

**HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE
MINUTES
JULY 2, 2008 – 3:00 P.M.
SCOTT HEYMAN CONFERENCE ROOM**

Present: F. Proto, Chairman, M. Robertson, C. Chock, N. Shinagawa (arrived 3:10 p.m.)
Excused: T. Randall
Staff: L. Holmes, Office for the Aging; R. DeLuca, Mental Health; N. Burston, Human Services Coalition; Patricia Carey, D. Bodner, T. Husick, M. Banks, Department of Social Services; K. Schlather, Cornell Cooperative Extension; S. Whicher, County Administrator, N. Jayne, Administration, D. Squires, Finance Director; K. Fuller, Deputy Clerk
Guest: Brad Scott, Mark Wheeler, TechS2, Ann Tonzi, Hospicare; T. Ashmore, Ithaca Journal; B. Stenkamp; Trudy Pantalia, Bridges

Call to Order

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

Additions/Changes to the Agenda

A Youth Services budget transfer, requiring no action, was added to the agenda.

Withdrawal from Agenda

There were no withdrawals from the agenda

Approval of the Minutes of June 4, 2008

It was MOVED by Ms. Chock, seconded by Ms. Robertson, to accept the minutes of June 4, 2008. A voice vote on the minutes resulted as follows: Ayes – 3; Noes – 0; Excused – 2 (Legislators Randall and Shinagawa), MINUTES APPROVED.

Chair's Report

Mr. Proto reported he has asked Department Heads to provide a brief sketch of 2009 budget concerns; based upon information received it may indicate a need to hold a special meeting. He announced there would be a special Budget meeting held by Legislators on August 5th, and that the Human Services Coalition will be having a budgetary meeting on July 17th, at which Legislators Koplinka-Loehr and Shinagawa, as well as County Administrator Steve Whicher, Assemblywoman Barbara Lifton, and Human Services Forum Chair George Ferrari would be present. This meeting will take place at the Borg Warner Conference Room of the Library. Mr. Proto said that due to the special joint meeting of the Health and Human Services and Facilities and Infrastructure Committees at 2:30 p.m. the same day to have the presentation of the feasibility study of the co-location of the Office for the Aging and Lifelong, it may require some members to be excused from the Human Services Coalition meeting. Mr. Proto asked that any executive summary for the feasibility study be provided ahead of time.

Mr. Shinagawa arrived at this time.

Office for the Aging

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

Ms. Holmes reported Holt Architects, the consultant on the project, has concluded the feasibility study regarding co-location. This item would be ready for the special joint meeting on July 17th. In addition, the same presentation would be made to the Lifelong board earlier the same day. The study has developed three potential options, and the construction costs came in higher than anticipated. She noted that concerns regarding the project voiced by the City of Ithaca have been addressed; Mr. Marx, Commissioner of Planning and Public Works has met with the City of Ithaca Planning Department and Mayor Peterson to discuss the proposed co-location project and the long-range intentions of the County, particularly in regard to use of the Old Library facility. Mr. Whicher asked if the Mayor's questions were received satisfactorily and was informed by Ms. Holmes that she believed they were.

Lakeside Nursing and Rehabilitation

In response to an inquiry by Mr. Proto, Ms. Holmes reported that as noted in the *Ithaca Journal*, the State approved the restructuring plan presented by Lakeside. This would retain the 100 skilled nursing beds, 80-bed assisted-living, 55 out-slots, and 25 slots targeted to low-income.

County-Received Housing Grants

Ms. Holmes reported the County has received a variety of housing grants from the New York State Division of Housing and Community Renewal. Although having applied for the then maximum amount of \$75,000 for emergency repairs for the elderly, the Office for the Aging received a grant in the amount of \$125,000, which is expected to assist in repairing fifty-eight homes. In addition, the Better Housing of Tompkins County received \$326,500 for Access to Home grants that provides accessibility modifications to households that include persons with physical disabilities, persons with mental retardation/developmental disabilities and persons who are frail elderly, and \$328,500 for first-time home buyers, Ithaca Neighborhood Housing received a \$400,000 home grant, and the Town of Dryden received \$315,160 for rehabilitation of owner-occupied housing, with some of the funding targeted for persons who are elderly and persons who are frail elderly. The Committee noted that these grants are in excess of \$1.5 million from the State coming into the county for housing programs.

Budget Adjustment

It was MOVED by Ms. Robertson, seconded by Ms. Chock, and unanimously approved by voice vote by members, to recommend approval of the following budget adjustment to the full Legislature:

<u>Revenue Acct</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Amount</u>	<u>Approp Acct</u>	<u>Title</u>
6780.43803	State Revenue	\$17,229	6780.54491	Subcontract

Explanation: Revenue increase in the EISEP program.

SEQR ACTION: TYPE II-20

Rollover

The Committee had no questions relating to the 2009 Rollover request.

State Registry for Home Health Aides

Mr. Proto inquired if any additional information has been made available regarding the State proposal to require home health and nursing home aides to be on a registry listing. Ms. Holmes said she had not, however, she noted the home health aides used through contracts by the Office for the Aging require background checks of all staff. Ms. Carey indicated that she has not seen any legislation occurring at the State level. Mr. Proto asked that if information is provided to bring it forward to the Committee. Ms. Carey noted she believed the intent was to extend requirements to consumer-directed aides.

Hospicare in a Nutshell – Challenges Ahead Presentation

Ms. Tonzi, Executive Director, introduced herself and provided a brief background of her experience. She noted this is the twenty-fifth anniversary of Hospicare, as well as many other hospice facilities throughout the nation. She said that at this time there are changes in rules for hospice care facilities being made to shift them from grassroots effort to a regulated facility. Although it should not change operations significantly, there is a need to find a balance for hospice care facilities to comply with reporting which could affect some due to a lack of resources or necessary business practices in place.

Ms. Tonzi said hospice care and palliative services is comprehensive care to assist with body, mind, and spirit. This work may be done within a home, nursing home, hospital, or at the residential facility such as the one on East King Road, which was the first such facility in the State. At this time hospice care has shifted and most are moving to an acute care, short-term in-patient settings. She believes there would be a trend in the next several years, to not only house those in residential care, but to move toward an acute care facility. The funding revenue is primarily from Medicare (eighty-five percent), who provides an approximate \$140 per-diem for any and all services required. Ms. Tonzi spoke of the various financial arrangements available including private insurance, sliding fee, etc. She noted nobody is turned away due to the inability to pay. In the recent budget process for the years 2009–2011 an anticipated reduction in the Medicare revenue is estimated between five to fifteen percent. With this in mind efforts are being made to streamline business practices without effecting quality care.

Ms. Tonzi reported that on average hospice care could be provided for the period of the last six months of life, with Hospicare experiencing an average of 45 days of service, with the median being 17 days, which is becoming a national trend. She reported on having discussions with Ms. Holmes, and Lifelong, to be able to determine how bring hospice/palliative services to individuals earlier as well as provide education. Ms. Tonzi spoke of the need to educate the public on what services her agency provides and the benefits it would provide.

The Committee was given a description of palliative care, which focuses on comfort at any stage of a disease. She believes that if a chronic illness exists palliative care could be beneficial. She noted former director Nina Miller had hoped to have a component of palliative care as part of the program.

Ms. Chock asked if shorter stays are because individuals cannot afford to stay at the residence. Ms. Tonzi said care is provided at home as well. In response to a question regarding regulatory changes, Ms. Tonzi said overall they are positive, requiring an overall review of the quality of the organization and subsequent reporting. She noted that a review of services for clients is occurring which could lead to a fee for service billing versus the per diem rates. Mr. DeLuca noted this is not specific to this type of care but appears to be taking place in numerous client-care venues. Ms. Tonzi said she does not believe it would adversely affect Hospicare and that larger hospice-care providers could have concerns.

Ms. Chock noted that over thirty percent of private health insurance expenses goes to administration rather than medical care. It was noted that Medicare is three percent for patient care. Ms. Chock advised it would be good to continue to keep abreast of the high administration costs.

Department of Social Services

Update on Child Protective Services

Ms. Carey introduced Mary Ann Banks and Todd Husick of Child Protection Services who provided information regarding trends and changes to be aware of regarding this division.

Ms. Banks reported on services providing and noted the division has three supervisors and ten full-time senior caseworkers. She said the trends show an increase in child protective services reporting. Normally there are approximately 800 reports per year; there is a 16 percent increase in cases in one year,

with a twenty-eight percent increase since 2005. Ms. Banks anticipates there would be approximately 1,200 reports this year. She reported that in 2006 New York State conducted a study that produced recommended caseloads of only twelve active investigations per month. As a result, New York State monitors workers to determine the number of investigations as well as seven-day safety assessment and the decision-making process, which thus far Tompkins County has not had difficulty with. Recently, the average has increased to 17 active cases per staff member, with two or three caseworkers having caseloads as high as 23. The increased caseload has been reported to New York State who is contacting the County regarding the situation. Eight workers out of ten are experiencing caseloads over 15, and up from 5 active cases since March, which causes a decrease in performance.

The Committee was informed this appears to be a State trend, which could be the result of 2007-2008 law amendments regard who and how to report potential abuse/neglect cases, now eliminating administration decision of whether or not to report a concern. In order to reduce the active cases per worker, the division increased supervisory staff and offered five hours overtime (from 35 hours per week to 40 hours per week) to complete investigations and assessments, as well as limited the number of staff taking vacation time in any given week to assure adequate coverage. In addition, the geographic locations requiring coverage are reviewed to streamline time and expenses within the division and have utilized project assistants for work they are qualified for.

It was noted there are changes taking place within Child Protective Services that would provide the ability to not undertake an immediate investigation if the concern is not severe. Discussions are underway with community partners for assistance with the less severe concerns and it is anticipated to implement the changes in January 2009.

A brief discussion occurred and the following was noted:

- An example of less severe would be a dirty house versus an unsafe house.
- The increase in cases does not appear to be related to the population but the amendments in the law regarding reporting.
- Families are under considerable stress, primarily when not able to determine how to afford required appointments, etc.
- The new regulations require certain positions (teachers, social workers, etc.) to make immediate reports; previously they may have been channeled through a supervisor or principal. It could mean several employees of a school could report on a single child.
- Although the primary concern in a referral is the safety of a child, upon investigation concerns regarding parents could result in a referral.
- If family dynamics include multiple parents/step-parents, all parties must be interviewed.

Ms. Chock expressed her appreciation to the Child Protective Services workers, noting they are owed a debt of gratitude for their work that exposes them to difficult situations.

Homeless Shelter Statistics

Ms. Bodner reviewed the statistics provided to members, noting that average stays at the shelter in 2006 (30 days) were almost half of the stays recorded for 2007 (17.6 days). She said it is believed that it is due to staffing referrals to special services that place individuals in alternate housing. An analysis of the clients staying at the shelter, it was determined approximately 63 percent have some sort of disability, and although it appears to be an increase, she believes it to be that better reporting is occurring. Ms. Carey said the Special Services Division has funded a housing specialist, which she believes has assisted in finding housing for individuals in the shelter. In response to Mr. Proto's question, Ms. Bodner said individuals who are recognized as having a disability are referred to Mental Health, Substance Abuse Division, and Adult Protection Services who provide an immediate assessment. Upon completing an assessment, Adult Protection Services will link the individual to appropriate services for their disability. Individuals referred to other services are tracked by the Red Cross, making certain clients have stabilized

housing and that they are obtaining the appropriate mental health/substance abuse treatment. Ms. Carey stressed the importance of this as many people are struggling to maintain themselves in the community. The Red Cross is utilized as the primary contact for individuals requiring case management referrals.

A brief discussion followed, noting the current personnel concerns reported within the Red Cross has not had any detrimental affect on services provided. Ms. Carey said there is a good working relationship with individuals operating the emergency shelter program, with weekly meetings occurring. It was also noted that it is not known if the downward trend is continuing for 2008; Ms. Bodner only does a comparison on an annual basis to provide an overall viewpoint. In response to Ms. Robertson's question, it was reported the supply for housing has increased somewhat, although some individuals require advocacy to be able to access some of the housing. Mr. DeLuca also noted the single-room occupancy building project is expected to open in September 2008.

Youth Services

Review 2009 Youth Board Funding Recommendations

Ms. Zahler reported the Youth Board met on June 30th to review the funding recommendations for 2009. The volunteers have recommended that there be no change to the 2008 funding. It was noted that 2009 is year-two of a three-year cycle for funding of programs. Ms. Zahler said only two changes occurring; as a result of State funding cuts, the Youth Services rollover would be used to offset only 2009 shortfalls due to State cuts and that a one-year funding for agencies and municipalities funded and that would allow time for planning for the 2010 budget. As a result of the reduced base it is anticipated that over-target-requests for 3.6 percent cost of living/maintenance of effort would be made on behalf of agencies and the largest County-funded component for municipalities. The operations portion is 15-16 percent of the total budget; no request is being made for maintenance of effort in this area.

Ms. Zahler said two items would have over-target-requests for the Bridges for Anger Management program, which she believes is promising and should be reconsidered. The Recreation Partnership is not under the Youth Board review process as it has a separate board, however, she reported they would be asking for a 3.5 percent increase from all municipalities for cost of living increases.

Mr. Proto asked if the County Administrator had received the preliminary information and was informed that the department has not been asked to submit this information yet. Ms. Zahler said because the Youth Board attempts to fund on a three-year basis no new initiatives/programs were requested. The agencies/municipalities were asked to advise of any additional funding requirements.

Mid-Year Update on the Bridges Program's New Anger Management Workshops

Ms. Zahler introduced Trudy Pantalia, Director, of the Bridges Program, and noted Youth Services contracts with her agency for Anger Management training. She explained that the program works with youth who are at risk, runaways, or homeless as part of a prevention program. This past year there have been two completed workshops in Groton and Trumansburg, with another starting primarily for Ithaca youth (with some Lansing and Dryden youth participants). Some of the participants were recognized as youth requiring more services than just the Anger Management workshops and they were able to direct them to the appropriate departments/agencies for assistance. Ms. Pantalia explained the workshops consist of thirty-hours over a ten-week period (3 hours per week), and propose social and morale dilemmas that could occur and how to handle them. Over the course of the workshop, contact is made via telephone to the parent/caregiver as well to determine specific needs of a youth. In addition, during times that school is not in session, contact is made through a home-visit once a week. Presently, the demand for the workshops exceeds the ability to pay for it, with a waiting list of just over one-year's time. Ms. Pantalia shared information regarding the success of the program and personal experiences of the youth participants showing their ability to avoid conflicts.

Ms. Zahler stated the program is doing more pre-testing and post testing to be able to get quantitative back-up on the program. It was noted the referrals are received from DAP, DSS, Mental Health, and the primary referrals are from the Probation Department. The program as it is presently designed has only run since January, with previous workshops having been limited to the Ithaca community. In response to Mr. Proto's question, it was noted by Ms. Carey that the New York State Office of Family and Children's Services has reduced funding for the program, however it is not part of the overall two percent cut. This funding reduction is due to the Office of Family and Children's Services holding funds while they investigate how funds are being spent in this area. It is unknown at this time whether the State can fund any new programs. Ms. Zahler explained the funding was approved by the State regional office, but due to the State moratorium on new funding, therefore, the anticipated approval of \$22,400 for a half-time worker the program was cut down to one group rather than two. In response to Ms. Chock's question of the cost-savings through a program such as this, Ms. Zahler said for every one dollar spent in prevention it is estimated to save nine dollars in the future, however different programs have different specific formulas.

Rollover Request

The Committee received the Department Rollover Request, which did not require action as it is for the 2009 budget year.

Budget Transfer

The Committee reviewed the budget transfer added to the agenda. Ms. Zahler noted the transfer was done to provide for a reduction in revenue due to cuts from the State; this will allow the agencies and municipalities to operate during the budget year.

Health Department

Rollover Request

The Committee received the Department Rollover Request, which did not require action as it is for the 2009 budget year. It was noted by Ms. Jayne that the figures would be amended due to a revision regarding the fringe rates for 2009. Initial budgeting was done using a 38 percent fringe rate; this has been amended to 36 percent due to consolidation of the fringe account lines and will affect the Health Department budget.

Human Rights Commission

Rollover Request

The Committee received the Department Rollover Request, which did not require action as it is for the 2009 budget year.

Liaison Reports

Cooperative Extension

Mr. Schlather, Executive Director, noted that the topic of energy costs affect on personal budgets for low-income families will be an important topic to discuss in the near future. Ms. Carey said this item would be a large concern for heating.

Greater Ithaca Activities Center (GIAC)

Mr. Shinagawa said the renovations are coming along well. He reported there is a new computer lab located in the basement of the building; a teacher is available to assist with education of use.

Tompkins Community Action

The time of meetings is being amended. Mr. Shinagawa said they do not have meetings at this time.

Office for the Aging

Information is being provided directly by Ms. Holmes.

Homeless and Housing Task Force

They have been receiving information from the Planning Department regarding the Cornell University housing initiative. The recent articles in the *Ithaca Journal* provide the majority of information regarding this project. The emergency shelter nights appear to be down this year as well and it was noted it is not related to the time of year but is a trend.

Board of Health

The changes in the well program and fees would be brought up at the next meeting. After their review the information would be brought forward.

Human Services Coalition

They have completed their review of agency requests. It is expected they would be requesting a 3.5 percent increase as maintenance of effort as an over-target request. Ms. Zahler stated the request is not limited to the salary portion of the allocation of county funding and is only for those agencies receiving County funding.

Announcement

It was announced the 4-H fair would be held the last week in July.

Guest Discussion

Mr. Proto asked Brad Scott, Mark Wheeler from TechS2 if they had any questions/comments regarding the meeting. They explained they are owners of a software development firm in Lansing working to integrate data into a single-system with one application to enable multiple users to utilize the same data. Presently they have two contracts with the State of Pennsylvania. A brief discussion of the difficulties such a task encounters due to confidentiality and state requirements occurred.

Adjournment

On motion the meeting adjourned at 5:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Karen Fuller, Deputy Clerk