended to continue it as long as she served as the Acting DSS Commissioner. For the month of January, Ms. Wheeler apprised that Jamie Brochu, Principal Social Welfare Examiner of the Medicaid Unit, had been named as Team Leader and Ashley McKinney, Social Welfare Examiner of the Temporary Assistance Unit, had been named as Team Player. She introduced Ms. Brochu and Ms. McKinney to the Committee members, noting that Ms. Brochu had worked in the DSS for over 25 years and supervised 22 staff members, while Ms. McKinney was a relatively new DSS employee, having worked in the Department for only the past 8 months. Ms. Wheeler pointed out that the agenda included information pertaining to the qualifications for

the awards, as well as several positive comments submitted by DSS staff for each of the award winners.

The Committee acknowledged Ms. Brochu and Ms. McKinney's accomplishments with a round of applause.

Continuing to Section II of the agenda, Action Items, Ms. Wheeler advised there were nine requests for authorization to attend training, as follows:

1. Tina Murray, Foster Care Caseworker, to attend Domestic Violence Training for Caseworkers/On-Call Duties on February 9 - 10, 2012 at the Saratoga County DSS;
2. Foster Care Caseworkers Katie Dion, Maureen Taylor and Carrie Wright to attend Achieving Permanency through Surrender and Terminations of Parental Rights Training in Albany, NY on March 6 - 8 and 12 - 14, 2012;
3. Janet Baker, Adoption/Foster Care Caseworker, to attend Child Sexual Abuse Leader Certification Training in Albany, NY on March 6 - 8 and 20- 23, 2012;
4. Social Welfare Examiners Cynthia Cameron and Ana Kerst to attend the Institute for Temporary Assistance Program Training in Albany, NY on February 27 - March 2 and March 12 - 16, 2012;
5. Cynthia Mulcahy, Preventive Unit Senior Caseworker, to attend the Core Essential Skills for Experienced Caseworkers Training in Albany, NY on March 13 - 16 and 27 - 30, 2012;
6. Mary Wilcox, Senior Social Welfare Examiner/Food Stamp Supervisor, to attend Case Processing Review Training for NTA-FS Supervisors on March 20 - 23, 2012 in Albany, NY;
7. Child Protective Services Caseworkers Lauren Berry and Pamela Parker to attend Forensic Interviewing Best Practices Training at the New York State Police Academy in Albany, NY on March 21 - 23, 2012;
8. Case Supervisors Maureen Schmidt and Christian Hanchett to attend Leadership Training in Albany, NY on April 26, 2012; and
9. Sharon Walter, Fraud Investigator, to attend Welfare Fraud Investigator Training at the New York State Police Academy in Albany, NY on May 7 - 11, 2012.

Motion was made by Mr. Kenny, seconded by Mr. Sokol and carried unanimously to approve all nine travel requests as outlined above. *Copies of the Authorization to Attend Meeting or Convention forms are on file with the minutes.*

Ms. Wheeler announced that the next agenda item consisted of a request to fill a vacant Caseworker position in the Foster Care Unit, due to resignation. She pointed out that the agenda included a copy of the resignation letter submitted by Elizabeth Fregeau upon receiving an offer for a position with a much higher salary; she added that they were very sorry to lose Ms. Fregeau as she was a valued employee. Ms. Wheeler concluded that the position received 75% reimbursement for salary costs and was necessary to satisfactorily meet the mandates of the Foster Care program.

Motion was made by Mr. Bentley, seconded by Mr. Kenny and carried unanimously to approve the aforementioned request 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.*

The next agenda item, Ms. Wheeler stated, included a request for permission to allow managed care vendors United Health Care and Fidelis to use an interview room in the Human Services Building one day each week to assist clients with health care applications. She then introduced Rhonda Allison, who was a former DSS employee that now worked for United Health Care, to provide more information on this initiative.

Ms. Allison distributed promotional materials pertaining to her firm and outlining some of the benefits offered. *Copies of the handouts are on file with the minutes.*

Ms. Allison apprised that United Health Care would be providing new health insurance plan options to Warren

County residents, including Medicaid Managed Care, Family Health Plus and Child Health Plus programs. She said the coverage had been made available following recent State approvals to expand into several Counties, including Warren County, that authorized them to begin accepting applications for coverage on the following Monday. She said their intention was to complete as many applications as possible for eligible residents to provide coverage and encourage healthier lifestyles, which was an advantage to the entire community.

United Health Care required mandatory volunteer work from its employees within their community, Ms. Allison stated, and she noted that they incorporated a program aimed at discouraging childhood obesity which included appearances by their mascot "Dr. Healthy Hound". Additionally, she advised that United Health Care held various alliances and partnerships with several organizations, one of which included distributing Sesame Street books and activity materials to area pediatrician offices; she added that they also partnered with the YMCA, Boys & Girls Clubs of America, the American Heart Association and the 4-H to provide health related information and programs.

Ms. Allison said that although they were new to the area, United Health Care would strive to make themselves available to Warren County residents by placing representatives in areas convenient to the applicant. She apprised that she had already set up meeting points in the Towns of Warrensburg, North Creek, and the City of Glens Falls and sought to add a location at the Human Services Building. Ms. Allison explained that she would like to schedule use of one of the vacant Interview Rooms at the Human Services Building to assist with and process enrollment applications; she added that this would also be a benefit to the DSS employees as she would be present to answer questions related to managed medical care coverage that the DSS staff might not be prepared to answer. Ms. Allison advised that as per State guidelines, they were required to enroll any residents not wanting United Health Care coverage in the Fidelis program. She said she had visited each of the Towns of Warren County to distribute marketing materials relative to the programs available and provide direct contact telephone numbers for any coverage inquiries.

Mr. Sokol stated that he had no issue with approving the request for use of an Interview Room, but would first like Mr. Dusek's input as to whether he foresaw any problems with said use. Mr. Dusek responded that although use of County facilities by private enterprises was not typically allowed during normal business hours, in this case he felt allowing United Health Care to do so would provide a benefit to County residents and was consistent with the programs currently offered by the DSS. However, he noted, if other similar organizations requested the same use of available facilities, they would have to make the same allowances. Mr. Sokol then questioned whether this situation would present any increased liability issues to the County and Mr. Dusek responded in the negative, advising that the liability exposure would be no greater than it was on any other day when a number of people were entering and leaving the Building.

Mr. Bentley noted that WIC (Women, Infants and Children) program representatives visited the Town of Horicon on a monthly basis to promote and accept resident applications for benefits and he suggested that Ms. Allison attend on the same days to offer the services provided by United Health Care. Ms. Allison thanked Mr. Bentley and noted that she was seeking notification from the Supervisors as to events and meetings where she might be able to further promote the benefits available.

In connection with this matter, Mr. Dusek said he would recommend that some type of permission application for County facilities use be developed to cover any issues concerning use of the rooms, as well as to formalize the room use procedure. He said Ms. Wheeler was currently seeking out examples of a form to be used and they would work together to make it appropriate to the facilities available before forwarding it to the County Attorney's Office for final review and approval.

In response to Mr. Loeb's inquiry as to the client base for United Health Care programs, Ms. Allison advised that the applicants would consist mainly of the same population seeking other Social Services programs. She noted that

when the State finalized their plans to convert Medicaid benefits to mandatory managed care programs within the next year, applicants would have to choose between the United Health Care and Fidelis programs and it would be much more convenient for her to answer questions and assist with application submissions as she was more familiar with the coverage available than the DSS staff would be. Mr. Loeb then asked Ms. Allison to comment on the difference between the current Medicaid program and the managed care programs, to which she responded that the United Health Care and Fidelis programs were less costly to the County as they would incur a monthly premium of \$200-\$400 that would include benefits for all medical or prescription services sought, while under the current Medicaid program a fee of \$1,500 could be incurred for one emergency room visit. Ms. Allison reiterated that when the State activated the mandatory managed care programs, all enrollees would be forced to choose between the United Health Care and Fidelis programs.

Mr. Sokol asked if a resolution was necessary to allow the room use as requested and Mr. Dusek responded affirmatively, adding that he would also encourage the Committee to include a notation as to their approval of the room use application he had eluded to previously.

Motion was made by Mr. Sokol, seconded by Mr. Kenny and carried unanimously to authorize United Health Care to utilize an Interview Room in the Human Services Building one day per week to assist with managed care application questions and submissions for Warren County residents, as well as to approve the development of a room use application form, and the necessary resolution was authorized for the February 17th Board meeting. *A copy of the request is on file with the minutes.*

Ms. Allison thanked the Committee members, stating that she looked forward to working with each of them and encouraged them to contact her with any questions or concerns they might have.

A brief discussion ensued relative to documents included in the information packet provided by Ms. Allison.

Resuming the agenda review, Ms. Wheeler asked Ms. Brochu to provide the Committee with a brief overview of the Medicaid Division. Ms. Brochu apprised that she supervised the Medicaid Program which consisted of six units including the following:

1. Community Medicaid - providing benefits for pregnant women, children and families;
2. Chronic Care Medicaid - providing benefits for the aged, disabled and nursing home population;
3. Supplemental Security Income (SSI) Medicaid - providing benefits for individuals receiving social security income;
4. Managed Care Unit;
5. Third Party Health Insurance Unit;
6. Disability Review.

Ms. Brochu apprised that she oversaw all staff working in these six units which was comprised of three Senior Social Welfare Examiners, fifteen Social Welfare Examiners, three Medicaid Clerks and one Intake Clerk. As for caseload sizes, she said there were currently about 7,700 individuals receiving Community and Chronic Care Medicaid cases and 1,700 individuals receiving SSI Medicaid; Ms. Brochu added that approximately 320 cases were handled by each Community Medicaid Examiner and 400 by each Chronic Care Medicaid Examiner.

Mr. Taylor questioned whether Ms. Brochu's staff would be affected by the State's change to mandatory managed care programs and she replied that they would eventually, but noted that the State continued to delay this change so they were not sure exactly when it would be enacted. Ms. Wheeler interjected that the change was initially projected to occur in August, but had been delayed due to centralization issues at the State level.

Continuing the agenda review, Ms. Wheeler addressed the Overtime Report which was included in the agenda

packet for the Committee's review. She noted that the Report provided a comparison of overtime incurred in 2010 and 2011, pointing out that although an increase in overtime costs for 2011 was represented, she would ask the Committee to keep in mind that they had changed scheduling practices to adjust work schedules and hours to avoid overtime beginning in August and continuing through the remainder of the year. Additionally, Ms. Wheeler noted that they had been allowed 235 hours of overtime in 2011 to catch up the case backlog in the Child Protective Services Unit, for which grant funding had been received to defray most of the associated costs.

Concluding her review, Ms. Wheeler addressed the Budget Status Report that was included in the agenda packet. She noted there were no issues to report relative to expenses incurred, but asked Julie Montero, Fiscal Manager, to expound upon revenue issues. Ms. Montero explained that due to issues with State reimbursements for 2011, they had not received all of the anticipated revenues, but expected to receive them by March of 2012. As for 2011 expenses, Ms. Montero advised they would be very close, or below, the anticipated expense totals.

Mr. Dusek noted that there appeared to be State revenues totaling approximately \$5 million outstanding and Ms. Montero advised this was correct. She explained the State was incorporating a new claims system and had not anticipated any issues with its operation, leading them to cease use of the old claim system while the new one was being installed; however, Ms. Montero stated, the new system had not worked as designed, leaving the State with no platform for claims reimbursements. The State had acknowledged this issue and opened some portions of their system to allow some claims to be submitted, Ms. Montero explained, but since many Counties were submitting at the same time, they were unsure exactly when reimbursements would be received. She advised that while they expected to receive reimbursements for the claims submitted in March, all special claims for the months of October through December could not be submitted until the State's new claim system was in working order. Ms. Montero said that the State had promised to rectify this situation as quickly as possible.

Discussion ensued.

Ms. Wheeler apprised some additional revenues would be received through the Foster Care Unit because a two-year backlog of claims, caused by legal documentation that needed to be entered into the DSS Welfare Management System, had recently been addressed. She said she was very happy to announce that this backlog had been caught up and she credited Rachel DuRose, Foster Care Unit staff member, with working diligently to rectify this matter.

There being no further business to come before the Social Services Committee, on motion made by Mr. Bentley and seconded by Mr. Sokol, Mr. Loeb adjourned the meeting at 12:06 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Amanda Allen, Sr. Legislative Office Specialist