

**HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE
MINUTES
JUNE 4, 2008 – 3:00 P.M.
SCOTT HEYMAN CONFERENCE ROOM**

Present: F. Proto, Chairman, M. Robertson, C. Chock
Excused: T. Randall, N. Shinagawa
Staff: S. Martel-Moore, Deputy County Administrator; L. Holmes, Office for the Aging; R. DeLuca, Mental Health; A. Cole, S. Connors, S. Allinger, Health Department; M. Lynch, Public Information Officer; K. Schlather, N. Burston, Human Services Coalition; Patricia Carey, Department of Social Services; K. Schlather, Cornell Cooperative Extension; N. Zahler, J. Johnson, N. Zook, Youth Services; D. Squires, Finance Director; K. Fuller, Deputy Clerk
Guest: David Scovronick, Drop-In Children's Center; Giovanni Freesia, Brooktondale Resident

Call to Order

Chairman Proto called the meeting to order at 3:02 p.m.

Additions/Changes to the Agenda

There were no additions to the agenda.

Withdrawal from Agenda

There were no withdrawals from the agenda

Chair's Report

During the meeting Mr. Proto reported on upcoming discussions at Cornell Cooperative Extension.

Approval of the Minutes of May 7, 2008

It was MOVED by Ms. Robertson, seconded by Ms. Chock, to accept the minutes of May 7, 2008. A voice vote on the minutes resulted as follows: Ayes – 3; Noes – 0; Excused – 2 (Legislators Randall and Shinagawa), MINUTES APPROVED.

Youth Services

Ms. Zahler said the reports being made are done annually and that eighty percent of funds within the department are a pass-through for the various countywide programs.

2007 Municipal Youth Services

Ms. Johnson reviewed the report with the Committee, noting that most municipalities match funds for programs as well as receiving grants from the United Way and other entities. The participation in various programs were reviewed, noting a total of 3,236 youth participated in 35 municipal youth services system programs. Of this number, 544 were in the municipal jobs programs. In response to Mr. Proto's question regarding how much the municipal jobs programs put back into the local economy, Ms. Zahler said she believed it was three-fold the cost of the program. It was noted that there is a formula used to determine this, however the information was not available at this time. It was suggested that

future reports include this information. Mr. Proto asked if there is any way to track the youth to determine how many stay within the county. Ms. Zahler said that although there is no tracking mechanism in place some counselors do have contact with youth previously served. Ms. Johnson explained that each municipality determines whether to have a jobs program.

With regard to the growth and success of the Groton summer camp, Ms. Zahler spoke of Ms. Johnson's extensive assistance in development of the program, which contributed greatly to the success of the program, which has doubled in size. She shared information on upcoming programs throughout the County. One item of particular interest coming out of a survey of rural youth was the need to have high-speed internet-access capability; although computers are available, without this it is useless for schoolwork. Ms. Johnson spoke of ongoing work regarding transportation from rural areas, noting presently there is year-round bus passes. She said there would shortly be better coordination of transportation services as a result of available software.

Ms. Johnson and Ms. Zahler stated much of the success of the municipal youth programs is the result of volunteers, noting Tompkins County is the only one in the State who undertakes local planning with volunteers.

Overview of 2007 Agency Services

Ms. Zook spoke of the work with the various agencies throughout the County. Every three years a request for proposals is completed and sent to any interested agencies to recommend programs. At the present time it is the middle of this three-year cycle, therefore, although an RFP is made to current agencies, no new programs would be considered. Agencies are required to provide outcomes and tracing through quarterly reporting, a requirement that has been ongoing for the past twelve years.

Ms. Zahler provided a summary sheet of participation in the various programs. There are very few of the 1,638 youth that are participating in the agency programs and municipal youth programs. In response to Mr. Proto's question regarding program needs, Ms. Zahler spoke of the attempt to leverage the one-time funding provided by the County for the Bridges program from the State, unfortunately, it did not occur. As a result the County funds were utilized for the program, but was not able to provide as many services as hoped.

With regard to transportation, Ms. Zook said the hub of agency services is in Ithaca. It would be helpful to enable satellite offices for youth programs, but given the present rise in transportation costs it is prohibitive. Ms. Zahler said there is an increase in poverty in Enfield and an increasing need in Newfield. Upon gathering data by municipalities and school districts it provides an overview of the community needs.

Ms. Chock asked what percentage of a particular age group reach. Ms. Zahler said the majority of youth participants are between the age of 0-17. Of the approximate 18,000 youth between these ages, 10,242 are served.

Ms. Zook said some program participants whose residency is unknown due to school district lines. She also provided an informational sheet providing information on summer youth employment opportunities.

Human Services Coalition

Drop-In Center Update

Mr. Scovronick, Director, was introduced to the Committee. Ms. Schlather said that as a follow-up to the 2007 contingent fund request she felt it was important to receive an update on the modifications made at the center to alleviate the financial concerns.

Mr. Scovronick reported that as a result of numerous changes to the operations at the center it is in a much better financial situation. Upon review of the center a decision was made to have two directors, himself who deals with the financial aspects, and a director who is certified for childcare and will deal with curriculum and staff. Another change at the center was a significant increase in fees, although they are very much in line with the average fee schedules for day care within the County. The funds provided by the County have been utilized to assist low-income families through a subsidy, particularly individuals just above the guidelines to receive assistance from the Department of Social Services. Mr. Scovronick noted although Cornell University day care is coming on board he does not believe it will draw away clientele, however, he expressed a concern regarding loss of the teaching staff due to Cornell offering a higher wage. He is hoping to bring staff up to a living wage in the near future.

With regard to the new rate structure, it was reported there are five levels, based on income. At the present time there is a waiting list for lower income day care as the subsidy funds have been exhausted. The openings the center now has are for the full rate cost of care. Mr. Scovronick analyzes the revenue and expenses monthly to ensure the financial stability of the center.

Ms. Robertson stated if there is not enough funding to subsidize the low-income slots it would be worthwhile to obtain additional information such as how many are on the waiting list, what have they done to find day care, etc. She was informed the families are having home-based day care.

Mr. Proto requested Mr. Scovronick develop a spreadsheet that would indicate how many families could be served at various levels of financial support to provide subsidies.

The committee was informed that 83 to 85 percent of the clientele received subsidies, and over fifty percent were Department of Social Services clients.

Ms. Chock asked whether there is the ability for parents to volunteer to reduce costs and was informed that the State does not allow this as it had been done in the past. The Center does still allow for short-term daycare to allow parents to attend interviews, etc.

Mr. Scovronick also reported all service contracts have been renegotiated to reduce the expenses, all accounts receivable have been brought up to date, the reimbursement process from Social Services is more efficient, the debt is restructured into one mortgage-based loan, and the staffing schedule is tightened up as well.

Ms. Carey reported work is ongoing with the Office for Children and Family Services regarding accreditation of the center.

Ms. Burston reported that a question was made regarding what would be done if the Center received subsidies; Mr. Scovronick stated it would be used for wages to enable employee longevity.

Finance Department

RESOLUTION NO- REQUESTING THE JOINT SUBCOMMITTEE OF THE ITHACA AREA WASTEWATER TREATMENT FACILITY TO TAKE OVER FINANCIAL BILLING OF THE SEPTAGE DISPOSAL AT THE ITHACA AREA WASTEWATER TREATMENT PLANT FROM TOMPKINS COUNTY

MOVED by Ms. Robertson, seconded by Ms. Chock. Mr. Squires provided an historical account of the issue, noting that it was done at a time when land-spreading of septage had been occurring. A discussion followed, during which it was noted it is beneficial for the County to remove itself from this process; it is possible for the County to payout more than it takes in due to non-payment of fees. Mr. Proto asked if the County would have any control over fees charged, noting a concern that the fees not be increased at the time the County discontinues this process. Mr. Squires informed the Committee the County does not have any control over the fee structure that is in place. A discussion continued, during which it was requested the memorandum and account receivable information provided by Mr. Squires be provided to the Government Operations Committee and full Legislature.

At this time, a brief discussion regarding whether treatment of various types of waste will change, such as composting, degrading, and other aspects of waste disposal, etc.

The question was called by Ms. Robertson and unanimously seconded.

A voice vote on the motion resulted as follows: Ayes – 3; Noes –0; Excused – 2 (Legislators Randall and Shinagawa). RESOLUTION ADOPTED.

WHEREAS, Resolution 377 of 1988 authorized an agreement with the Ithaca Area Wastewater Treatment Facility (IAWWTF) for a capital investment to ensure a more environmentally acceptable method of septage treatment and disposal, and

WHEREAS, under the agreement Tompkins County is responsible for reimbursing the IAWWTF for operating and maintenance costs associated with septage receiving activity, and for the debt service on the improvements added to accommodate septage waste, and

WHEREAS, the debt for the aforementioned capital improvement has now been retired, and

WHEREAS, the continuing involvement of the County for billing and collecting for septage disposal now that the debt on the improvements have been retired is no longer warranted, and

WHEREAS, a more efficient method of financial billing at the point of service is practical and desirable and is acceptable to the IAAWTF, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, on recommendation of the Health and Human Services and the Government Operations Committees, That Tompkins County is supportive of the transfer of the financial billing operations of septage disposal from the County Finance Department to the IAWWTF effective January 1, 2009, and

RESOLVED, further, that the County Finance Director is charged with coordinating with the IAWWTF to ensure a smooth transition of the financial billing function.

SEQR ACTION: TYPE II- 2

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Mental Health

Mr. DeLuca shared information regarding the May 30th forum entitled Autism and Sensory Integration Perspectives that addressed autism spectrum disorders, which was highly successful with 161 participants. Ms. Allinger then reviewed the contents of the February 12, 2007, Mental Retardation/Developmental Disabilities Subcommittee discussion regarding Autism Services. Information was provided regarding the Racker Centers pre-school perspective, doing some Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) from birth to three months. In addition, Cornell University has contracted with the Racker Center training undergraduates as paraprofessionals to treat children birth to three years old. It was reported that at this time approximately five percent of classified students in the Ithaca school (56) have been identified as being on the autism spectrum. ABA programs have been designed for students in grades kindergarten through second grade as well as the start of integrating middle school students of various ages, presently in Dryden and Lansing.

Following the review there was a brief discussion period. Mr. Proto asked if there is any anticipated training for emergency responders dealing with autistic individuals, both within the county and outside of its borders. It was noted this is a good suggestion and that perhaps it could be done in conjunction with Broome Developmental Center. With regard to the increased number of students within the autism spectrum it was clarified that previously there was not any classification for autism within the definitions of mental health, therefore it is possible that some students previously classified under schizophrenia or psychotic could now be under the autism spectrum.

Health Department

RESOLUTION NO. – AUTHORIZATION TO SUBMIT CERTIFICATE OF NEED APPLICATION TO ADD MEDICAL SOCIAL SERVICES TO OPERATING CERTIFICATES – HEALTH DEPARTMENT

It was MOVED by Ms. Robertson, seconded by Ms. Chock. Ms. Connors explained the position is strongly recommended by the State as part of the certified home health agency program. This position would be responsible to assist Although previously approved seven to eight years ago, with the Certificate of Need in place as well, funding restrictions made it impossible to fill. As a result, the State dropped the Certificate of Need for the position. Since that time, the position is now reimbursable through Medicare and Medicaid. It is believed the reimbursement would be adequate to cover the cost of the position. In order to fill the position, the Certificate of Need is required.

Ms. Chock asked what the consequences would be if the position were not filled, and also questioned if the additional position would put a strain on administrative supervision. Ms. Connors indicated that at the present time nurses are provide this service, taking away from skilled nursing time that is badly needed. With regard to supervision, Ms. Connors indicated following a brief orientation period it is expected supervision requirements would be minimal. Ms. Connors reviewed the reimbursement rates per visit for the Committee. It was requested this information be provided as an explanatory paragraph on the resolution to clearly indicate the position as not requiring local share.

A voice vote on the motion resulted as follows: Ayes – 3; Noes – 0; Excused – 2 (Legislators Randall and Shinagawa). RESOLUTION ADOPTED.

WHEREAS, Tompkins County Health Department currently operates a certified home health agency (Tompkins County Home Health Care) and a diagnostic and treatment center for maternal-child services and requests approval to add medical social services to its operating certificates, and

WHEREAS, the provision of medical social services will benefit the needs of patients with complex family issues and will assist health department staff in coordinating appropriate resources, and

WHEREAS, the addition of a Medical Social Worker would enhance the quality of our care, and our ability to obtain managed care contracts and preferred provider status, and

WHEREAS, the Quality Improvement Sub-committee and the Professional Advisory Committee have repeatedly recommended the addition of a Medical Social Worker based on needs identified through patient record reviews, and

WHEREAS, funds were allocated for a part-time contract Medical Social Worker in the 2008 budget, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, on recommendation of the Tompkins County Board of Health and the Health and Human Services Committee, That the Health Department is authorized to submit a certificate of need application for approval from the New York State Department of Health to add medical social services to its operating certificates.

SEQR ACTION: TYPE II-20

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Explanation:

- ❑ Addition of the Medical Social Worker through contract services was approved in the 2008 Budget. New York State Department of Health requires a Certificate of Need (CON) application be made to add the service to our operating certificates. This resolution is to formalize the CON request.
- ❑ The MSW contractor would be an integral member on the nursing teams and we estimate he/she will make ~ 250 visits per year assisting the Home Health Care and the Medicaid Obstetrical Maternal Services (MOMS) clients.
- ❑ Medical social service needs are currently being met by nursing staff. Due to limited nursing staff and increased demand the Home Health Care has been unable to admit 27 clients since January of 2008. Obtaining the services of a MSW would help to free up valuable nursing time.
- ❑ The Director of Patient Services would provide administrative support to the Home Health Care Supervisor in supervision of the position.
- ❑ We estimate the MSW would perform ~ 100 Admission visits @ \$85 visit and ~ 150 visits @ \$60/visit.
- ❑ Visits made to MOMS clients will be billable through Medicaid; current reimbursement is \$82.70 per visit. Client visits with Private Insurance will be billable at ~ \$115 per visit. Medicare will reimburse for MSW visits if the client has less than 5 visits at ~ \$168-174 a visit.
- ❑ Revenue is expected to cover a significant portion of the contract cost. Freeing up nursing time will enable nurses to see additional clients.

Enumeration of the Local Public Health Workforce in New York: Statewide Comparison to the Tompkins County Department of Health

The Committee received a written report, questions are to be directed to Ms. Cole.

Annual Report

Ms. Cole provided copies of the 2007 Annual Report to Committee members.

It was noted that there is a national nursing shortage and the department's having difficulty replacing positions as the County requires bachelor's degrees. In the near future there will be a higher number of retirements in the department.

Office for the Aging

Office for the Aging/Lifelong Co-Location Feasibility Study Update

Ms. Holmes reported the work completed by Holt Architects relating to the feasibility study relating to co-location. As a result of the work completed, including site review at Lifelong, reviewing parking, buildings, zonings, engineering reviews, etc. There does not appear to be any items not anticipated. In addition, programmatic reviews of both agencies are being conducted. She believes it is a healthy, productive process. This morning Holt presented a preliminary report of the various studies and as a result of the initial review additional work is required before a final report is presented. The next presentation will be on June 18th. Upon completion of the review by the feasibility review committee, a joint meeting of the Health and Human Services and Facilities and Infrastructure Committees will be arranged (the July 2nd meeting initially called will be postponed).

Lakeside Nursing and Rehabilitation Home

At this time no new updates have taken place.

Department of Social Services

Babies Sleep Safest Alone

Ms. Carey read the press release regarding the campaign spearheaded by the New York State Office of Children and Family Services. She reported that Tompkins County has joined the campaign that includes over three-dozen counties. Since 2006 there have been 89 infant or small child death reports as a result of co-sleeping with a parent, sibling, or caregiver. It was also noted the deaths cross cultural, racial, ethnic, and economic demographics. Ms. Carey said her staff is working with the Health Department to determine the most appropriate outreach that will educate parents of the potential hazard, and options available without diminishing the much-needed nurturing and bonding of young children.

Mr. Proto suggested obtaining the materials in other languages as well. Ms. Carey said as the campaign was initiated in New York City they are being made readily available. Mr. Proto inquired whether the previous study completed regarding infant mortality should be updated; Ms. Cole said it is not necessary at this time.

Chair's Report – continued

Mr. Proto reported after attending a Cooperative Extension meeting the Committee would be taking up the topic of alternative energy, particularly biomass. He believes it to be appropriate as Cooperative Extension reports to this committee.

Adjournment

On motion the meeting adjourned at 5:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Karen Fuller, Deputy Clerk