

WARREN COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

COMMITTEE: JOINT MEETING OF HEALTH SERVICES/EXTENSION SERVICE

DATE: OCTOBER 31, 2014

HEALTH SERVICES COMMITTEE

MEMBERS PRESENT:

SUPERVISORS SOKOL
FRASIER
TAYLOR
MCDEVITT

HEALTH SERVICES COMMITTEE

MEMBER ABSENT:

SUPERVISOR CONOVER

EXTENSION SERVICE COMMITTEE

MEMBERS PRESENT:

SUPERVISORS GIRARD
FRASIER
VANSELOW
SIMPSON
BEATY

OTHERS PRESENT:

REPRESENTING CORNELL COOPERATIVE EXTENSION:
DR. JAMES A. SEELEY, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
KENNETH MANGES, PRESIDENT OF THE CORNELL COOPERATIVE
EXTENSION BOARD OF DIRECTORS
REPRESENTING THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH:
PAT AUER, DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC HEALTH/PATIENT SERVICES
PAUL DUSEK, COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR
MARTIN AUFFREDOU, COUNTY ATTORNEY
AMANDA ALLEN, DEPUTY CLERK OF THE BOARD
FRANK E. THOMAS, BUDGET OFFICER
SUPERVISORS BROCK
SEEBER
WESTCOTT
TRAVIS WHITEHEAD, RESIDENT OF THE TOWN OF QUEENSBURY
SARAH MCLENITHAN, SECRETARY TO THE CLERK OF THE BOARD

Mr. Girard called the meeting of Extension Service Committee to order at 9:33 a.m.

Mr. Sokol called the meeting of the Health Services Committee to order at 9:33 a.m.

Motion was made by Mr. McDevitt, seconded by Mr. Taylor and carried unanimously to approve the minutes of the previous Health Services Committee meeting, subject to correction by the Clerk of the Board.

Privilege of the floor was extended to Pat Auer, Director of Public Health/Patient Services, who distributed copies of the agenda to the Committee members; *a copy of the agenda is on file with the minutes.*

Ms. Auer advised the purpose of the meeting was to discuss the sponsorship of the WIC (Women, Infants and Children) Program. She said she had only good comments to make regarding the WIC Program; however, she stated, the sponsorship expired on September 30, 2015. She explained the New York State Department of Health required a five year contract for sponsorship of the program. She noted the program was 100% reimbursable to the sponsoring agency. She apprised she had attended a meeting with the County Administrator, the County Budget Officer and the Chairman of the Board to discuss whether the County would submit an RFI (Request for Information) indicating whether the County would like to continue to sponsor the program, as well as what other agencies may be a good fit for the program and might be interested in pursuing sponsorship of the program in Warren County. She apprised Paul Dusek, County Administrator, contacted Dr. James A. Seeley, Executive Director of Cornell Cooperative Extension, to inquire whether their agency may be interested in providing the sponsorship for the program. She said they received positive feedback from Dr. Seeley regarding this matter. She mentioned they were bringing the matter to the Committees today to discuss whether Health Services or Cornell Cooperative Extension would submit the RFI to the New York State Department of Health to commit to sponsoring the program in Warren

County for the next five years. She noted the main goal was to ensure the program was preserved. She said if the program were to be taken over by the Cornell Cooperative Extension their Department would put measures in place to ensure a seamless transition. She pointed out if a decision was made to allow Cornell Cooperative Extension to take over sponsorship of the WIC program in Warren County they would need to submit a letter to the New York State Department of Health WIC Program indicating Warren County would not be submitting an RFI to continue sponsorship of the WIC Program for the five year contract period beginning October 1, 2015. She said once this letter was sent to the State, the Health Services Department could assist Cornell Cooperative Extension with preparing their RFI. She commented since the State was charged with selecting the program sponsor there was no assurance that Cornell Cooperative Extension would be awarded the contract. She advised the State's main concern was ensuring every County in the State had an agency in place to manage the program.

Mr. Dusek apprised when they reviewed the program they considered the five year commitment the County would have to make, as well as the other requirements and duties of the Health Services Department such as the Homecare Division. He commended Ms. Auer for successfully managing the WIC Program for a number of years. He said after reviewing the present staffing, the status of the County and the five year commitment, they felt the WIC Program may be a good fit for the Cornell Cooperative Extension because they offered a number of programs that were similar and connected to the WIC Program. He pointed out Cornell Cooperative Extension reached across the County with various programs and connections. He advised after discussing the matter with the Chairman of the Health Services Committee, the Chairman of the Extension Service Committee, as well as the Chairman of the Board and the County Budget Officer, they decided to contact Dr. Seeley to inquire whether the WIC Program may be something Cornell Cooperative Extension was interested in sponsoring for the County. He stated Dr. Seeley discussed this matter with the Cornell Cooperative Extension Board of Directors and they were supportive of their agency possibly taking over the program. He apprised if Dr. Seeley had indicated he had no interest in the WIC Program the Health Services Department would have continued to manage the program and submitted the RFI; however, he said, because of the positive feedback received from Dr. Seeley they were bringing the matter to the Committees for further discussion. He noted the goal was to enhance and continue the WIC Program using the best resources available while keeping it well connected with organizational activities. He mentioned the program fit in well with the initiatives of the Health Services Department; however, he stated, he believed the Committees should hear how and why the program would fit in with the Cornell Cooperative Extension organization from Dr. Seeley.

Mr. Girard requested that Dr. Seeley provide the Committees with some background information about similar programs Cornell Cooperative Extension had sponsored. He asked whether the Cornell Cooperative Extension Board of Directors had indicated they were interested in sponsoring the WIC program and Dr. Seeley replied affirmatively.

Dr. Seeley advised Cornell Cooperative Extension had managed the Eat Smart New York Program for a number of years until recently when funding issues arose. He said they were seeking to maintain a nutrition program within their organization. He pointed out there were several other Cornell Cooperative Extension Offices across the State that managed the WIC Program. As an example, he stated, the Schenectady County Cornell Cooperative Extension Office had managed the WIC Program in Schenectady County for over 20 years. He apprised he received full support from the Cornell Cooperative Extension Board of Directors to move forward with this initiative. He mentioned he attended an RFI meeting with Ms. Auer and a representative of the WIC Program to learn how to apply for sponsorship of the program. He noted the deadline of December 2, 2014 to apply for sponsorship was fast approaching.

Dr. Seeley commented he felt the key to success was a seamless transition for WIC Employees. He advised he had met with the WIC Employees this morning to discuss space, salary and benefits. He said he believed after the meeting the employees had a much better understanding of the benefits Cornell Cooperative Extension could provide them. He stated he thought the benefits they offered were comparable to those offered by Warren County.

With regards to the RFI, Dr. Seeley apprised he had provided Cornell University with a copy of the pertinent information for review. He said they indicated a desire to ensure the WIC Program supported their mission, which was primarily educational in nature. He explained they provided individuals in the community with programs to improve their lifestyle. He stated a goal of theirs was to build the capacity of the program. He advised their hope was to maintain the same number of staff at the same salaries they received through the County. He stated they were considering sub-contracting with the County for some space for the Program. He mentioned the WIC office space at the Warren County Municipal Center was appropriate for the programs needs. He added they had office space available in their building located in Town of Warrensburg that they could make readily available to the WIC Program Staff. He advised presently there were 9 different locations where WIC clinics took place and approximately 1,360 participants enrolled in the program. He said the grant was based upon the number of participants in the program.

Mr. Taylor asked whether the transition would have any impact on the participants of the program and Ms. Auer replied the goal was to ensure the transition was as seamless as possible. She apprised there would be no changes to the sites where WIC clinics took place. She stated she felt strongly the WIC Office should remain at the Warren County Municipal Center because the majority of the participants resided within close proximity of the building. She noted transportation was an issue for many of the program participants, and the Municipal Center provided a central location along the bus route. She said it would not be a seamless transition if no clinics were offered at the Municipal Center. Mr. Taylor questioned whether there were any employees that were split between the WIC Program and others and Ms. Auer replied in the negative.

Ms. Auer advised although it would be more work for the Health Services Department and Cornell Cooperative Extension, she felt this transition had the ability to represent a value added situation. She pointed out if Cornell Cooperative Extension rented space in the Municipal Center for the WIC Program, when they were out of the office for a WIC Clinic they could utilize this space to offer some of their other programs. She noted the only downside was that it was a change; however, she said, she felt Dr. Seeley was able to put the employees concerns at ease during the meeting this morning, as he was very open and did not steer away from any of their questions. She advised she would be happy to proceed in whichever direction the Committees would like to take. She added a decision today was essential, as the deadline for the application of December 2, 2014 was fast approaching.

Mr. McDevitt queried whether any other Counties had transitioned the program over successfully to a Cornell Cooperative Extension office in New York State and Mr. Seeley replied affirmatively. He explained the Schenectady County Cornell Cooperative Extension had been successfully managing the WIC Program for over 20 years and there were 3-4 additional Cornell Cooperative Extensions in the State that managed the program within their County, as well. He said there were currently 42 full-time employees through the WIC Program at Cornell Cooperative Extension.

Mr. Girard asked Dr. Seeley to elaborate on the process needed to ensure Cornell University was agreeable to the Warren County Cornell Cooperative Extension sponsoring the WIC Program in Warren County. Dr. Seeley advised the biggest issue with Cornell University was compliance. He said he felt the WIC Program was compliant with Cornell University's mission statement for research,

solutions, social well being, positive change on behalf of families, etc.; however, he stated, to ensure they were 100% compliant with they were requesting approval from Cornell University on this matter. Mr. Girard interjected he felt there would be no issues since the Schenectady County Cornell Cooperative Extension had been successfully managing the program for several years.

Mr. Vanselow requested Mr. Seeley expound on the possibility of utilizing space in the Municipal Center in addition to their facility located in the Town of Warrensburg. Dr. Seeley explained they could subcontract with the County for some space at the Municipal Center for the WIC Program. He continued, when WIC clinics were located at other sites they could utilize this space to offer some of their other programs. He reiterated the goal was to make the transition of the program from Health Services to the Warren County Cornell Cooperative Extension as smooth as possible for the employees and participants. He pointed out they were in the process of upgrading their facility with solar power, insulation, updated lighting through the National Grid Lighting Program and an upgraded security system. He said this provided them a good opportunity to convert some of their space into office space and storage to accommodate the WIC Program.

Mr. Taylor questioned whether there were any other Counties that had been unsuccessful in transitioning the program to the Cornell Cooperative Extension and had to take the program back over and Ms. Auer replied in the negative. She said this had been a concern of hers; however she learned if for any reason an organization wanted to back out of the five year commitment they could do so as long as one years notice was provided to the State.

Mr. Girard inquired what type of action was required of the Committee and Ms. Auer explained consensus of the Extension Service Committee was required to support Cornell Cooperative Extension in submitting an RFI to the New York State Department of Health WIC Program indicating their interest in sponsoring the WIC Program in Warren County. She continued, a resolution from the Health Services Committee and authorization was required to authorize a letter to the New York State Department of Health WIC Program stating that Warren County will not submit an RFI to continue sponsorship of the WIC program for the 5 year contract period beginning October 1, 2015.

It was the consensus of the Extension Service Committee that they were supportive of Cornell Cooperative Extension submitting an RFI to the New York State Department of Health WIC Program indicating their interest in sponsoring the WIC Program in Warren County.

Motion was made by Mr. McDevitt, seconded by Mrs. Frasier and carried unanimously to authorize a letter to the New York State Department of Health WIC Program stating that Warren County will not submit an RFI to continue sponsorship of the WIC program for the 5 year contract period beginning October 1, 2015 and the necessary resolution was authorized for the November 7, 2014 Board meeting. *A copy of the resolution request form is on file with the minutes.*

Mr. Girard advised the Eat Smart New York Program had been a success in educating families on how to shop for and prepare healthy meals. He said he believed the WIC Program would fill the void that was left when the Eat Smart Program was discontinued due to funding issues. Mr. Girard queried whether the office hours of the Cornell Cooperative Extension had been cut back to four days per week and Mr. Seeley replied affirmatively. He explained that due to budget cuts that occurred in 2009 their office hours were reduced to Monday through Thursday. He said he envisioned that with the WIC funding they would be able to return to their regular schedule of Monday through Friday. Mr. Girard commented the staff at Cornell Cooperative Extension were top notch and he believed the WIC staff would fit in nicely. Ms. Auer added the WIC staff was familiar with the employees Cornell Cooperative Extension because they held one of their WIC clinics at their

facility.

Mr. Sokol commended Dr. Seeley and Ms. Auer for the research and due diligence they put towards this matter. He said he felt they were headed in the right direction and this change would be beneficial for the program participants. Mr. Vanselow questioned what would occur if the State did not accept the proposal. Ms. Auer explained the State would inform Cornell Cooperative Extension why their proposal was rejected and what corrections were required for them to accept it. She continued, during this time frame they would ask Health Services to continue sponsoring the program until Cornell Cooperative extension provided them with the corrected version of their proposal. Mr. Sokol asked what would occur if Cornell Cooperative Extension missed the application deadline. Ms. Auer advised after the RFI's were submitted the State they scored them. She continued, if there was only one RFI submitted for Warren County they would award that applicant with the contract for Warren County unless there were substantial issues with their application. She pointed out the main goal of the State was to ensure the program was offered in every County in the State.

As there was no further business to come before the Extension Service Committee, on motion made by Mr. Vanselow and seconded by Mr. Simpson, Mr. Girard adjourned the meeting at 9:54 a.m.

As there was no further business to come before the Health Services Committee, on motion made by Mrs. Frasier and seconded by Mr. McDevitt, Mr. Sokol adjourned the meeting at 9:54 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Sarah McLenithan, Secretary to the Clerk of the Board