

**HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES
MAY 12, 2009 – 3:30 P.M.
SCOTT HEYMAN CONFERENCE ROOM**

APPROVED 6-10-09

Present: F. Proto, Chairman, W. Burbank, M. Robertson, T. Randall
Excused: G. Stevenson
Staff: P. Carey, Department of Social Services; N. Zahler, N. Zook, Youth Services; K. Schlather, Human Services Coalition, L. Holmes, S. Mothoral, Office for the Aging; A. Cole, S. Conners, Health Department; R. DeLuca, Mental Health; J. Mareane, County Administrator; K. Fuller, Deputy Clerk
Legislator: M. Koplinka-Loehr
Guests: Sue Chaffee, Catholic Charities Immigrant Services; Sally Wessels, TST BOCES ESL Program; Todd Messer, WHCU News; Tim Ashmore, Stacey Shackford, *The Ithaca Journal*

Call to Order

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

Changes to the Agenda

The following items were added to the agenda:

- Budget Adjustment – Youth Services
- Appointment to Mental Health Services Board [subsequently withdrawn pending nominating committee approval]

Request for Report

Mr. Randall requested that a future meeting include a report of services provided by the SPCA. Mr. Proto will contact the Director to do so.

Approval of Minutes of April 14, 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 April 14, 2009.

Office for the Aging

Announcement

Ms. Holmes announced the department's annual luncheon would be held on May 13, 2009, at the Clarion Hotel. The Keynote Speaker would be Dr. William Thomas Founder of The Eden Alternative.

Annual Report

Ms. Holmes provided members of the Committee with the 2008 Annual Report.

Budget Update

Ms. Holmes had reported previously on the elimination of State funding for the Long Term Care Insurance Outreach program for the current year and provided information on how her department is handling the phasing out of this program. Within her department one Aging Services Specialist has voluntarily reduced hours. Ms. Holmes explained she is developing a plan to reassign the Aging Services Specialist job responsibility, which is not readily transferable due to specific certification testing and training required for the position. She anticipates having the staff fully transitioned by the first week in June. Ms. Holmes said overall, this change will leave only 1 FTE Aging Services Specialist position with the rest at less than full time. She is concerned regarding the continually increased demands within her department as the population ages with the staffing levels decreasing.

Ms. Holmes reported she is a member of the Legislative Committee of the State Advocacy Organization and was informed the Chair of the State Senate Committee on Aging, Rubin Diaz, is putting forward a bill that would require the State to fully fund the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) for home-delivered meals. If this is approved it would provide a cost shift from County to State. The State Advocacy Organization supports the bill but has questions on how it would roll out. Ms. Holmes will continue to update the Committee as more information is known and believes it may be beneficial to indicate local support. She said it is not expected this bill, or one being introduced to import prescription drugs from Canada to offset the cost of the SNAP program, however, the prescription drug proposal would be in violation of current state law) would happen at this time. Ms. Carey said she believes the measure may be due to the State receiving more Federal funding for the SNAP Program. Ms. Holmes said at the present time it is anticipated to receive \$11,000 for congregate meals and \$5,000 from stimulus funding for home-delivered meals; she was informed these funds should be spent when received to ensure the funded amount remains.

Restore Program Update

Ms. Holmes provided a brief history of the Restore Program, noting its purpose is to provide emergency assistance for repairs to homes for low-income seniors. She introduced Suzanne Motheral, the outreach worker who works part-time for the Weatherization Referral and Packaging Program (WRAP) and also part-time for the PERS program, with her salary covered by State funding for the WRAP program, and by the PERS client fee revenue. Ms. Motheral she packages funds from various sources to enable low-income seniors to make repairs to their homes. In many years the funding has been limited, however, for the current year a grant application was made for \$75,000, with an award of \$125,000 for emergency repairs through the Department of Housing and Community Renewal.

Ms. Motheral noted the grant funds are for health and safety repairs; weatherization work is done separately from the Restore program. She provided photographs showing some of the work that has been done through the program, including: ceiling and roof repairs, installation of stairs, purchasing of appliance to assist a legally blind individual, and present, she is working to find one client a new mobile home as her home is not repairable. This client has excessive leaks throughout her house. Ms. Motheral has received permission from the State to relocate her. The maximum expenditure under the current grant program is \$7,500 per dwelling.

Ms. Motheral reported she goes to clients every afternoon, with many clients being referred to other programs within the County to assist in their well being. In response to Mr. Burbank, she reported the work is completed by subcontractors including Better Homes of Tompkins County, Ithaca Neighborhood Housing, and private individuals; all of whom are based in Tompkins County. Work has been done in homes in Caroline, Enfield, Groton, Newfield and the City of Ithaca. She also noted that in the event a house has significant damage they are referred to Adult Protective Services.

Mr. Randall spoke of his association with the program through Better Housing of Tompkins County as an employee. He said there is a significant need for this type of service in the County, particularly for low-income and elderly. Mr. Randall praised staff for the work.

In response to Ms. Robertson, it was noted the units are owned by the clients. The program, unlike many grants, allows for a substantial amount of repairs to be made to mobile homes. Mr. Proto said Better Housing of Tompkins County had received grants from the Housing and Urban Development program for Groton, Dryden, Caroline, and Enfield that were from several hundred thousand dollars to as high as four hundred thousand dollars. These funds could be used, up to \$25,000 for repairs, with one being a mobile home much like the one shown; they allowed the program to purchase a double-wide mobile home. He also recalled how arrangements were made with mobile home dealers to sell used units brought in trade at a lower cost. He suggested perhaps there might be a dealer willing to do the same.

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Ms. Holmes reported she has applied for an additional grant and it is not known what the result may be. She noted that two out of three grants applied for in the past had been awarded.

PERS Program

In response to a question, it was noted the PERS unit fees range from zero for income-eligible to \$31.25 per month.

Needs Assessment Survey

Ms. Holmes reported the next needs assessment survey would be undertaken following the 2010 census. This survey is completed every ten years and provides valuable information for planning purposes.

Human Services Coalition

Catholic Charities Immigrant Services Program Update

Ms. Schlather provided a brief history of the Immigrant Services Program, noting it was partially funded by one-time County funding.

Ms. Wessels, TST BOCES ESL Program instructor, introduced Ms. Chaffee, the new Coordinating Immigrant Services Program Director, who started the position in January. Ms. Wessels said in her position she often refers individuals to the Immigrant Services Program.

Ms. Chaffee provided a written overview of the program that provides a comprehensive array of services for immigrants/refugees residing in Tompkins County in order to facilitate their integration into the community. Last year 160 individuals were assisted in the program, with 30 new clients having been serviced in the first quarter of 2009. She described a recent case, which she indicated was a typical student; a Burmese woman who had participated in Ms. Wessels ESL class, in her fifties who received a doctor referral for Total Care medical coverage rather than Medicaid. Ms. Chaffee said with the assistance of the Fidelis Care representative explained many physicians are requiring that due to the cumbersome process for Medicaid claims. The woman was diabetic, with ongoing needs, and after a few days all paperwork was completed, with translators assisting to explain what was needed, and within a month she had the Total Care coverage package. It then required translation of what the package included, and assistance in transferring her back to the primary care physician. During this period her hours of work was reduced and she needed food stamps, now possible to have immediate screening for eligibility and paperwork completed to speed up the process.

Ms. Chaffee said there is a focus on job development as well. Ms. Wessels spoke of her recent students, primarily of Burmese origin, needed assistance in finding employment. A special session was held with each volunteer assigned to assist two refugees, taking 1.5 hours to work with them to develop a resume. The resumes were then reviewed/revised by Workforce New York. Ms. Wessels made a connection with RPM in Dryden, who was looking for agricultural workers; now eight of the individuals are employed at that business. If additional employees are required, RPM now knows to contact Immigrant Services to determine if there is a qualified individual.

Ms. Chaffee reported another area requiring additional development is domestic violence. At the present time there are no individuals/agencies offering to do pro bono or free services for individuals to get a green card or visa. Ms. Chaffee is working on going through the certification process with the Board of Immigration Appeals to become an advocate. It is a 1.5-year process and includes training and webinars. By obtaining the partial accreditation she would be allowed to assist with obtaining green cards, with a lawyer who has indicated he would assist if the preliminary work were completed. Ms. Chaffee said donations are used for the fees associated with the immigration form filing.

Ms. Schlather feels the program has been very beneficial. Many agencies spoke of having more immigrants coming in and seeking services. With the development of this program, it enabled the agencies to

refer the immigrants to one place and did not require each agency to have to learn what current regulations and legal issues were required. In addition, the program is developing a bank of volunteer translators, at times utilizing the services via conference phones.

Ms. Chaffee said there are more individuals seeking services, particularly for food stamps, which may be due to the economic downturn. The group being served appears to be mainly Asian women, with many working but not earning enough or have had hours reduced. In addition, many individuals are of Spanish heritage as well.

The Committee briefly discussed experience with immigrants, including the children of the individuals. Mr. Randall noted it is a challenge that is pleasant to assist them and provides insight to how hard they work at the cultural differences they experience.

Mr. Proto suggested Ms. Chaffee contact Deb Teeter at Cornell Cooperative Extension regarding youth jobs in the agricultural field.

With regard to funding of the Immigrant Services Program, the Committee was informed the program received a grant City of Ithaca Community Development Block Grant for a one-year period and require a match, which they are hoping to receive from the County. The program funding is approximately \$43,000 to \$44,000 annually.

Youth Services

Budget Adjustment

It was MOVED by Mr. Randall, seconded by Ms. Robertson, to recommend approval of the following budget adjustment to the full Legislature.

<u>Revenue Acct</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Amt</u>	<u>Approp Acct</u>	<u>Title(s)</u>
7020.42797	Other Local Government Contributions	\$ 5,500	7020.5100071	Coordinator of Community Youth Services
7020.42797	Other Local Government Contributions	\$ 15	7020.54330	Printing
7020.42797	Other Local Government Contributions	\$ 165	7020.54414	Local Mileage

Explanation: The County Youth Services Department has entered into an agreement with the Workforce Investment Board (WIB) to provide staff time of Nancy Zook to assist Julia Mattick with technical assistance, coordination and monitoring of their three summer job providers. Nancy Zook's hours have been authorized to increase to 40 hours/week during this period. Related printing/copying to the above services. Local mileage for weekly site visits during this period.

Review of Part I of the Youth Services Department Annual Report

Ms. Zahler spoke of eighty percent of the department budget going to direct funding for programs serving youth in the County, partly through contracts with not-for-profit agencies, with municipalities, and staff research, grant writing, and coordination of existing youth programs. She said noted each of the eleven programs funded has their own unique outcome measure, and this year the requested minimum eighty-five percent of all outcome performance measures were met with five of the eleven reaching one-hundred percent of objectives or more. She noted all municipalities would be provided a copy of the finalized annual report, in particular information on youth served by contract agencies. She called attention to the chart indicating participation information that provides an overview to determine equitable distribution and use of resources.

It was noted the participant counts are unduplicated within the program, however, some youth may participate in more than one program.

With regard to the breakdown of services by age, Ms. Robertson noted the majority of youth are in the 10 to 15 and 16 to 20 brackets, however, studies show it is better to provide early intervention services at a younger age. Ms. Zahler explained programs are funded on a three-year period; with the next round of updating the community and programs occurring in 2009. At that time programs would be reviewed and other program recommendations taken into consideration by the Youth Services Board. She said the Primary Services Program is one of the newest programs that have come in and was able to expand somewhat with the COPS funding; but now is vulnerable due to the funding reduction. She said the prenatal programs are assisting as well by helping young parents receiving services. Ms. Zook said the prenatal programs would provide services for youth on Medicaid until their 21st birthday. At the time they reach 21, many work with the Child Development Council's family support services for a longer period. Ms. Zook also noted there are more children ages 5 – 9 taking part in the recreation support services. Ms. Zahler said while most municipalities programs serve primarily middle school youth, some include elementary-aged youth.

Mr. Proto asked if the TP3 program has adequate staffing. He was informed at the present time they are fully staffed with 2.5 case managers. The number of pregnant teens has dropped from the period Mr. Proto recalled (when 160 families were being assisted). Presently there are approximately 100 youth served annually, with the majority of funding coming through Medicaid. As Medicaid has some restrictions on how funds could be served it is challenging; transporting youth to their appointments is not covered. Ms. Zook said the County funding assists to back-fund the program somewhat. Mr. Proto noted the restriction for coverage on transportation would limit some individuals to reside within an area with public transportation, which at this time is difficult to locate affordable housing. Ms. Zahler said reductions and restrictions are the things that erode the quality of the potential counseling of programs. She spoke of the County funding having the flexibility to assist fathers and those above the low-income guidelines.

Overview of Summer Youth Employment Opportunities

Ms. Zahler said there are programs outside of the Youth Employment programs being offered. Ms. Zahler reported Ms. Zook coordinates the information on all youth employment opportunities to provide the resource to know what jobs are available and what youth might be best suited for the employment.

Ms. Zook provided a flyer for the Jump Start job program that is being funded through TANF and the Federal Stimulus Program. Referrals are accepted from any source; once received she reviews the applications to match youth with the appropriate job opportunity.

Teen Empowerment

Ms. Zahler reported the past weekend's Teen Empowerment Forum was well attended with 70 youth. It was a well collaboratively planned event by many agencies.

Department of Social Services

Budget Transfer

The Committee was provided information on a budget transfer; no action was necessary.

Budget Update

Ms. Carey reported she attended a retreat with other Social Service Commissioners and was informed that the Office of Family Services is now saying they are not intending to cut the COPS funding in 2010. She believes it may mean the entire program would not be funded, it may come back later. Many counties have already stopped the COPS funding and it may be thought the might continue, at least in part, those counties who have continued. The State has heard loud and clear the need for funding to continue. Ms. Carey does not believe it would provide for new program development. She also said New York State Office of Temporary and

Disability Assistance has received funding from the stimulus funding and will offer allocation of funding for innovative programs such as subsidized jobs, case management around employment, etc. This will help those struggling with loss of jobs during transition. The notification of the allocation is expected in June following a determination of how to allocate the funds, which may be by population and other information. At this time there is no information on the Flexible Funding or TANF allocations. The State had said they would be stopping funding for the administration piece for food stamps but believed there is a way to make the cost neutral and are taking time to write the allocation directive to provide the appropriate instructions to make it cost-neutral.

Monthly Reports

The members were provided with copies of the monthly reports. Ms. Carey noted food stamp requests are increasing significantly. In an effort to assist those recently unemployed or with reduced income staff will be going into the community to assist in determining qualification for the benefit. Fifteen staff members (who will receive wages) volunteered to spend weekends and evenings in various locations to do this work. The staff has done mock-up's for each grocery store to show what can be bought with the food stamps. Mr. Burbank said he is liaison to Cooperative Extension and was speaking of work that included equitable distribution of food among church's and the satellite farmers' market. Ms. Carey said they satellite farmers' market will begin in July.

In response to Mr. Proto's question about the increase in Medicaid assistance going up and the family health coverage down. Ms. Carey responded it is due to eligibility criteria changing.

Health Department

Resolution

RESOLUTION: AUTHORIZATION TO INCREASE HOURS – WIC PROGRAM DIRECTOR – HEALTH DEPARTMENT

It was MOVED by Mr. Randall, seconded by Ms. Roberston, to recommend adoption of the following resolution to the full Legislature. Mr. Proto expressed concern regarding fringe expense in positions such as this, noting that although the salary may be fully funded benefits associated may have a local cost. As an example, he said a position might be funded for ten or more years, at which time the employee is fully vested in the retirement system. Upon retirement, the cost is borne solely by the County. As salary and fringes are the highest expense line for the County (greater than \$6,000,000) it is important to realize there is a potential local expense involved. Ms. Connors spoke of the WIC program having started in the early 1980's as a fully funded grant; it would be helpful to know what the local cost of the program is.

With regard to the sponsorship application to continue the program, Ms. Connors said the County should hear by August. The contract period would begin in October for a five-year period with annual renewal contracts. Mr. Burbank inquired what would occur if the County were not awarded the contract. Ms. Connors does not know of any other agency placing an application for the sponsorship. Ms. Connors said the Director, Andrea Smith, has held the position for approximately nine months; during which she has reached the maximum allowed compensatory time level. Ms. Smith is responsible for oversight of seven staff persons, and is required to work within the clinic at least one day per week and sometimes it has been three days per week.

A voice vote on the resolution resulted as follows: Ayes – 5; Noes – 0. RESOLUTION ADOPTED.

WHEREAS, the WIC Program has sufficient State/Federal funds to increase the WIC Director's time,
WHEREAS, the New York State Department of Health has authorized the program to increase the hours, now therefore be it

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RESOLVED, on recommendation of the Health and Human Services and Budget, Capital and Finance Committee, That the position of WIC Program Director (14/598), labor grade N, competitive class, be increased from 35 hours per week to 40 hours per week effective May 31, 2009, and

RESOLVED, further, that this increase in hours shall be permanent as long as there are sufficient grant funds to cover the increase in hours, and

RESOLVED, further, That this change is one-hundred percent funded by the WIC Program grant.

SEQR ACTION: TYPE II - 20

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Explanation:

WIC is 100% funded by federal and state monies and operates on the federal fiscal year, October 1, 2009 to September 30, 2010. Due to staff transition, funds are available to cover an additional five hours a week for this position. The WIC Director has and continues to amass compensatory time to keep up with a heavy workload. These additional hours will help the Director: meet mandatory state reporting requirements; provide staff training and orientation, and to serve as back-up Nutritionist for WIC clinics to cover staff illness. Further, the Director is educating community organizations to meet identified unmet needs in the community. In the short term, additional hours are needed to prepare for the Health Department move in Fall 2009 which requires developing and implementing a new outlying WIC clinic site plan. Lastly, extra hours are needed to accomplish the goal of the new caseload outreach and retention plan submitted in the 5-year Request for Application.

Budget Transfer

Update on H1N1 (Swine Flu)

Ms. Cole, Public Health Director, reported the recent outbreaks of the H1N1 (Swine) flu in the United States created a very labor-intensive response from her staff. She said there was not any hysteria within the County with regard to the flu, however, staff was having to continually be updated by the State Health Department and others via conference calls. Ms. Cole said the staff has been doing a wonderful job throughout this time. Although it is not yet over, Tompkins County has not had one suspicious or confirmed case. She noted the work that is being undertaken is the same actions her staff takes daily; they have put out the necessary information to the public and will continue to do so as needed. Ms. Cole spoke of the elimination of the funding for emergency preparedness, situations such as this would be additionally labor-intensive as a great deal of preparation for pandemics is done by this position.

Mr. Proto, on behalf of the Legislature and Board of Health, expressed appreciation to Ms. Cole and her staff who have worked around the clock to ensure the County was as protected and informed as possible.

Mental Health

Appointment to Mental Health Subcommittee

It was MOVED by Ms. Robertson, seconded by Mr. Burbank, and unanimously approved by voice vote by members present, to recommend the appointment of Liz Norton to the Mental Health Subcommittee, for a term to expire December 31, 2012. APPOINTMENT APPROVED.

Ms. Robertson was excused at this time (5:02 p.m.)

Clinic Restructuring in Mental Health

Mr. DeLuca informed the Committee of the Office of Mental Health having provided a Clinical Restructuring Implementation Plan. The plan, that amends the process of clinical funding and service structure, would be rolled out over the course of a four-year period, in twenty-five percent increments each year. Mr. DeLuca said it may have some positive benefits in some aspects and negative in others, therefore he has

concern. The Committee was informed the COPS funding for Mental Health would be incrementally eliminated as a result of the restructuring, with the idea the new funding structure would replace this funding. Attempting to predict future budgets is challenging as a result of the restructuring.

Mr. DeLuca said at the present time billing is done using simple codes; the restructuring will increase the types of service and modifiers (who can bill; what specific service is done; is it doctor, nurse practitioner, etc.; is it on site, off site; is it a matrix of other elements) being billed, up to twenty items. The restructuring will be a significant management item beginning in January 2010.

Mr. DeLuca said there are some positive aspects such as off-site services; some funding for complex care management (ex. post-treatment management of a psychiatrist setting up appointments for a patient); five percent of activity for a client being for medical care, which is beneficial in treatment; inclusion of nurses within the billing structure (this item was placed within the plan following advocacy efforts at the local level).

With regard to policy issues, one revolves around managed care. Currently at the State level clients with total Medicaid care also receive have a COPS add-on; the new program would remove the add-on. It is believed that the new funding structure would replace the present funding. Mr. DeLuca said the County is at a level of COPS funding that would provide for same funding, or in some areas, better funding for services rendered. If Medicaid managed rates do not pay sufficiently to replace the funding received from COPS, it will be problematic across the state.

Mr. DeLuca responded to Mr. Proto's question regarding how this may affect agencies or other departments, stating the restructuring has to do with all licensed Article 31 clinics, not just county-operated clinics; any client utilizing one would be involved with the amendments to funding. The restructuring is mainly operational; where it is policy it is the reimbursement not matching up, or the State not sure how to deal with the Managed Care area. The present rate system allows more flexibility in controlling the funding stream with the restructuring being more specific. The proposed restructuring will require Federal approval to go into place on January 1, 2010.

Mr. Proto requested that Mr. DeLuca return to discuss this proposal further in upcoming meetings.

Ms. Carey spoke of the County becoming a mandatory managed Care County. This could be a serious issue if it occurs. She explained that since two firms are now within the county it is anticipated that all clients will be required to go to Managed Care. Mr. DeLuca explained rates at the present time are management due to the add-on state aid. If under the new rates we were only paying the Managed Care rates it will not work. Mr. DeLuca said it is not a matter of Managed Care or rates along, but the add-on payments are larger than the rates in our county.

With regard to workload, the model does have positives such as off-site and physical health. Presently if there is a need for separate services they cannot be done in the same day in order to receive reimbursement; the new model will allow for combined services.

Community Mental Health Services Board

Mr. DeLuca reminded members of the Community Mental Health Services Board Celebration and Recognition event May 27th at the Holiday Inn. It is to recognize all the individuals involved with mental health care.

Liaison Assignment

Mr. Proto noted that to date no individual has come forward to volunteer to be a liaison to the Youth Services Board.

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Committee Goals

This item was deferred due to lack of time.

Budget Discussions

Mr. Proto said there might be need for a special meeting to discuss how to approach the 2010 budget.

Adjournment

On motion the meeting adjourned at 5:24 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Karen Fuller, Deputy Clerk