

**HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE  
MINUTES  
AUGUST 15, 2007 – 3:00 P.M.  
SCOTT HEYMAN CONFERENCE ROOM**

Present: N. Shinagawa, Chair, M. Robertson, M. Koplinka-Loehr  
Excused: F. Proto  
Absent: M. Sigler, Vice Chair  
Staff: P. Carey, T. Herden, Department of Social Services; N. Zahler, J. Johnson, N. Zook, Youth Services; L. Holmes, Office for the Aging; S. Whicher, County Administrator; S. Martel-Moore, Human Rights Commission, J. Mattick, Workforce Development; M. Lynch, Public Information Officer; K. Fuller, Deputy Clerk  
Guest: R. Dietrich, Town of Danby; D. Frongillo, Recreation Partnership Board; T. Pantalia, Bridges

**Call to Order**

Chair Shinagawa called the meeting to order at 3:05 p.m.

**Chair's Report**

Mr. Shinagawa reported that due to vacation and expanded budget meetings the Committee would meet only on September 5, 2007. He then reported that the revised Recreation Partnership Agreement and accompanying resolution were received after the agenda and he therefore would like to only discuss the amendments today and delay action until a special meeting to be held prior to the August 21<sup>st</sup> Legislature meeting, to allow time for adequate review. Mr. Koplinka-Loehr inquired whether the resolution would then go to the Legislature the same time and was informed it would be in the packet, pending Committee action. The meeting will take place at 4:45 p.m. in the Scott Heyman Conference Room.

**Additions to the Agenda**

There were no additions to the agenda.

**Deletions from the Agenda**

There were no deletions from the agenda.

**Youth Services**

Ms. Zahler also noted that Ms. Pantalia from the Bridges program would be in attendance to review that particular program.

**Resolution No. - Adoption Of The 2008-2012 Intermunicipal Recreation Partnership Agreement**

Ms. Zahler said the amendments are a result of review by the municipal partners. At this time Ms. Johnson reviewed the amendments made to the Recreation Partnership Agreement that occurred subsequent to the initial resolution and agreement presented to the Committee on July 18, 2007. She said that one item of note was that the agreement indicates: "Each municipal board shall accept or reject their respective share of the municipal contribution by the third

Tuesday in November". It was noted that this amendment was made to insure each municipal board voted and notified the Recreation Partnership of their vote. Ms. Robertson questioned the language as it did not note what steps occur in the event the funding was rejected. It was noted that the Recreation Partnership has been notified verbally in prior years of the level of funding approved. This clause is to set a timeframe so that the Partnership can then work on its budget according to the approved funding level. Another amendment was to include the ability of the Youth Services Director to sign agreements on behalf of the County. Ms. Zahler said Mr. Barber had requested that the Recreation Partnership Board be allowed to do so, however, the County Attorney indicated it must be a County representative. Mr. Barber accepted the County Attorney ruling. Overall, Ms. Zahler noted it puts in writing procedures that have consistently been taken. The other amendments to the agreement were reviewed and the members did not have any specific concerns with them.

Ms. Zahler said that at the Recreation Partnership meeting the sentiment expressed by some Health and Human Services Committee members, specifically reduction of funding, at the July 18, 2007 Committee meeting, was shared. Mr. Dietrich, in his capacity as a Recreation Partnership member, said that collectively there was an agreement that the Partnership is still fragile and needs a longer period to become independent from the County funding. He said the Recreation Partnership is unique in the County and is something he would strongly encourage to continue. He said that Ms. Zahler and Ms. Johnson have put forth a tremendous effort that keeps the towns talking and agreeing with each other. While he can appreciate and understand the reasoning in wanting to reduce funding over a period of time he feels it is premature. He said it should be a few more years to find ways to secure the baseline and then take steps to reduce funding. Mr. Frongillo agreed with Mr. Dietrich's statements. He said there is work that needs to be done regarding a 501c3 and working with school districts. Once the Board has reached this point it would be more secure. Mr. Dietrich spoke of the need to undertake fundraising activities to provide funding other than tax dollars. He believes that the Recreation Partnership Board is looking at alternatives for funding.

Mr. Koplinka-Loehr asked what Mr. Dietrich predicts if the timeframe were extended five years. Mr. Dietrich said he did not believe there was a great deal of discussion at the present regarding future funding sources, rather, the discussion was how to respond in this particular year. He said personally, he would make a hard commitment of finding another source of funds outside of tax dollars. He sees the Recreation Partnership should and will find other sources to solidify base funding in some other manner.

Mr. Koplinka-Loehr asked if it would be appropriate to include in the resolution a clause indicating that County funding be contingent on expedited measures for 501c3 status, fund raising operations begin and partnerships with municipalities and school districts occur. Mr. Frongillo indicated that the Recreation Partnership Board has not had discussions regarding this topic. Mr. Koplinka-Loehr asked Mr. Shinagawa if such an amendment would be appropriate and was informed that although it would be appropriate, Mr. Shinagawa felt not at this particular meeting. Ms. Johnson said 501c3 status has not been discussed by the Recreation Partnership Board and that school partnership discussions have occurred with regard to the Ithaca School District only. She does not believe it would be possible with all school districts. Mr. Shinagawa indicated the inclusion of such an amendment would be to provide a sense of the Legislature that such discussions should occur.

Ms. Zahler said a stipulation such as suggested by Mr. Koplinka-Loehr could be made if desired, however, she said another possibility is that the two County representatives on the Recreation Partnership Board could recommend the items at the time the work plan for the next year is developed. She noted that it would require other municipal partners' approval to have the items included within the work plan.

Ms. Robertson said she does not believe that 501c3 status will resolve funding issues, and that fundraising cannot be done without associated expenses. She believed it is sometimes difficult for the Recreation Partnership Board to have a quorum, and it would be difficult to ad the needed assistance for a fundraising committee. Ms. Robertson unless funding would allow for staff to do fundraising efforts it is unrealistic to think these efforts would be successful or sustainable. She personally believes that municipalities should advocate for sharing the burden and sharing the wealth.

Ms. Robertson offered two other suggestions to clarify membership within the Agreement. She also was provided clarification on the clause regarding non-renewal that would provide planning by the Recreation Partnership Board at the end of the agreement period.

#### Budget Issues – Bridges Program

Ms. Zahler indicated she has submitted an over-target request regarding the Budes Program that would provide for an Assistant Director for the Bridges Program. It was explained this program is at the very beginning of the runaway and homeless youth services continuum, looking at youth who have connections at home; it is the linchpin of the most preventative efforts.

Ms. Pantalia reported many of the referrals received are from the Probation Department and Department of Social Services (DSS), often from the Preventive Services division of DSS, and involves youth with a history of running away or is currently running away and being brought back home by police officers. She said the goal is to try to keep the family together. The program works with the youth and family members to determine the conflict, the cause for the situations that make the youth run away from home, and developing a form of contracting, trauma-based therapies, aggression replacement training, etc. In addition, efforts are made to talk about things the youth could do to reduce anger and improve their social skills. An assessment is completed by youth and a program curriculum is developed based on the need. Following these steps a moral-reasoning piece is completed, presenting a morale dilemma to the youth and talking about how they could advance in their stage of moral development and think more critically in a similar situation. Ms. Pantalia shared communication from families that have gone through the process, noting while it may not remove all the difficulties it provides for improvement in the situations. These services are for youth between 12 to 21 years old, with the majority 13 to 16 years old. The older youth are attempting to find how to get a job and become independent and are often referred to the Learning Web.

Ms. Zahler said that because the program has 24/hr. per day/7 day per week access, Ms. Pantalia is presently attempting to cover the crisis backup as well her regular job functions, with assistance from the Binghamton office. She explained that the new assistant would provide relief from the 24/7 requirement as well as alleviate the backup list of youth waiting to be served, which at the present time is 12. It was noted that during an average year 80 to 100 youth are served, with 75 percent referrals.

#### Workforce Development/Department of Social Services

Ms. Carey provided a background of the youth employment program, noting that for the past 4-5 years the Youth Employment Services came in and was earmarked for Temporary Assistance to Needy

Families (TANF) youth, however there appeared to be a disconnect in outreach. Now, at the beginning of the year when money is received, a mass mailing is completed to every case where there is a youth between the ages of 14 to 18. The mailing includes a flyer from Workforce Development providing encouragement to sign up the children into the summer youth program. Ms. Carey said they are making sure they are specifically targeting TANF and Foster Care children. She noted that the foster care children previously were often not included as they were thought not to be “work-ready”.

Ms. Mattick provided a newsletter regarding the summer youth program. She said there are predominantly two programs, one is the TANF summer youth program for summer jobs and educational experience, and the other is for educational experience only. A request for proposals is completed for both programs each year. The TANF summer program has two operators, the Office of Employment and Training and the City of Ithaca Youth Bureau. Approximately \$280,000 was received from the State TANF funds, and Ms. Carey decides the distribution of the funding in order to meet the requirements of DSS. Ms. Carey noted the department has the ability to keep funding and do the work in-house, or contract it out if desired. Since a strong partnership exists with Workforce Development, she has contracted the work through Ms. Mattick’s department and will continue to do so.

Ms. Mattick said spoke highly of the program and said that it provides work experience as well as offering educational opportunities. The primary participants of the summer work program are between the ages of 14 to 16, and as of July 30<sup>th</sup>, 163 youth participated, with seventy percent receiving some form of assistance. She noted that they reach a broad group of youth through the mailing and assist families that receive cash assistance at or below two hundred percent of the poverty level (for a family of four it is just above \$41,000).

Ms. Mattick reviewed the program that was a partnership with Groton Central School. A teacher was hired in the capacity of a crew chief/counselor and worked with youth on a new trail for the school district. They are also working on a composting program. Ms. Mattick reviewed the many educational opportunities available to the participants of the summer employment programs, including workshops that review various areas. She spoke of the Workforce Investment program that is providing over \$300,000 for longer-term employment. It is targeted toward older youth up to 22 years old and will provide education, sometimes with GED program, as well as employment. The program creates opportunities for youth to practice the experiences in a sheltered environment and become successful.

Ms. Mattick said the Workforce Investment Act Youth Program is a major collaboration with the Youth Services Department and Youth Bureau. The Office of Employment and Training subcontracts to complete the outreach, intake, and evaluation component that is helpful to bring in youth meeting the criteria. Ms. Carey spoke of her having to sign on the paperwork for the programs that ensures that she is reaching the eligible target group. Ms. Zook said there is a natural link between TANF and JobLink, which has a significantly lower income eligibility level for the year-round program. The funding for the longer-term jobs have specific requirements to receive funding and consequently municipalities attempt to fill positions with less restrictive positions. Ms. Carey also spoke of attempting to find appropriate services for youth and children just above the poverty level as well.

A brief discussion occurred regarding the content of the particular flyer shared with the Committee. Ms. Robertson said it might be less overwhelming to a youth to have them call and then explain the process required; the lengthy list of required items on the flyer may cause a youth to think it is not possible to obtain the necessary items. Ms. Mattick and Ms. Carey spoke of requesting client comments in various venues for advice on how to streamline the form.

Mr. Whicher congratulated Ms. Carey and Ms. Mattick on the integration that has occurred between the departments and the constituent value received. Ms. Zahler spoke of the Youth Employment

Services meetings in spring when numerous participants review information to enable the highest participation levels possible for youth in the County.

Ms. Carey then spoke of what employment strategies are taking place for their adult population. She said that her department has been undertaking evaluations of the programs and has developed a pilot program for client referral to Workforce Development for on the job training to assist in a more permanent placement. This is possible by working with employers and subsidizing the client's salary during the training process. The purpose of the training is to help individuals and families who are receiving cash assistance obtain the skills necessary to progress to an employment level that would be self-sustaining.

### **Department of Social Services**

Ms. Carey said she would prefer to table the discussion of the 2008 budget concerns until all members are in attendance. Doing so would provide additional time for Mr. Herden to analyze the information in more detail as it was just received, and he will be prepared to answer questions at the next meeting.

### **Work Participation Rate Update**

In response to an inquiry by Ms. Robertson, Ms. Carey said that although the work participation rate fluctuates on a regular basis, that the County is in better shape than others. Ms. Carey said Commissioners met with David A. Hansell, Commissioner of the New York State Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance (OTDA), who indicated that he did not believe any sanctions would occur for at least a three-year period. She said that the officials believe there is a loophole that will allow them to bypass the next year without being sanctioned. In addition, Mr. Hansell said there is perhaps only one state in the union that would meet the participation rate and consequently requests are being made to amend this requirement. There has not been any commitment regarding when or how a sanction would occur. Ms. Carey said the rate has increased due to strategies undertaken, however, it can be influenced a great deal by just a few participants not meeting the standards. At the present time there are approximately 61 individuals meeting the standard.

### **Office for the Aging**

#### **Budget Adjustments**

It was MOVED by Mr. Koplinka-Loehr, seconded by Ms. Robertson, and unanimously adopted by voice vote by members present, to approve the following budget adjustments:

| <u>Revenue Acct</u> | <u>Title</u>  | <u>Amt</u> | <u>Approp Acct</u> | <u>Title(s)</u> |
|---------------------|---------------|------------|--------------------|-----------------|
| 6793.43803          | State Revenue | \$7,650    | 6793.54491         | Subcontract     |
| 6793.43803          | State Revenue | \$2,770    | 6793.551000559     | Salary          |
| 6793.43803          | State Revenue | \$1,080    | 6793.58800         | Fringes         |

Explanation: Revenue Increase in HIICAP Program.

| <u>Revenue Acct</u> | <u>Title</u>                | <u>Amt</u> | <u>Approp Acct</u> | <u>Title(s)</u> |
|---------------------|-----------------------------|------------|--------------------|-----------------|
| 6794.42770          | Other Miscellaneous Revenue | \$16,509   | 6794.43803         | Subcontract     |

Explanation: Mistakenly posted to wrong account for Adults with Developmental Disabilities Program

#### **Budget Update**

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Ms. Holmes reported that an anticipated grant to provide for home repairs in the amount of \$40,000 was not received. She will be having an exit interview and at that time will be informed why it was not funded. She is reworking her budget to request rollover funds to be used for senior home repairs to make up for this shortfall.

**Minutes of July 18 and August 1, 2007**

It was MOVED by Mr. Koplinka-Loehr, seconded by Ms. Robertson, and unanimously adopted by voice vote by members present, to approve the minutes of July 18, and August 1, 2007.

**Adjournment**

On motion the meeting adjourned at 4:20 p.m.

*Respectfully submitted by Karen Fuller, Deputy Clerk*