

## WARREN COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

**COMMITTEE: SOCIAL SERVICES**

**DATE: JANUARY 23, 2014**

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**COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:**

SUPERVISORS WESTCOTT  
WOOD  
SOKOL  
FRASIER  
STROUGH  
VANSELOW

**COMMITTEE MEMBER ABSENT:**

SUPERVISOR SIMPSON

**OTHERS PRESENT:**

REPRESENTING THE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES:  
SUZANNE WHEELER, COMMISSIONER  
JULIE MONTERO, FISCAL MANAGER  
MAUREEN SCHMIDT, DEPUTY COMMISSIONER  
CHRISTIAN HANCHETT, FOSTER CARE/ADOPTION SUPERVISOR  
TAMMY BREEN, CHILD PROTECTIVE SERVICES SUPERVISOR  
DIANE COUGHLIN, FAMILY PRESERVATION AND YOUTH DEVELOPMENT  
SUPERVISOR  
JULIE PEARL, CASA/ADULT PROTECTIVE SERVICES  
KELLY BARKER, PRINCIPAL SOCIAL WELFARE EXAMINER  
TINA CAMERON, PRINCIPAL SOCIAL WELFARE EXAMINER  
KAREN WHITTED, PRINCIPAL SOCIAL WELFARE EXAMINER  
LORRIE MOSHER, SENIOR CHILD SUPPORT INVESTIGATOR  
LIZ BURKE, SENIOR FRAUD INVESTIGATOR  
LAUREL JOHNSON, RESOURCES AND RECOVERY SUPERVISOR  
KEVIN B. GERAGHTY, CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD  
PAUL DUSEK, COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR  
MARTIN AUFFREDOU, COUNTY ATTORNEY  
JOAN SADY, CLERK OF THE BOARD  
FRANK E. THOMAS, BUDGET OFFICER  
SUPERVISORS BROCK  
CONOVER  
MCDEVITT  
SEEBER  
TAYLOR  
DON LEHMAN, *THE POST STAR*  
CHARLENE DiRESTA, SR. LEGISLATIVE OFFICE SPECIALIST

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Mr. Westcott called the meeting of the Social Services Committee to order at 11:28 a.m.

Motion was made by Mr. Vanselow, seconded by Mr. Frasier and carried unanimously to approve the minutes of the previous Committee meeting, subject to correction by the Clerk of the Board.

Mr. Westcott informed that William Loeb, former Supervisor for the City of Glens Falls, Ward 4, and former Chairman of the Social Services Committee, was undergoing by-pass surgery and he asked that everyone keep Mr. Loeb in their thoughts and prayers. He acknowledged Joanne Collins, Confidential Secretary to the Commissioner of the DSS, for the work she had done on the Committee Meeting Agenda and meeting notes. He said every effort would be made to schedule the Social Services Committee meeting for the Thursday or Friday following the Board Meeting and to email the agenda one week prior to the meeting.

Mr. Westcott welcomed Mr. Strough as the newest member of the Social Services Committee. He noted that Matthew Simpson, Supervisor for the Town of Horicon, had also been appointed to the Committee but had been unable to attend today due to illness. (*Please note: Supervisor Frasier is also a new member of the Social Services Committee for 2014.*)

Privilege of the floor was extended to Suzanne Wheeler, Commissioner of the Department of Social Services (DSS), who distributed copies of the agenda to the Committee members; *a copy of the agenda is on file with the minutes.*

Commencing the agenda review, Ms. Wheeler pointed out that a two-part Social Services Organizational Chart was included in the agenda packet and she introduced the DSS Unit Supervisors, as follows:

- Part 1 - Family Services
  - Maureen Schmidt, Deputy Commissioner;
  - Christian Hanchett, Foster Care/Adoption Supervisor;
  - Tammy Breen, Child Protective Services (CPS) Supervisor;
  - Diane Coughlin, Family Preservation and Youth Development Care Supervisor;
  - Julie Pearl, CASA/Adult Protective Services; and
- Part 2 - Income Maintenance and Support Services;
  - Kelly Barker, Principal Social Welfare Examiner of Temporary Assistance/Food Stamps/HEAP/Employment/Reception;
  - Tina Cameron, Principal Social Welfare Examiner of Community Medicaid/Managed Care/Third Part Health Insurance;
  - Karen Whitted, Principal Social Welfare Examiner of Chronic Care/SSI;
  - Lorrie Mosher, Senior Child Support Investigator;
  - Liz Burke, Senior Fraud Investigator;
  - Julie Montero, Fiscal Manager; and
  - Laurel Johnson, Resources and Recovery Supervisor.

Ms. Wheeler commented that throughout the year she would invite Unit Supervisors to the Committee meetings for brief presentations on each Unit's functions and responsibilities. Mr. Westcott thanked all of the Unit Supervisors for attending today and for the outstanding work they did on behalf of the County.

The DSS Unit Supervisors, with the exception of Ms. Montero, exited the meeting at 11:32 a.m.

Continuing, Ms. Wheeler requested authorization to attend training, as follows:

- request for three employees to attend CPS Response Training A in Albany on January 27-31, 2014 and February 10-14, 2014, using a County vehicle;
- request for two employees to attend CW/CPS Common Core Training B in Albany on February 3-7, 2014, February 19-21, 2014, March 3-7, 2014 and March 18-21, 2014, using a County vehicle;
- request for one employee to attend SNAP Training Institute in Albany on February 3-7, 2014, using a County vehicle; and
- request for two employees to attend the Institute for Temporary Assistance Program in Albany on March 10-14, 2014 and March 24-28, 2014, using a County vehicle.

Mr. Strough asked if the employees would drive back and forth each day or stay overnight and Ms. Wheeler replied there were no overnight stays involved with these requests. Ms. Wheeler explained that each request submitted included a cost analysis of commuting versus overnight stay and the least expensive means was always selected.

Following a brief discussion, motion was made by Mr. Sokol, seconded by Mr. Vanselow and carried unanimously to approve the four requests for training as outlined above. *Copies of the Authorization to Attend Meeting or Convention forms are on file with the minutes.*

Ms. Wheeler requested to create and fill a new position of Keyboard Specialist, Grade 3, annual base salary of \$24,669, effective February 21, 2014 and delete the position of Senior Typist, Grade 4, Step 29, annual base salary of \$33,635, due to retirement; additionally she requested authorization to backfill any vacancies caused by promotion. She noted this position was mandated and received 39% Federal and 38% State reimbursements.

Motion was made by Mrs. Wood, seconded by Mrs. Frasier and carried unanimously to approve the request to create and fill the position of Keyboard Specialist and delete the position of Senior Typist as outlined above, as well as to authorize the filling of any vacancies caused by promotion, and to forward same to the Personnel Committee. *Copies of the resolution request form and Notice of Intent to Fill Vacant Position form are on file with the minutes.*

Ms. Wheeler requested to create and fill a new position of Supervising Support Investigator in the Child Support Unit, Grade 15, annual base salary of \$37,138, effective February 21, 2014 and delete the position of Director of Support & Fraud, Grade 17, Step 25, annual base salary of \$50,398, due to retirement; she also requested authorization to backfill any vacancies caused by promotion. She noted this position was mandated and received 39% Federal and 38% State reimbursements. She explained that she was separating the Child Support Investigation and the Fraud Investigation and both Supervisors would report directly to her.

Motion was made by Mr. Sokol, seconded by Mr. Vanselow and carried unanimously to approve the request to create and fill the position of Supervising Support Investigator and delete the position of Director of Support & Fraud as outlined above, as well as to authorize the filling of any vacancies due to promotion, and to forward same to the Personnel Committee. *Copies of the resolution request form and Notice of Intent to Fill Vacant Position form are on file with the minutes.*

Ms. Wheeler requested to fill the vacant position of Senior Social Welfare Examiner in the Temporary Assistance Unit, Grade 11, annual base salary of \$33,687, Employee No. 4509, due to retirement and to backfill any vacancies caused by promotion. She noted this position was mandated and received 39% Federal and 38% State reimbursements.

Motion was made by Mr. Vanselow, seconded by Mr. Strough and carried unanimously to approve the request to fill the vacant position of Senior Social Welfare Examiner as outlined above, as well as any vacancies caused by promotion, and to forward same to the Personnel Committee. *A copy of the Notice of Intent to Fill Vacant Position form is on file with the minutes.*

Ms. Wheeler requested to fill the vacant position of CPS Caseworker, Grade 14, annual base salary of \$36,093, Employee No. 11369, due to resignation and to backfill any vacancies caused by promotion. She noted this position was mandated and received 39% Federal and 38% State reimbursements. She pointed out that the employee had resigned to assume a higher paying position as a Probation Office for Saratoga County.

Motion was made by Mr. Sokol, seconded by Mrs. Wood and carried unanimously to approve the request to fill the vacant position of CPS Caseworker as outlined above, as well as any vacancies created by promotion, and to forward same to the Personnel Committee. *A copy of the Notice of Intent to Fill Vacant Position form is on file with the minutes.*

Ms. Wheeler requested to fill the vacant position of Keyboard Specialist in the Temporary Assistance Unit, Grade 3, annual base salary of \$24,699, Employee No. 12315, due to resignation and to backfill any vacancies caused by promotion. She noted this position was mandated and received

39% Federal and 38% State reimbursements. She explained the previous employee had been out on maternity leave and had decided to stay home with her baby rather than return to work.

Motion was made by Mrs. Frasier, seconded by Mr. Strough and carried unanimously to approve the request to fill the vacant position of Keyboard Specialist as outlined above, as well as any vacancies created by promotion, and to forward same to the Personnel Committee. *A copy of the Notice of Intent to Fill Vacant Position form is on file with the minutes.*

Ms. Wheeler requested to appoint Wendy Burkowski, from the Town of Bolton Landing, and Annie McMahon, from the Town of Lake Luzerne, to the Warren County Youth Board for a term commencing January 1, 2014 and terminating December 31, 2014. Mr. Thomas interjected that the Stony Creek Town Board had recently appointed Cheyenne Moses, as the new Youth Director, and he requested Ms. Moses' appointment to the Warren County Youth Board, as well.

Mrs. Frasier asked about the function of the Warren County Youth Board and Mr. Thomas replied the Board met about four times a year in order to discuss the allocation of funds received from the State for recreation programs and youth services in various towns. A brief discussion ensued.

Motion was made by Mrs. Wood, seconded by Mrs. Frasier and carried unanimously to appoint Wendy Burkowski, Annie McMahon and Cheyenne Moses to the Warren County Youth Board as outlined above. *Copies of the resolution request forms are on file with the minutes and the necessary resolution was authorized for the February 21, 2014 Board Meeting.*

Ms. Wheeler requested authorization to transfer the physical location, supervision and administration of the First and Second Social Services Attorneys from the County Attorney's Office to the DSS Offices. She explained all the work completed by these attorneys was on behalf of the DSS and their salaries were paid out of the DSS Budget. Martin Auffredou, County Attorney, explained that both attorneys were presently located in the County Attorney's Offices. He advised that he and Ms. Wheeler had discussed the possibility of re-locating the Offices with Paul Dusek, County Administrator. He opined it made sense for these attorneys to be physically located within the DSS Offices. He said the attorneys did not represent the County Attorney's Office nor did they complete work on behalf of the Board of Supervisors or other Departments. Mr. Auffredou acknowledged there had been factors involved between 2009 and 2011 which caused the DSS Attorneys to be under the supervision and direction of the County Attorney; however, he added, those factors were no longer present. He stated he would remain available to the DSS and other Departments and the County Attorney's Office would continue to work on contracts for the DSS. He noted the County Attorney's Office would continue to offer assistance to the DSS Attorneys, such as coverage in Court due to illness. Mr. Auffredou commented it would be necessary to amend Resolution Nos. 757 of 2009 and 192 of 2011 in order to re-locate the DSS Attorneys' Offices.

Motion was made by Mr. Strough, seconded by Mr. Vanselow and carried unanimously to amend Resolution Nos. 757 of 2009 and 192 of 2011 in order to transfer the physical location, supervision and administration of the First and Second Social Services Attorneys from the County Attorney's Office to the DSS Offices. *A copy of the resolution request form is on file with the minutes and the necessary resolution was authorized for the February 21, 2014 Board Meeting.*

Pertaining to the Overtime Report, Ms. Wheeler stated that overtime usage in 2013 had been much higher than 2011 and 2012 due to changes in the Medicaid Unit. She explained that a Principal Social Welfare Examiner had resigned early in the year in order to assume a position with the State and the DSS had been fortunate that staff members had been willing to work overtime. Later in the year, she continued, six Social Welfare Examiners had resigned in order to take positions with the State

and again overtime had been necessary. She advised the majority of the overtime usage had been in the Community Medicaid and Chronic Care Units. She anticipated two additional Senior Social Welfare Examiners would resign in order to assume positions with the State. Mr. Westcott pointed out that 20% of the Medicaid Unit employees had resigned in order to take positions with the State. He commented that 100% reimbursements were received for these positions which meant the increased overtime usage did not reflect an increase to the budget. Mrs. Wood noted an increase in the CPS Caseworkers hours and asked if there was a particular reason and Ms. Wheeler replied the caseload for CPS Caseworkers fluctuated and there had been a few Caseworkers out on maternity leave.

Ms. Seeber asked if comp time or flex time were offered to employees in lieu of overtime and Ms. Wheeler replied in the negative. Ms. Wheeler explained that it was vital to have staff at work as much as possible. She advised that staff members were encouraged to come in later in the day if they anticipated appointments in the evening. She commented that it was not currently possible to offer additional time off with the current staffing levels. A discussion ensued pertaining to overtime usage.

Mr. Conover advised that in some cases, it was less expensive to pay a full time employee for overtime hours than to hire an additional full time employee and pay their benefits package.

Pertaining to the Budget Performance Report, Ms. Montero said that a lot of the billing for December was not completed, as December services were billed in January. She said for the next couple of months she would run both 2013 and 2014 Budget Performance Reports. She anticipated both revenues and expenditures for 2013 to be slightly under budget when the books were closed.

Chairman Geraghty stated the amount of overtime usage reported was approximately 700 hours or 18 weeks of overtime. He said he understood that it was not always possible to offer comp time in lieu of overtime; however, he added, some of these employees had very stressful jobs. He said he would rather flex time be considered on occasion, when possible, so that employees would not be overworked. Ms. Wheeler said employees were encouraged to be honest about their ability to work overtime. She noted she was working with Gretchen Steffan, County Human Resources Director, on a possible trauma program for employees.

As there was no further business to come before the Social Services Committee, on motion made by Mr. Sokol and seconded by Mr. Vanselow, Mr. Westcott adjourned the meeting at 12:06 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Charlene DiResta, Sr. Legislative Office Specialist