

## WARREN COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

**COMMITTEE: HUMAN SERVICES**

**DATE: JANUARY 28, 2013**

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**COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:**

SUPERVISORS STRAINER  
FRASIER  
SOKOL  
LOEB  
VANSELOW

**OTHERS PRESENT:**

CHRISTIE SABO, DIRECTOR, OFFICE FOR THE AGING  
CHRIS HUNSINGER, DIRECTOR, EMPLOYMENT & TRAINING ADMINISTRATION  
DENISE DiRESTA, DIRECTOR OF VETERANS' SERVICES  
KEVIN B. GERAGHTY, CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD  
PAUL DUSEK, COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR  
JOAN SADY, CLERK OF THE BOARD  
FRANK THOMAS, BUDGET OFFICER  
SUPERVISORS CONOVER  
DICKINSON  
MASON  
TAYLOR  
WILLIAM VALENZA, POLICE CHIEF, CITY OF GLENS FALLS  
COURTNEY SLADE, VETERANS JUSTICE OUTREACH COORDINATOR  
THOMAS WALKER, NYS DIVISION OF VETERANS AFFAIRS  
JOHN SYLVESTRI, ATTORNEY  
COMMANDER MIKE HOYT, VFW POST 2475  
JIM CAMPANELI, QUARTERMASTER, VFW POST 2475  
HARRY TREADWAY, WARREN COUNTY RESIDENT  
GERRY HOFFMAN, WARREN COUNTY RESIDENT  
LEESA STILLER, DISTRICT OFFICE MANAGER, FOR ASSEMBLYMAN DAN STEC  
DON LEHMAN, *THE POST STAR*  
JOANNE COLLINS, LEGISLATIVE OFFICE SPECIALIST

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**COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT:**

SUPERVISORS GIRARD  
WOOD

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

Motion was made by Mrs. Vanselow, seconded by Mrs. Frasier 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 Christie Sabo, Director of the Office for the Aging (OFA), who distributed copies of the agenda to the Committee members; a copy of which is on file with the minutes.

Commencing the Action Items portion of the agenda, Ms. Sabo presented a request to modify and renew the contract with William Lane Associates, LLC., for the Health Insurance Information Counseling & Assistance Program (HIICAP) services, for the term commencing April 1, 2012 and terminating March 31, 2013, for a total amount not to exceed \$5,000. She explained the contract amount was being increased to expend the additional HIICAP funding received and she felt that William Lane Associates could best handle the full range of application scenarios including one-on-one counseling.

Motion was made by Mr. Loeb, seconded by Mrs. Frasier and carried unanimously to modify and extend the contract with William Lane Associates as outlined above and the necessary resolution was authorized for the February 15, 2013 Board meeting. *A copy of the resolution request form is on file with the minutes.*

Concurrent with the previous request, Ms. Sabo requested permission to amend the 2013 County Budget to increase estimated revenues and appropriations in the amount of \$5,000 to reflect the receipt of additional HIICAP funding.

Motion was made by Mr. Loeb, seconded by Mr. Vanselow and carried unanimously to amend the 2013 County Budget as outlined and to refer same to the Finance Committee. *A copy of the Request to Amend County Budget form is on file with the minutes.*

Ms. Sabo presented a request to fill the vacant position of Mealsite Cook #8, Grade 2, annual salary of \$18,730 (30 hours per week), Employee No. 11841, due to resignation. She stated the position was located in Chestertown and the work hours would be decreased from 30 to 25 hours per week.

Motion was made by Mr. Loeb, seconded by Mrs. Frasier and carried unanimously to fill the vacant position of Mealsite Cook #8 as outlined and to refer same to the Personnel Committee. *A copy of the Notice of Intent to Fill Vacant Position is on file with the minutes.*

The final action item presented by Ms. Sabo was a request to reappoint voting, non-voting and elected members, of the 2013 Advisory Council.

Motion was made by Mr. Loeb, seconded by Mr. Sokol and carried unanimously authorizing the appointments and reappointments to the 2013 OFA Advisory Council as detailed on the resolution request, and the necessary resolution was authorized for the February 15, 2013 Board meeting. *A copy of the resolution request form is on file with the minutes.*

Ms. Sabo noted that a Served Client Summary Report was included in the agenda packets. She reported an average of 629 meals per day were served in 2012 which reflected an increase over the prior year.

At Mr. Loeb's request, Ms. Sabo defined the following acronyms:

CSE	Community Services - Elderly
CSI	Community Services Initiative
EISEP	Expanded In-Home Services for Elderly Program
HEAP	Heating Energy Application Program
HIICAP	Health Insurance Information Counseling & Assistance Program
POE	Point of Entry
SNAP	Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program
C1	Congregate Site Nutrition
C2	Home Delivered Nutrition
Title IIIB	Program used in Main Office (Older Americans Act)
Title IIID	Evidence Based Health Promotion Program
Title IIIE	Caregivers for Elderly
Title VII	Elder Abuse Prevention
WRAP	Weatherization Referral Application Program

Responding to requests from Messrs. Strainer and Loeb, Ms. Sabo stated she would provide information reflecting the percentage of increases over several years for both congregate and delivered meals, as well as data reflecting the age of meal recipients over several years.

This concluded the OFA portion of the Human Services Committee meeting and privilege of floor was extended to Chris Hunsinger, Director of the Employment & Training Administration (ETA), who

distributed copies of the agenda to the Committee members; *a copy of which is on file with the minutes.*

Mr. Hunsinger presented a request to amend the 2013 County Budget to increase estimated revenues and appropriations in the amount of \$43,830 to reflect training reimbursement of Trade Adjustment Act expenditures for dislocated workers.

Motion was made by Mr. Sokol, seconded by Mrs. Frasier and carried unanimously to amend the County Budget as outlined and to refer same to the Finance Committee. *A copy of the Request to Amend County Budget is on file with the minutes.*

Mr. Hunsinger requested permission for Sharon Sano and Noreene Tarantino, to attend the New York Association of Training and Employment Professionals (NYATEP) in Albany, NY, from March 5 - 7, 2013.

Motion was made by Mrs. Frasier, seconded by Mr. Loeb 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.*

Mr. Hunsinger advised of funds needed to administer the Youth Work Crew Program, available for out-of-school youth from March through June. He said program expenses included a van rental or use of a County vehicle for transport to the work sites, and the need to hire approximately six supervisors/mentors for the standard work hours of 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. He said the program had been carried out in the past and the Federal allocation of funds was based on a formula used for specific expenses. Mr. Hunsinger informed that the number of out-of-school eligible youth had decreased over the past several years; however, he said, funds were currently available for this group and the future of program funding was uncertain. Mr. Hunsinger further explained that employment mentoring was built into the program, as well as the possibility of a nationally recognized certificate of completion. He noted that individuals currently enrolled in a GED program were eligible for the Youth Work Crew Program and the GED program may be used as a resource for seeking eligible candidates.

Mr. Hunsinger said he had two requests which pertained to the "Ticket To Work" program through the New York State (NYS) Department of Mental Health. He explained the program served disabled individuals who could receive payment for work without the loss of Social Security/Disability benefits. He said it was a State initiative for Workforce Investment Boards (WIB) in which Employment Counselors would set up paid employment placements based on the length of time the individual received Social Security/Disability benefits.

Motion was made by Mrs. Frasier, seconded by Mr. Loeb and carried unanimously to authorize the Chairman to execute the NYS Department of Mental Health "Ticket To Work" Confidentiality & Non-Disclosure Agreement, and the necessary resolution was authorized for the February 15, 2013 Board Meeting. *A copy of the resolution request form is on file with the minutes.*

Regarding the second request related to the "Ticket To Work" program, Mr. Hunsinger explained he was not certain if the WIB or Warren County was required to execute the agreement with the NYS Department of Mental Health.

Motion was made by Mr. Vanselow, seconded by Mr. Sokol and carried unanimously to authorize the Chairman, should it be determined necessary, to execute the Agreement for the "Ticket To Work" program through the NYS Department of Mental Health, for the term commencing upon execution

of the agreement, and terminating January 31, 2022. The necessary resolution was authorized for the February 15, 2013 Board Meeting. *A copy of the resolution request form is on file with the minutes.*

This concluded the ETA portion of the Human Services Committee meeting and privilege of the floor was extended to Denise DiResta, Director of the Veterans' Services Office, who distributed copies of the agenda to the Committee members, a copy of which is on file with the minutes. Ms. DiResta stated the purpose of today's meeting was to share information regarding the possible implementation of a Veterans Justice Court Outreach Program and she introduced guest speaker, Courtney Slade, LCSW, United States Department of Veterans' Affairs (VA) - Health Administration Resources/VA Justice Court Outreach Program Coordinator.

Privilege of the floor was extended to Ms. Slade, who stated that her service area covered eighteen counties and she noted there were multiple ways the program interfaced with both the legal system and participating community partners. One interface, she said, was through law enforcement which included the jail and court system and the purpose of such collaboration was to assess a veteran as early as possible in the legal system, and to offer resources relative to health administration. She advised that Thomas Walker, with the NYS Division of Veterans' Services, provided the veterans benefits portion of the programming, which included compensation for injuries related to military service, as well as non health related matters.

Ms. Slade stated the veterans who sought her assistance included the homeless, and those in need of vocational, substance abuse, or mental health counseling. She said the theory behind the programming was that the provision of benefits early in the legal process would deter future issues and/or decrease the incidence of homelessness, and she noted that she was familiar with the Buffalo Veterans' Treatment Court, as well as the Albany County program, which was the most well established of the existing programs within the eighteen counties. Ms. Slade advised that she received a daily roster of every veteran who entered the legal system in Warren County, some of whom were incarcerated. One of her goals, she asserted, was to discuss the need to educate law enforcement and the lower level courts in order to provide veterans with alternative resources prior to sentencing. She added that not all veterans in the system were/would be interested in alternative programs, and she welcomed questions and Committee discussion about the program.

Mr. Strainer asked if an endorsement from the Committee was needed today, and if there was a need for County funding. Ms. Slade stated, that as a Federal Government employee, she could not request funding from the counties and she noted, there were ways to implement the program with minimal funds, such as using mentors. The mentors, she said, often served in the same branch of the military as the veteran; thereby providing the most effective advocacy and support. Veterans' Courts, she noted, which included a program coordinator and judge would incur expenses and she cited the Albany City Court as an example.

A short discussion ensued with regard to the benefits of the Veterans Justice Court Systems.

Harry Treadway, Warren County Resident, stated that as a Vietnam Veteran, he became interested in the program and felt the largest issue facing veterans was not a new issue and involved the effects of active combat which often prevented them from coping with civilian life. Without accessible resources, he said, veterans often turned to self-medication. He added that VA treatment centers had a better understanding of the core issues facing veterans which often required proper mental health services.

Ret. Judge Gerry Hoffman, program advocate, added that the Veterans' Court in Buffalo, NY had been successful with only one person having a second arrest since 2008.

Privilege of the floor was extended to Mr. Walker who stated his role was to cooperate with various county organizations (Community College, Office for the Aging, Mental Health) to achieve the program goals. He said the Warren County Veterans' Services Office played a central role for veterans by offering the first opportunity to obtain and retain assistance, and was the lead Office for matters related to funding, education, discharge and upgrades. Mr. Walker pointed out that veterans were proud and tended not to seek help. The primary Justice Court program goals, he said, were to help veterans and to save money for which a critical component was mental health care. The number-one challenge for veterans, he said, was the re-adjustment to society without the use of drugs or alcohol.

Privilege of the floor was extended to John Sylvestri, Esq., who stated that veterans had not fared well in traditional drug courts, and he noted a 2% recidivism rate. The Veterans' Court system, he said, can cost nothing and provide essential services, as long as law enforcement supported the program by identifying veterans entering the system. He further stated that support for the program often came from police officers who were veterans, and prosecutors whose goal was to decrease recidivism, as well as District Attorneys. He expounded the program incurred no cost to the County or its taxpayers and court judges performed the same work regardless of the existence of a separate court for this purpose. Mr. Sylvestri said he had spoken with Kate Hogan, District Attorney and Sheriff York, who were supportive of the program. He asserted that if veterans could be identified upon entering the system, alternative programs could be offered, and an agreement could be reached with regard to specified court sessions to address veterans cases. The courts, he stated, were not convinced that the total number of veterans cases warranted separate court sessions. He recommended that law enforcement determine veteran status by asking whether the individual had served in the Armed Forces.

Privilege of the floor was extended to Commander Mike Hoyt, Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) Post 2475, who said that when someone was arrested, they were not currently asked their military status and he said the local American Legion and VFW posts supported the program and its outreach efforts.

Mr. Strainer inquired about training for mentors and Ms. DiResta stated that veterans were sought to provide mentor services, with consideration of age groups and military branches. She advised that mentor training was offered free of charge. She further explained that the support and collaboration of the Committee and County Departments and agencies was essential to the success of the program on behalf of all veterans.

Privilege of the floor was extended to William Valenza, Police Chief, City of Glens Falls, who said he had attended Ms. Slade's recent session. He said he had discussed the program with Glens Falls City Court Judge Richard Tarantino, who questioned the need for the program in Warren County, following training and funding cuts several years ago. Chief Valenza said he found the number of arrests reported in Warren County to be disconcerting at 128, due to reporting issues and he noted that Saratoga County recorded one arrest. He said the reason Warren County's numbers were high in comparison was due to the fact that Saratoga County had not included a veterans status question. He said the Glens Falls Police Officers asked both veteran and branch status. All incident reports, he asserted, should include the question.

In furtherance of identifying veteran status, Mr. Walker suggested the question be presented as follows: "Have you ever served in the armed forces, or active duty in the Reserves?"

Pertaining to Warren County Jail reports, Ms. Slade stated that incarceration had decreased in Warren County since 2009, which implies evidence of diversion efforts. Chief Valenza stated it was likely that the Sheriff's Officers were asking the question which determined veteran status. Ms. Slade noted that Corrections Captain Michael Gates had provided useful information and she noted the Sheriff's Offices use of the Black Creek Integrated Reporting System was advantageous.

Mr. Strainer recommended the program be addressed at a subsequent Committee meeting to include the District Attorney, Sheriff and Probation Director in furtherance of the initiative.

Motion was made by Mr. Loeb and seconded by Mr. Vanselow to support the VA Justice Court Outreach Program.

Mr. Hoffman, who actively supported the program, suggested that those who wish to learn more about the program access the Buffalo Veterans Court website to view procedures, manuals and screening forms used by Erie County law enforcement.

Mr. Strainer called the question and the motion was carried unanimously to support further consideration of the VA Justice Court Outreach Program Initiative, and the necessary resolution was authorized for the February 15, 2013 Board Meeting. *A copy of the resolution request form is on file with the minutes.*

As there was no further business to come before the Committee, on motion made by Mrs. Frasier and seconded by Mr. Loeb, Mr. Strainer adjourned the meeting at 10:35 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Joanne Collins, Legislative Office Specialist