

APPROVED

4/14/09

HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES
MARCH 10, 2009 – 3:30 P.M.
SCOTT HEYMAN CONFERENCE ROOM

Present: F. Proto, Chairman, M. Robertson, W. Burbank, T. Randall
Excused: G. Stevenson
Staff: P. Carey, Department of Social Services; N. Zahler, Youth Services; K. Schlather, Human Services Coalition; D. Stoye, Office for the Aging; B. Crosby, S. Allinger, Health Department; R. DeLuca, Mental Health; J. Mareane, County Administrator; M. Lynch, Public Information Officer; K. Fuller, Deputy Clerk
Guests: T. Ashmore, *The Ithaca Journal*

Call to Order

Chairman Proto called the meeting to order at 3:35 p.m.

Changes to the Agenda

There were no changes to the agenda.

Chair's Report

Mr. Proto, Chairman, welcomed Mr. Burbank. He also noted the first part of the meeting would deal with action items, with the last portion budget discussions. He said Ms. Crosby had expressed concern regarding the ability to complete the agenda in time.

Approval of Minutes of January 20, and February 17, 2009

It was MOVED by Mr. Randall, seconded by Ms. Robertson, and unanimously approved by voice vote by members present, to approve the minutes of January 20, and February 17, 2009, as presented.

Office for the Aging

It was MOVED by Ms. Robertson, seconded by Mr. Randall, to approve the following budget adjustments. It was noted the Restore program provides for home repairs.

Office for the Aging

Revenue Acct	Title	Amt	Approp Acct	Title(s)
6787.41650	PERS Income	\$10,000	6787.52219	PERS Units
6779.43803	State Revenue	\$ 4,303	6779.51000	Salary
6779.43803	State Revenue	\$91,556	6779.54400	Program Expense

Explanation: Reappropriated money to be used in 2009. Reappropriated money to be used in 2009 Restore Program. Reappropriated money to be used in 2009 Restore Program.

SEQR ACTION: TYPE II-20

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Reversal of Member-Item Funding - Correspondence from Senator Winner

The Committee had been provided a letter from Senator Winner indicating as a result of action by Governor Paterson, the Member Item funding for the Restore Program was eliminated from the 2008-2009 Senate Republican Member Item account. Mr. Stoyell reported he had received a telephone call from Ms. Holmes, Office for the Aging Director, who is presently in Albany indicating the Governor amended his decision and would restore funding to those Member Items that hold a contract. Mr. Stoyell indicated he is not certain if it is all Member Items or just the specific one dealing with the Office for the Aging.

Advisory Board Response to Tompkins Consolidated Area Transit (TCAT) Route Changes

Mr. Proto reported meetings were to take place in Varna and Titus Towers with regard to route changes and paratransit services. He will have additional information when he attends the TCAT Executive Committee meeting on March 11. Ms. Robertson indicated the meeting in Varna had occurred with many individuals present to discuss concerns. Mr. Proto said TCAT is working through concerns and anticipates finalizing changes to routes by the end of May for an August implementation. He said TCAT is attempting to find cost-savings but is trying their best to get good operational base to work with. Ms. Robertson noted the Varna public meeting provided suggestions from the public on possible route changes that could reduce the number of runs but still be effective for riders.

Mr. Burbank inquired what the changes were at Titus Towers and was informed the loop may be reversed to reduce the time individuals would have to wait at shopping centers.

Youth Services

RESOLUTION NO. - OPPOSING GOVERNOR PATERSON'S PROPOSED YOUTH PROGRAMS BLOCK GRANT AND RETROACTIVE ELIMINATION OF THE COMMUNITY OPTIONAL PREVENTIVE SERVICES (COPS) PROGRAM

It was MOVED by Ms. Robertson, seconded by Mr. Randall, to recommend adoption of the following resolution to the full Legislature. Ms. Zahler indicated there are some youth who due to their particular situations require detention.

A voice vote on the motion resulted as follows: Ayes – 4; Noes – 0; Excused – 1 (Legislator Stevenson). RESOLUTION ADOPTED.

WHEREAS, Governor Paterson has submitted his budget recommending a “Youth Programs Block Grant” and

WHEREAS, this proposed Block Grant recommends a January 1, 2009 effective date which leaves many programs uncertain of funding and of their existence, and

WHEREAS, this proposed block grant would combine youth development, prevention and intervention services of (Youth Development and Delinquency Prevention – YDDP; Special Delinquency Prevention Programs – SDPP; Runaway and Homeless Youth Act – RHYA; Alternatives to Detention and Alternatives to Residential Placement) with state mandated services (Secure and Non-Secure Detention Services provided by the Department of Social Services), and

WHEREAS, the Block Grant would repeal key provisions of New York State Executive law that provide for per capita funding for the County, its municipalities, and administrative aid for the county and city youth bureaus, jeopardizing the legal framework and cost-sharing partnership that has assured prevention, youth development, and intervention services for all you in New York State for over sixty years, and

WHEREAS, the total allocation statewide would be reduced by 24.5 percent, and

WHEREAS, the combination of detention and prevention services recommended in this proposed block grant is detrimental to our young people, and

WHEREAS, the proposal of combining mandated, non-secure and secure detention with development and prevention funding will pit comprehensive community- based youth development and prevention programs against the more costly detention programs, and

WHEREAS, Governor Paterson has also proposed the elimination of the Community Option Preventive Services (COPS) retroactive to October 2008, and

WHEREAS, COPS state aid is used by the Department of Social Services to contract with agencies providing intensive prevention services designed to reduce placements in foster care and institutions costing \$100,000 or more/year/youth, and

WHEREAS, Youth Development, Prevention, Early Intervention and COPS programs are essential and cost-effective components of our system of services for youth and families, and

WHEREAS, a 24.5 percent reduction in administrative state aid would reduce the County Youth Services Department's capacity to leverage other grants and resources to support critical services such as housing for homeless youth, and

WHEREAS, the Tompkins County Legislature believes that providing services and programs for youth is an investment, not only in delinquency prevention, but also in the development of our young people in all ways thus enriching our society and nation, therefore be it

RESOLVED, upon recommendation of the Health and Human Services Committee, That the Tompkins County Legislature hereby requests Governor Paterson and the New York State Legislature to eliminate the concept of this proposed Block Grant,

RESOLVED, further, That the Governor and Legislature re-affirm support for Executive Law 420 Article 19a to maintain the current Youth Bureau System, which is in the best interest, of the over 8,000 youth served by Youth Development and Prevention Services in Tompkins County,

RESOLVED, further, That copies of this resolution be sent to: Governor David Paterson, Senator Malcolm Smith, Senator Dean Skelos, Senator Carl Kruger, Senator Velmanette Montgomery, Senator T. Schneiderman, Senator Jeffrey D. Klein, Senator, James Seward, Senator Michael Nozzolio, Senator George Winner, Assemblyman Sheldon Silver, Assemblyman James Tedisco, Assemblyman Herman D. Farrell, Jr., Assemblyman William Scarborough, Assemblywoman Barbara Lifton, Daniel Sheppard, New York State Association of Counties, Association of New York State Youth Bureaus, and Municipalities in Tompkins.

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Federal Grant Application on Behalf of Community Coalition for Healthy Youth

The Committee received written information regarding the grant application, which would continue to assist the Community Coalition for Healthy Youth for a second five-year period. The grant provides \$125,000 each year and is designed to reduce substance abuse among youth and, over time, adults, by addressing factors that increase risk of substance abuse and promoting the factors that minimize the risk of substance abuse. In addition, the grant is to strengthen and diversify collaboration among communities, not-for-profit agencies, federal, state, and local governments to prevent and reduce substance abuse among youth. Ms. Zahler noted the original grant application request caused concern for some Legislators as it focused only on the Ithaca City School District; this application includes proposals for countywide participation of all school districts, with Trumansburg and Groton expressing a desire to participate and Groton is considering participation. Ms. Zahler will be contacting other school districts to determine their interest as well. There is no cash match for the grant; the match comes in the form of in-kind through the use of office space, access to computers and phones, as well as access to network of youth commissions and funded programs. It is anticipated there will be matching in-kind increases subsequent to the first year of grant funding from TST BOCES local or state funded Youth Development services, exploring Health Department Tobacco Control efforts if funded with Tobacco Settlement funds, and County funds for Municipal Youth Services commissions and programs.

It was MOVED by Mr. Randall, seconded by Mr. Burbank, to support the application for grant funds on behalf of the Community Coalition for Healthy Youth. Ms. Robertson asked if a Dryden resident could be a member on the advisory board and was informed it should be possible. Ms. Zahler explained the application would be in competition with others who have not begun the program and she should know by August. She noted two staff positions are funded through the grant.

A voice vote on the motion resulted as follows: Ayes – 4; Noes – 0; Excused – 1 (Legislator Stevenson).

Department of Social Services

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Budget Transfer

Ms. Carey provided written information to the Committee. With regard to the budget transfer, she said the JARC funding that is for transportation use is funding the purchase of the rack to hold bus route information for clients. It was noted that the Red Cross shelter provides referral information to those using the shelter.

Overview of Homeless Shelter Report

The Committee reviewed the report and asked if the report could be modified to distinguish the number of bed-nights for the under twenty and twenty to thirty group. Ms. Carey explained they are also attempting to determine a method to more clearly distinguish children using services and whether they are alone or with a family. She said it is sometimes difficult to obtain detailed information regarding the reason they are homeless. She spoke of the need to try to refine the reasons in a manner that would clearly define the individual's circumstances. Questions are asked upon arrival and the information is non-duplicated. With regard to shelter clients with disabilities, Ms. Carey indicated there has not been any difference seen with regard to a lowering of use due to new housing that is available at this time, however it is anticipated to decrease in the future. Mr. DeLuca indicated the Red Cross attends the Mental Health Single Point of Access (SPOA) weekly meetings and provide input on clients.

Monthly Report

Mr. Burbank asked for an explanation regarding the number of food stamp cases that has increased versus the public assistance cases. Ms. Carey stated the Federal government is aggressively seeking individuals who are food stamp eligible. In addition, she provided the information on the food stamp pilot program in Tompkins County, noting the pilot program provides easier application submission and reporting and can be completed online and over the telephone. Ms. Carey said they are now beginning to see an increase in public assistance caseloads and anticipates it would continue to increase as individuals' unemployment benefits are running out. In response to Ms. Robertson's inquiry regarding HEAP cases, Ms. Carey said they have had 700 more applicants than 2008. Mr. Proto noted New York State Electric and Gas has provided information on the program through their billing enclosures. Ms. Robertson noted the HEAP designation on the monthly report did not indicate the increase reported; Ms. Carey said the designation are for HEAP only cases, that many other clients are receiving HEAP through the various financial assistance programs offered by the department. Ms. Carey said her staff is making every effort to assist residents in every way possible due to the financial climate.

Catholic Charities

Ms. Robertson spoke of having had a conversation with Ms. Sanchirico, Catholic Charities Director, and was informed that the security deposit program is running out of funding and there are more individuals also "in crisis" regarding utilities. Ms. Carey spoke of the Department of Social Services' ability to provide a one-time per five-year loan assistance to pay utilities, which could be used again after full repayment and time-period elapsing. She will look into the possibility of providing notification to agencies reminding them of this assistance.

Mr. Proto stated he has noticed that when on a budget plan it appears the last month prior to reconciliation of the account is estimated, and is normally much higher than actual usage.

Health Department

Permission to Seek Transportation Proposals for Preschool and Early Intervention Programs

Ms. Allinger reported it might not be required to seek a proposal to go to bid for transportation for the pre-school program. At this time all but three school districts have been approached and have agreed to

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transport students within their district utilizing their regular bus runs for a set amount. She will be contacting the remaining three districts within the next two weeks. This change would reduce pre-school transportation costs by almost \$500,000 [present savings as currently negotiated \$308,000]. Ms. Crosby said they are requesting approval to seek bid as a precautionary measure should the need arise. Ms. Allinger said the transportation component would be added into the current contracts the County has with each school district. At this time there has not been a determination how the early intervention children (20 students) would be transported; she would keep the Committee updated. It was noted the school districts would have monitors on the busses as required. Since the change in transportation would affect arrival time, Ms. Allinger has negotiated with the Racker Center who has agreed to amend start-time accordingly. The Committee was informed this new transportation procedure would go into effect September 1, 2009.

Liaison Assignments

The Committee reviewed the advisory appointments. Mr. Randall offered to step in for Mr. Dennis who indicated a desire to resign from the seat on the Recreation Partnership.

ADVISORY APPOINTMENTS – VOTING

Board of Health - voting member – Greg Stevenson
Personal Emergency Response Service Advisory Board - voting member - Greg Stevenson
Greater Ithaca Activities Board - voting member - Nathan Shinagawa; Committee Liaison – Tyke Randall
Recreation Partnership - voting members- Tyke Randall /Frank Proto (C. Chock Alternate)
Cooperative Extension Service (Not a County Advisory Board) - 2 voting members - Chair appointments, Will Burbank(1/15/08) Carol Chock

The Committee reviewed the liaison appointments and offered to take on various seats as noted below.

LIAISON APPOINTMENTS - NON-VOTING

Alcohol and Drug Council of Tompkins County - liaison – Vacant (Mr. Burbank will attend as possible)
Community Mental Health Services Board – Will Burbank
Health Planning Council - liaison – Martha Robertson – Alternate Frank Proto
Homeless and Housing Task Force – Martha Robertson
Human Services Coalition - liaison – Martha Robertson
Office for the Aging Advisory Board - liaison – Vacant
Senior Citizens Council - Lifelong - liaison – Nathan Shinagawa
Tompkins Community Action - liaison – Tyke Randall/Kathy Herrera (Board Members)
Tompkins County Youth Board - liaison – Vacant
Local Early Intervention Coordinating Council – Vacant

Budget Impact Discussions

Mr. Proto had indicated this portion of the meeting would be used to review anticipated budget cuts and known impacts.

Mr. Mareane indicated he had not received any additional information from Albany at this time. He said he may receive additional information in the future for slight updates or calibrations in figures but believes it would be consistent with previous information.

Office for the Aging

Mr. Stoyell reviewed the information submitted that indicated anticipated reductions as follows: Long Term Care Ombudsman Program, \$577; Long Term Care Insurance Education and Outreach Program, \$50,000; Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, \$11,353; Transportation - \$10,000; Expanded In-Home Services for the Elderly (EISEP) \$11,360; and Community Services for the Elderly, \$4,114. With regard to the Economic Stimulus Package, it is hoped to obtain Federal funds that would offset the reduction in the SNAP

program; the other item would be a one-time supplemental payment for Social Security, SSI, Veterans or Railroad Retirement.

Ms. Robertson noted it would be helpful to understand what percentage of total budget the cuts are. Mr. Stoyell the cut for Transportation (Gadabout) was the only funding provided by the Office for the Aging and he is not aware of the percentage of total reductions they would be.

Mr. Stoyell stated he does not believe the funding would be restored as the State Office for the Aging Director worked with the State Budget offices to determine where to cut funding.

Youth Services

Ms. Zahler reviewed her written material regarding the noted concerns of the change to Block Grant funding, clearly indicating the policy implications are bigger than a funding cut. There is strong opposition for the Block Grant policy and it appears there are strong advocates in the Senate and Assembly who will try to negotiate to remove the Block Grant policy. It is not known if that occurs the 24 percent reduction would have to be factored into the various youth programs. With regard to specific cuts, it appears there would be a total anticipated cut of \$96,309: \$14,093 for County Youth Service Administration; \$52,093 for Youth Programs; \$17,552 for Municipalities; and \$12,572 for Ithaca Youth Bureau Administration. In particular, she spoke of the concern regarding detention of youth, which is a mandated service and could have an extremely negative impact if these funds are reduced. She spoke of using the Youth Services funding to leverage funding with Department of Social Services in the area of detention and preventive programs. She spoke of the County Youth Board making final determinations regarding programs within her department.

Ms. Zahler spoke of having amended contracts with agencies to enable paying them for the first six months services as a precautionary measure in the event the cuts take place. Discussions are ongoing with agencies to determine what the impact would be if they lost funding, what other cuts they may be experiencing, and what other sources of funding are available. This information would be useful to the Youth Board when making budget decisions. She would like to take the path outlined by the County Administrator at the Budget and Capital meeting; if there is the ability to get through 2009 it would then provide more time to determine the 2010 budget plan.

With regard to the Stimulus Package, there is no dedicated funding for youth programs, however, if the County receives funding it may take some burden off her department.

Mental Health

Mr. DeLuca reported there would be a \$4 million cut in New York State Office of Alcohol and Substance Abuse Services (OASAS) funding for case management services for individuals with severe alcohol and substance abuse. The goal of the original grant was to reduce the cost of Medicaid for that particular population, and the grant program has been phased out. He does not anticipate it would be reinstated. For Tompkins County, the cut is \$113,259, affecting 2.1 FTE's (\$113,259). The affected positions would be handled by a retirement at the end of March, and hiring out the other credentialed individual to the Alcohol and Drug Council. In addition, there is a possibility of a \$15,000 reduction due to changes in service definitions and rate reductions in 2009 for the Continuing Day Treatment Program.

Other reductions that are anticipated for individual receiving mental health services includes: Cayuga Addiction Recovery Services (CARS) - \$65,000 reduction in personal needs allowance, \$49,000 elimination of prior funding commitment (OASAS), and \$21,000 for Road to Recovery stipend; Office of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities and Office of Mental Health are reviewing sheltered workshops and are identifying further reductions to funding streams – it is not anticipated Challenge would definitely be affected but it is not anticipated any other sheltered workshop would be created at this time. With regard to CARS it was noted the individual clients would be impacted by reductions within the program.

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Mr. DeLuca said there is a whole process of looking at the fiscal structure of Mental Health clinics and services billing. He has met with the Office of Mental Health Commissioner yesterday regarding the interest of counties in this restructuring process. Although the review relates to budgetary concerns it is not specific to the Governor's budget.

Mr. DeLuca reported the Community Mental Services Board would have a special event surrounding Mental Health Services on Wednesday May 27th at the Holiday in from 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.

Health Department

Ms. Crosby reported there is a reduction of \$105,502 in the Article 6 area. This includes Emergency Medical Services, State aid for the mandated Medical Examiner position, and Administration for the mandated work regarding Committee on Preschool Special Education (CPSE). Ms. Crosby anticipates these reductions would stay within the budget. Within categorical funding, a total of \$148,341 is anticipated to be reduced; some are based on the 2009-2009 reductions, however the \$111,501 for Public Health Preparedness Grant is of a concern as it is the doing a great deal of planning and preparing, for staff as well as generating collaboration with colleges, schools, law enforcement, emergency responders etc. The Certified Home Health Agency has some reductions in reimbursement rates, however the largest amendment is the requirement for the Certified Home Health Agency to hire the Home Health Aide (HHA) directly and would not allow contracting for the services as presently occurs. Several years ago a study was made to determine the most cost-effective manner for the County to provide this service; at that time it indicated there would be an addition cost of \$1 million if the County hired and provided home health service for that service. She spoke of reading an article relating to home health care indicating the reduction of this service is counterproductive to the Governor's state of the State address; without this service people may not be able to stay in their homes. Ms. Crosby said that although it does not appear there is a logical reason for the CHHA amendments it could be due to factors occurring in other areas of the State having experienced fraudulent billing or credentials. The overall reductions total \$309,000 plus the potential additional cost if the Health Department is required to operate their separate Home Health Agency.

Ms. Allinger reported that although there are many proposed changes to the Early Intervention program, the ones that have the most budgetary impact would be many of the programs that the County contracts with smaller agencies would no longer provide services. At the last quarterly meeting with the contractors they expressed a great deal of concern regarding the proposals and Ms. Allinger believes there would be a loss of the workforce. In preschool education, the proposal has been made that schools assume 15 percent of their own cost for preschool special education. It is a positive move, but it is unsure whether it would occur this year since New York State school board system is fighting against it, and New York State Association of Counties is supporting the proposal. Ms. Allinger spoke of her transportation proposals to school offering a win-win situation; what the County would pay would significantly offsets the 15 percent of the school district's cost for preschool special education. In addition, the following year it would greatly reduce their overall total cost, thus reducing the 15 percent further, almost eliminating what they would be paying out.

With regard to the Medical Examiner reductions, the Department of Justice did not realize there was funding in public health for medical examiners and this may be one of the reasons for the money being shifted for this position from Public Health to the Department of Justice.

Ms. Allinger said a child receiving special integrated service program at the Racker Center could cost \$60,000 if the child required a one-on-one aide. Although there are 69 children receiving services very few require a one-on-one aide. Overall, there are approximately 400 children in special education programs.

Social Services

Ms. Carey has not received any further updates on the proposed budget. Mr. Herden plants to attend the fiscal forum next week when the State agencies will come speak to the New York State Welfare Association. They would either provide updates or again review information received already. With regard to the COPS

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program reduction, it is a retroactive reduction going back to October 2008. She believes the reductions are coming out of the State Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) and not just a decision by the Governor. She said they are working on transferring families that would be affected into other programs with different funding streams, including DAP. Ms. Carey said she believes the COPS funding will be eliminated.

Ms. Carey spoke of the Youth Block Grant, indicating she believes OCFS is behind the decision, noting it has been a goal of OCFS to not have youth be placed in detention. Previously, the State has attempted to make counties responsible for one-hundred percent of the cost of youth detention, and the effort was not successful. Our county has been very good about utilizing alternative programs to prevent detention but she believes the removal of funding is reflective of problems existing downstate.

Ms. Carey reported the Flexible Fund for Family Services (FFFS) reduction is anticipated to be very large, but at this time it is not possible to put an actual dollar amount together as no calculation has been completed. Until the County is informed what will be allocated it is not possible to know the impact. Ms. Carey will be speaking to State Legislators regarding the funding. She did indicate all costs to administer the program would be the County's responsibility. She spoke of the mandate that a certain percentage of FFFS funds must be spent on child welfare.

Ms. Carey spoke of the County being proactive and reviewing programs to determine whether programming needs to be modified and how to best service clients.

Human Services Coalition

Ms. Schlather has no any information due to nothing being heard from Albany with regard to agency funding. She indicated she had not yet seen the document provided by Mr. Mareane and will review it when received. She reported most of the agencies that have had cuts do not anticipate funds being restored. It does look favorable that stimulus funding would help housing agencies.

She spoke of the training workshops being held (listed in brochure provided) that would continue to assist agencies. Due to the economy it is planned to adapt the workshops to the present needs. The workshops are being presented at different times of the day to provide flexibility in attendance.

Ms. Schlather reported a Survey of Health Concerns has been prepared and was sent to Tompkins County Residents. After reviewing the returned surveys the top three areas of concern would be discussed to determine how to provide better services in that area.

Ms. Robertson spoke of the Fair Share Tax Reform resolution that would come before the Legislature. She believes that when hearing the concerns and difficulties that would be faced by the low-income residents compared to individuals making over \$250,000, asking to pay additional income taxes would help, although it would not fill the gap.

Committee Goals

Mr. Proto requested members of the Committee review the potential Committee goals.

Adjournment

On motion the meeting adjourned at 5:58 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Karen Fuller, Deputy Clerk