

Warren County Board of Supervisors

Committee: Social Services

Date: April 26, 2012

Committee Members Present:

Supervisors Loeb
Kenny
Bentley
Strainer
Wood
Sokol
Westcott

Others Present:

Representing the Department of Social Services:
Suzanne Wheeler, Acting Commissioner
Julie Montero, Fiscal Manager
Daniel G. Stec, Chairman of the Board
Paul Dusek, County Administrator
Joan Sady, Clerk of the Board
Kevin Geraghty, Budget Officer
Supervisor Frasier
Supervisor McDevitt
Supervisor Taylor
Supervisor Thomas
Don Lehman, *The Post Star*
Nicole Livingston, Second Deputy Clerk

Mr. Loeb called the meeting of the Social Services Committee to order at 10:15 a.m.

Motion was made by Mr. Sokol, seconded by Mrs. Wood and carried unanimously to approve the minutes of the March 23, 2012 Committee meeting, subject to correction by the Clerk of the Board.

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.

Commencing the Agenda review with Announcements, Ms. Wheeler informed that the Team Leader selected for the month was Tammy Breen, Child Protective Services (CPS) Supervisor, who was unable to attend the meeting today. She further reported that the Team Player for the month was Kristy Neel, Senior CPS Caseworker, who was present and she congratulated Ms. Neel. She noted that the Agenda included praising comments from Ms. Breen's and Ms. Neel's coworkers. The Committee members responded with a round of applause.

Item II on the Agenda, Ms. Wheeler said, was the DSS Program Information and Education, and she stated that this month's presentation would be provided by Winston Varnum, Resource & Recovery Coordinator. Mr. Varnum remarked that he had been employed in the DSS for eighteen and a half years and had been the Resource & Recovery Coordinator for twelve years. He referenced a handout included in the Agenda which reflected a diagram of the staff in the Unit that consisted of himself, a Senior Clerk and two Clerks and also outlined the phases of the Units daily operations. Relative to providing support to DSS Units, Mr. Varnum highlighted the following: his Unit mailed out/provided returned clearances of applicant/recipient: employment, bank accounts, life/accident insurance, real property ownership, stocks, bonds, mutual funds, worker's compensation, unemployment benefits, veterans' benefits, NY State Disability benefits

to Food Stamp, Medicaid, Temporary Assistance and HEAP Units; maintained/provided DSS file records for Temporary Assistance, Food Stamp, Medicaid, HEAP, Support and Employment Units; maintained/assigned/changed applicant/recipient case file numbers in Temporary Assistance, Food Stamp, Medicaid, HEAP and Services Units; completed daily list of deceased recipients of Assistance and provided lists to all Units.

Mr. Varnum added that 75% of his time was dedicated to the Recovery phase and he reviewed the associated duties as follows: recovery of Small Estates, Testate Estates (Will) and Intestate Estates (without Will) and all claims were filed in Surrogate's Court; Medicaid Liens, which were liens on real property owned by persons who are institutionalized, not residing in the community and said liens were filed in the County Clerk's Office; bond and mortgages filed on persons who owned real property and were approved for cash receipt/vendor payments when on Temporary Assistance; affidavits that were sent to recover individual bank accounts, after death, of individuals with no estate processes, sent on life insurance policies with predeceased beneficiaries, also sent on other various assets not requiring estate processing, for example, personal/incidental nursing home accounts, Countryside Adult Home accounts and others; and accidental/medical malpractice liens filed on persons who had or were receiving temporary or Medical Assistance and who were covered by insurance policies, noting that claims may or may not have been in legal pursuit through Court action. Mr. Varnum noted last year, he recovered \$156,000 from one accident injury malpractice suit.

Returning to the Agenda review, Ms. Wheeler presented eight requests for authorization to attend meetings or conventions as follows:

- 1- CPS Caseworker, Meaghan Gorman, to attend Adolescent Substance Use: Challenges & Resiliencies at Washington County DSS on May 17, 2012;
- 2- Principal Social Welfare Examiner, Kelly Barker and Senior Social Welfare Examiner, Mary Wilcox, to attend the 2012 LIFE Conference in Albany on May 22-23, 2012;
- 3- Adult Protective Services Caseworker, Elizabeth Dobert, to attend the Mental Health Assessment Skill Building for Protective Services for Adults in Albany on May 29, 2012;
- 4- Senior Preventive Caseworker, Cynthia Mulcahy, to attend Core Essentials for Experienced Caseworkers in Albany on June 5-8, 2012 and June 19-22, 2012;
- 5- Social Services Fraud Investigators, Elizabeth Burke, Sharon Walter and Lisa Zulauf, to attend Child Care Subsidy Training for Fraud Investigators in Albany on June 12, 2012;
- 6- CPS Caseworker, Andrea Corbin, to attend the Sexual Abuse Dynamics & Intervention Training in Albany on June 13-15, 2012;
- 7- Foster Care Caseworker, Heather Ranado, to attend Common Core Training in Albany in July, August and September 2012; and
- 8- Senior Social Welfare Examiner, Mary Wilcox, to attend Effective Agency Representation at Fair Hearing Training in Albany on September 5-6, 2012.

Motion was made by Mr. Kenny, seconded by Mr. Strainer and carried unanimously to approve the eight requests for training as outlined above. Copies of the Authorization to Attend Meeting or Convention forms are on file with the minutes.

Ms. Wheeler stated the next item was a request to create the position of Principal Social Welfare Examiner in the Medicaid Unit, annual salary of \$36,410, effective May 18, 2012; thereby amending the Department's Table of Organization. She noted that the position was mandated and 100% reimbursed. She also requested to create the position of Senior Social Welfare Examiner in the Medicaid Unit, annual salary of \$33,026, effective May 18, 2012; thereby amending the Department's Table of Organization. She added that the position was mandated and was 100% reimbursed. Ms. Wheeler advised that included in the Agenda was a 2008 Medicaid Unit Organizational Chart, the Present Model Chart and the Proposed Model Chart, which she reviewed in detail with the Committee members. She pointed out a significant increase in Medicaid cases from 2008 to 2012, as well as an increase in the number of consumers and transactions. Ms. Wheeler remarked that in 2008, there were fourteen front line staff and six supervisors; currently there were nineteen front line staff and four supervisors. She stated that at the present time, the supervisors were six months to one year behind in their case reviews, which had necessitated the requests to create the two additional positions.

Motion was made by Mr. Bentley and seconded by Mr. Kenny to approve the requests to create the positions of Principal Social Welfare Examiner and Senior Social Welfare Examiner as presented.

Discussion ensued relative to the reorganization that took place a few years ago in the Department which resulted in the elimination of a number of positions. Following discussion, Mr. Loeb called the question and the motion was carried unanimously to approve the requests to create the aforementioned positions as outlined above, and to refer the same to the Personnel Committee. The resolution request forms are on file with the minutes. Please note: Subsequent to the meeting, Ms. Wheeler advised that the request included backfilling of any vacancies resulting from promotion to either the Principal or Senior Social Welfare Examiner position.

The next Agenda item, Ms. Wheeler said, was a request to amend the 2012 County budget to increase estimated revenues and appropriations in the amount of \$70,081, due to the creation of two positions within the Medicaid Unit that were 100% reimbursable.

Motion was made by Mr. Bentley, seconded by Mr. Kenny and carried unanimously to approve the request to amend the 2012 County budget as outlined above, and to refer the same to the Finance Committee. The resolution request form is on file with the minutes.

Ms. Wheeler referred to the next item on the Agenda, Overtime Report, and informed there was no overtime for the period of March 26 through April 9, 2012, only on-call hours, and that was a decrease from the same time in 2011.

Concluding the Agenda review, Ms. Wheeler noted the Budget Status Report was included in the Agenda and there were no issues at this time. She pointed out that there was an increase in revenues; however, she said, such increase was not reflected in the report because the Treasurer's Office had not posted the figures yet.

There being no further business to come before the Social Services Committee, on motion made by Mr. Bentley and seconded by Mr. Kenny, Mr. Loeb adjourned the meeting at 10:41 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Nicole Livingston, Second Deputy Clerk