

**HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES
JUNE 9, 2009 – 3:30 P.M.
SCOTT HEYMAN CONFERENCE ROOM**

APPROVED 8-11-09

Present: F. Proto, Chairman, W. Burbank, G. Stevenson
Excused: M. Robertson, T. Randall
Staff: T. Herden, Department of Social Services; N. Zahler, J. Johnson, Youth Services; L. Holmes, Office for the Aging; A. Cole, B. Grinnell-Crosby, Health Department; R. DeLuca, J. Bezirgianian, Mental Health; J. Mareane, County Administrator; S. Martel-Moore, Human Rights; K. Fuller, Deputy Clerk
Legislator: M. Koplinka-Loehr
Guests: Stacey Shackford, *The Ithaca Journal*

Call to Order

Chairman Proto called the meeting to order at 3:30 p.m.

Changes to the Agenda

There were no changes to the agenda.

Approval of Minutes of May 12, 2009

It was MOVED by Mr. Burbank, seconded by Mr. Stevenson, and unanimously approved by voice vote by members present, to approve the minutes of May 12, 2009.

Health Department

Annual Report

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

Pandemic Flu Preparedness: Lessons from the Frontline

Ms. Cole provided members a report that outlined information relating to the H1N1 (Swine) flu outbreak.

RESOLUTION NO. - APPROPRIATION FROM CONTINGENT FUND – TERMINAL-PAY REIMBURSEMENT – HEALTH DEPARTMENT

It was MOVED by Mr. Stevenson, seconded by Mr. Burbank, to recommend adoption of the following resolution to the full Legislature. It was noted the positions are not open at this time; Mr. Proto was pleased they were filled due to the additional work the Department went through due to the H1N1 flu. A voice vote on the resolution resulted as follows: Ayes – 3; Noes – 0; Excused – 2 (Legislators Randall and Robertson). RESOLUTION ADOPTED.

WHEREAS, the Health Department had a Community Health Nurse resign effective April 13, 2009, and

WHEREAS, the Health Department had a Sr. Account Clerk Typist resign effective May 8, 2009, and

WHEREAS, the Fiscal Policy of Tompkins County allows for terminal-pay reimbursement from the Contingent Fund, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, on recommendation of the Health and Human Services and Budget, Capital and Finance Committees, That the Director of Finance is hereby authorized and directed to make the following budget appropriation:

FROM:	A1990.54440	Contingent Fund	\$3,909
TO:	A4016.51000580	Community Health Nurse	\$ 972
	A4016.51000529	Sr. Account Clerk Typist	\$1,902
	A4016.58800	Fringes	\$1,035

SEQR ACTION: TYPE II-20

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Update on H1N1 (Swine) Flu

Ms. Cole reported that as of this date there have been three confirmed cases within the county. Since the flu has been confirmed in the county, testing of any suspected case is not recommended unless it appears to be severe illness or in a cluster. Mr. Proto inquired whether any special precautions or notification is necessary for transient students at Tompkins Cortland Community College, Ithaca College, or Cornell University. Ms. Cole said the same information as was initially provided regarding precautions would be the same:

- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw the tissue in the trash after you use it.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water, especially after you cough or sneeze. Alcohol based hand cleaners are also effective.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth. Germs spread that way.
- Try to avoid close contact with sick people.
- Stay home if you are sick for 7 days after your symptoms begin or until you have been symptom-free for 24 hours, whichever is longer.

Ms. Cole also noted the same information would be applying to summer day camps.

With regard to vaccines, Ms. Cole reported there would be a vaccine in the fall of 2009. Information provided to date indicates there would be two flu vaccines, one for the anticipated normal flu, and one for the H1N1. The H1N1 vaccine would be tiered and given first to high-risk individuals or health-related workers; it may be possible to expand this group but until it is known how much is available preliminary plans are being made. Ms. Cole stated that she has heard, though not yet verified, that the Federal government would be paying for the vaccine and making it available at the State level. In addition, she has also heard that the Federal government is planning to provide funding for the equipment required to do so. Upon arrival of the vaccine, the Health Department would distribute the vaccine to physicians and outside clinics to reduce the demand on the department.

In response to a question regarding delivery dates and effectiveness, Ms. Cole said it is not yet known when the vaccine would be ready due to the complicated process required to produce it; with regard to effectiveness, she stated it is as effective as can be, that no vaccine is one-hundred percent effective.

Rollover Request

The Committee was provided a written form indicating the department's certified rollover in the amount of \$177,399.

In response to a question by Mr. Proto regarding departments desiring to use the certified rollover for 2010, Mr. Mareane explained the rollover is the amount the department potentially could use to offset the 6.25 percent reduction; the question, however, is whether to allow use of all, or some of the rollover funds specifically for that department or designate its use elsewhere. He has encouraged departments to not make requests for rollover funds for 2009, although some department may use funds for current needs that he would recommend be approved.

Bioterrorism Program

Ms. Cole reported this is the last week that Carol Hill, Bioterrorism Coordinator, would be working for the County. Although the County was informed the program would be receiving partial State funding for fiscal

year 2009-2010, Ms. Hill has chosen to leave the County's employment. The funding will allow the County to hire a part-time coordinator; once the department knows the actual amount to be received, the position would be filled.

Elimination of Contract – Family and Children Services

Ms. Cole reported the County was informed of discontinuation of home health aide services provided by Family and Children's Services effective June 30. She noted they did not provide a sixty-day notice as required within the contract. Clients are being shifted to other agencies contracted by the County for services and it is not anticipated there would be any lapse in the amount or quality of services provided.

Comprehensive Emergency Management Planning Committee

Mr. Proto spoke of Supervisor Dietrich's plan to attend the meeting and suggest holding a table-top training exercise using H1N1 (Swine) flu as an example. Ms. Cole stated Mr. Dietrich was referred to the Training And Exercise Subcommittee who is responsible for numerous training exercises planned for the next three years; he had not been aware of the subcommittee's work.

Youth Services

2008 Municipal Youth Services and Recreation Partnership

Ms. Johnson reviewed the report, noting her work with all municipalities except the City of Ithaca. The report indicated 3,014 youth were served in 33 different municipal youth service programs during 2008. A breakdown of participation by municipality was also included within the report. In addition 469 youth were served through the municipal job program, providing career exploration training and paid work experiences. Ms. Johnson reported a percentage of her time is also spent working with the Recreation Partnership. Also included in the report is an unduplicated count of participation in the Recreation Partnership programs.

Ms. Johnson spoke of convening all municipal recreation directors on a regular basis to consider joint purchases, planning, and share resources. This last year the group developed a new cross-county program, a cross-country race series for youth to go to various areas around the county and participate in a race. All of them have had an increase in the desire to have running programs and had waiting lists. This program affords a greater level of participation than before. The group hopes that next year Tompkins Cortland Community College and the Town of Newfield will also become part of the cross-country running program. Ms. Johnson clarified the race program is not one municipality against another but the youth racing against each other.

Mr. Proto asked how participation in the jobs programs compared to previous years. Ms. Johnson said funding has not increased, which does not allow increased participation; there are always waiting lists. She spoke of how many businesses would rather hire a college student or older individual versus youth, particularly when the minimum wage increased. Although there are some additional funding for certain areas, many youth may not meet the eligibility criteria but cannot be successful in a first-time job situation without assistance.

A brief discussion regarding the coordination of summer job programs was held. By bringing all parties together with the applications it has provided an additional ten percent youth employment rate. Reviewing the applications and criteria avoids having youth applying in multiple locations. Previously, youth would be called to take on a position, and if it were found out the candidate had accepted employment elsewhere, it required having to back-fill from the other candidates. Coordination also assists in determining the appropriate employment program based on income, needs, etc.

Ms. Johnson spoke of intermunicipal cooperation that allows youth to attend summer camps not within their municipal boundaries to allow interaction with their peers from school. Dryden provides the Town of Caroline with funding for youth from their area to offset the costs. Ms. Zahler spoke of a good deal of their work behind the scenes is working with municipalities and school districts to reconcile the mismatched

boundaries to allow for seamless operation of services. Ms. Zahler said often youth are working at the same location but are being paid through different programs depending on eligibility. Mr. Proto suggested other members of the Legislature be provided the information from this report.

Budget Update

The 2009 State Aid allocations were received last week and are \$10,000 to \$14,000 higher than anticipated. Ms. Zahler provided a written budget reflecting these amounts. Overall, the community itself will be losing approximately \$59,000 of State aid this year. The department lost \$87,000, agencies approximately \$29,000 to \$30,000, with the department having only \$38,000 in allocations in the County budget.

Mr. Mareane spoke of how the framework was to sustain programs that experienced cuts in funding for the present year utilizing the stimulus funding, to allow time to determine whether the programs should be retained. He spoke of having several programs fully funded by State aid and that these programs would be phased out over the course of the year. He said the Youth Services Department is the first to know what the level of funding is and that to continue the programs will require \$38,000 of stimulus savings. Mr. Mareane will prepare a consolidated sense of what is occurring as information is received, prior to formal action.

Mr. Proto asked to have a breakdown of what the agency funding loss is to better determine which programs should be maintained.

Mr. Mareane noted the County would not be providing funding to agencies in 2010 for the loss in State aid. Ms. Zahler, in response to a request from Mr. Proto, would provide participation of various programs to assist in determining effectiveness. Ms. Zahler requested that if the Committee determined a program should be eliminated she be notified as soon as possible. She noted there is a 30-day contract change if necessary.

Mr. Mareane indicated sales taxes are eroding but there are not significant changes from his first report. He will provide the Legislature information with all funds requiring stimulus savings funding. Ms. Zahler noted that when submitting the 2010 budget it will be clear that the County cannot provide the same services.

Rollover Request

The Committee was provided a written form indicating the department's certified rollover in the amount of \$20,431 that will be requested for use in 2010.

Mental Health

Mr. DeLuca reported the Community Mental Health Services Board Celebration and Recognition event held May 27th at the Holiday Inn to recognize all the individuals involved with mental health care was very successful.

Human Rights Watch Report

Mr. DeLuca introduced Dr. Bezirgianian to members. Dr. Bezirgianian provided his viewpoint on clinic operations in general, and the program he started for opiod-dependent individuals exiting the jail. The Committee was informed that severely opiod-dependent prisoners are started on buprenorphine, a recently released drug that when compared with methadone, has a lower risk for abuse and dependence, fewer side effects, and a longer duration of action. It was explained that opiod-dependent prisoners are started on the drug and are then linked with a licensed buprenorphine provider in the community for continuing care. Dr. Bezirgianian believes it has assisted in saving lives by preventing overdoses.

Mr. Burbank inquired why there is limited access to providers of the particular drug. He was informed that in general, most physicians do not request to be able to write the prescription for the medication; those that

are doing it have connections with jails. Dr. Bezirgianian noted the drug, while giving the individual a sense of being high, does not provide the ability to overdose.

Mr. DeLuca said it was due to Dr. Bezirgianian's initiative and group training in substance abuse that the treatment program was developed. He noted that not everyone wants to deal with severely addicted individuals or those with mental health issues. It was noted that the fact that the treatment can continue is what makes the program successful; it is not a policy decision, but common sense. Mr. DeLuca is going to inquire what other counties are doing.

Mr. Proto recalled the needle exchange program was controversial but it proved to be successful as it built trust and had some success in reducing illness associated with re-use of syringes. Dr. Bezirgianian stated the program is the only one in the area that provides assurance that if an individual comes and asks they will receive the medication.

Mr. Burbank asked whether there the relapse rate is known. He was informed there are presently twenty in the jail using the medication; it is known since some use and then relapse and then try again. Mr. DeLuca reported that before the program was implemented these clients were transported to Syracuse and other facilities to receive methadone treatment.

Budget Update

Mr. DeLuca reported that Challenge Industries and Franziska Racker Centers have been informed they would see a total of \$80,000 cut from State Aid.

Department of Social Services

Mr. Herden, Deputy Commissioner, was present to provide information as requested. Mr. Mareane spoke of concerns in the increased cases in the areas of temporary assistance and placements. Mr. Herden explained the ten percent increase in the Family Assistance category is a normal change reflecting the present economy and he does not believe there are any other substantive changes in eligibility. The Safety Net population has increased and is in part a shift in eligibility for particular programs such as TANF, which has a five-year eligibility limit. The shift to Safety Net increases the local share from twenty-five percent to fifty percent. With respect to the increase in youth in placement, Mr. Herden stated he is not totally familiar with the program, however, the numbers are small and the addition of one youth could show a twenty percent increase in the program. It was noted detention placements have a high cost associated with them.

Mr. Proto inquired if there have been increased expenses regarding indigent burials. Mr. Herden indicated he did not have the information at this time. Mr. Proto spoke of previously having a special program in place years ago for the burials, however, they now come under the Family Assistance and Safety Net Programs. *Mr. Herden will provide this information at the next meeting.* Mr. Herden noted the program offers the same amount for services to all funeral director and families determine which funeral home to use. He does not believe there has been significant changes in the contract negotiated with the local funeral home association. In the event a deceased does not have family the remains are cremated.

Mr. Herden reported the increase in food stamps is directly related to outreach efforts made throughout the state. Efforts to streamline the application process as well as utilizing electronic cards versus "food stamps" have been successful. Changes in the program, including allowing application by telephone and extending the period of eligibility, have also occurred.

Mr. Proto asked what Mr. Herden meant about programs that the County makes decisions regarding the manner in which services are delivered. Mr. Herden said it could be how to, for example, administer a day care subsidy program. Some counties choose to operate with waiting lists, contracting with a preferred set of providers, at a higher cost and therefore the funds are used quickly. If there is an obligation to require parents

to contribute the choice of how much to have them pay is up to the county – it could be a nominal \$5 or a sliding scale. *Mr. Proto requested additional information such as this be provided at the next meeting.*

Office for the Aging

The Committee was provided a copy of a budget adjustment; no action was necessary.

Human Rights Commission

The Committee was provided a written form indicating the department's certified rollover in the amount of \$27,949. Ms. Martel-Moore said that she anticipates using most of the funding to offset reductions that are required in the preparation of the 2010 budget. Some of the funding may be used to upgrade the department computers.

Adjournment

On motion the meeting adjourned at 5:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Karen Fuller, Deputy Clerk