

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

Approved 10/1/08

Present: F. Proto, Chairman, M. Robertson, C. Chock
Excused: T. Randall, N. Shinagawa
Staff: L. Holmes, Office for the Aging; R. DeLuca, B. Doling, Mental Health; K. Schlather, Human Services Coalition; K. Schlather, Cornell Cooperative Extension; A. Cole, S. Connors, B. Grinnell-Crosby, T. Schiele, T. Lyczko, S. Dunlop, Health Department; N. Jayne, Administration; N. Zahler Youth Services; K. Fuller, Deputy Clerk
Guests: Christine Sanchirico, Cecilia Vargas, Catholic Charities

Call to Order

Chairman Proto called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m.

Additions/Changes to the Agenda

The Committee was provided two budget transfers not requiring action presented from the Office for the Aging.

Withdrawal from Agenda

There were no withdrawals from the agenda

Approval of the Minutes of August 6, 2008

It was MOVED by Ms. Robertson, seconded by Ms. Chock, to accept the minutes of August 6, 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 had asked department heads and the Human Services Coalition to provide information regarding the \$540 million State budget cuts as it related to their departments/agencies. Mr. Whicher had also asked to be provided with the information as well and it should be available at the Expanded Budget meeting.

Mr. Proto recommended the Committee hold a special meeting to review the 2009 budget requests for the departments/agencies coming under this committee. Following discussion it was decided to hold a special Health and Human Services Committee meeting on Wednesday, September 17th at 3:00 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Mr. Proto briefly discussed Tompkins Consolidated Area Transit (TCAT) and the need for all municipalities who desire routes to become involved. He noted the requests for increased routes are items that should require all parties to pay proportionate amounts. Ms. Chock suggested the formulas determined for the Recreation Partnership or other joint ventures could be used as a model to determine participation rates. Ms. Robertson mentioned that of the Tompkins County Council of Governments is also determining formulas for animal control.

Ms. Robertson said human service cuts are very different than cuts in other services due to the varied manner in which they may be done (change in formula, eligibility, cost-sharing ratios, etc.). She would like to have an understanding of the funding reductions as they would ultimately apply to departments and agencies.

Review of Additional Budget Information

Administration Report

Ms. Jayne reported that a review of information received to date indicates approximately \$120,000 in potential aid reductions for the Health Department, Youth Services, and Office for the Aging as a result of the State budget cuts. To date information regarding Mental Health has not been received.

Mental Health

Mr. DeLuca said information he has received indicates a \$10 million reduction Statewide but the exact cuts for Tompkins County are unknown. The Statewide figures for programs that would be affected by the total is a \$1.638 million reduction in mental health, \$4.2 million for alcohol and substance abuse, and \$4.2 million for developmental disabilities. He is not overly concerned about the impact to the County itself but is concerned regarding sheltered workshops, such as Challenge Industries. They have already absorbed approximately \$60,000 in the last reduction and they would be impacted by the further reductions, although it is unknown to what extent.

Human Services Coalition

Ms. Schlather reported that one agency, Better Housing of Tompkins County, has reported an approximate \$30,000 loss of aid and she believes Ithaca Neighborhood Housing Services is most likely going to experience a reduction as well. Normally two grants were awarded each year for various municipalities and last year only one was awarded; this year they did not receive approval of any grants. She reported that reductions within the County could affect agencies that hold contracts, but it is not known at this time. Ms. Schlather will inform Committee members as she receives additional information.

Office for the Aging

Ms. Holmes reported her department is attempting to confirm the full extent of reductions and at this time assumes it to be at least a six percent reduction.

Report of New York State Association of Counties (NYSAC) Meeting

Ms. Jayne spoke of her attendance at a NYSAC meeting held in Chemung County where it was reported they are lobbying to attempt to direct the cuts rather making across-the-board budget reductions. NYSAC is seeking ideas to offer to the State such as consolidation of departments at the State level. Any member of the Legislature or staff who desires to offer suggestions should contact NYSAC. Ms. Robertson spoke of the tax increase for those with higher wages that occurred several years ago; she noted it did not have a negative effect. Mr. Proto spoke of a recent article in *The Ithaca Journal* regarding the State purchase of computers in excess of the number of staff with numerous computers mothballed; he spoke of it being a waste of taxpayer monies. Ms. Robertson said Senate Minority Leader Malcolm Smith would be attending a Democratic picnic this month and that she has requested Mr. Smith speak to Legislators. She said if County reimbursements and cost-sharing are cut that it would only be fair to have similar reductions at the State level.

Tompkins Consolidated Area Transit (TCAT)

Mr. Proto said ridership has increased, however TCAT is anticipating a \$20,000 reduction for 2008 and \$30,000 in 2009 due to the change in the formula reimbursement. With the apparent need for additional service it would prove difficult to purchase the necessary vehicles and hire drivers to do so.

Ms. Jayne reported the budget books would be available in the Legislature office.

Human Services Coalition

Agency Updates

Ms. Schlather reported funding has been cut for the 211 Information Referral initiative. The 2007 budget was set at \$600,000 for the entire state, and for 2008 was reduced to \$500,000. As the fiscal year is from September to August, the program will have a small deficit and would be dramatically reduced next year. Locally, the number of calls has doubled over the same period as last year. She spoke of the initiative taking ten years to bring to fruition, which was completed with the assistance of United Way of New York and Office of Children and Family Services. She is hopeful that the funding could be reinstated but are presently looking for contracts with other firms as well. The county received \$100,000 for 2007 and \$80,000 for 2008. Ms. Schlather announced there would be a Cornell Cooperative Extension forum held on September 10th from 8:45 a.m. to 10:15 a.m. to discuss heating and fuel concerns. Tompkins Community Action and Department of Social Services would also be present at the forum that is designed to update a chart utilized regarding heating solutions. The group that initially created the heating solutions chart is planning to start meeting again in light of the current energy market. *Ms. Chock requested Legislators be provided with the chart when completed.* Ms. Schlather said there are no resources at the present time being offered from New York State to alleviate heating concerns.

Update on Immigrant Services

Ms. Sanchirico, Catholic Charities Director, reported the Immigrant Services Program is the result of a request from several agencies working with immigrants which came to Catholic Charities in January 2006 asking the agency to develop a program as only one portion of immigrant services was undertaken at that time. A pilot program was developed and began in 2007 with funding from Ithaca Urban Renewal Agency block grant fund in the amount of \$35,000. This fall a grant in the amount of \$26,000 is anticipated. The funding has allowed part-time funding for the program, however, it was determined that to meet the needs it requires a full-time worker. As a result, the County is being requested to provide financial assistance to continue the program for several more years to enable seeking of additional outside funding.

Ms. Vargas, Immigrant Services worker, spoke to the Committee about the program, noting the type of services provided include employment, translation services, obtaining health insurance, housing, assistance in completing naturalization applications, etc. Many immigrants feel comfortable coming to the agency for assistance and will return for another segment of services. In the course of the last year the number of individuals served has increased from 33 in the first quarter to 257 individuals assisted. Ms. Vargas noted the application for citizen status would cost \$1,500 for a lawyer to assist, a \$650 a filing fee, and no public services may be provided to immigrants without citizenship. The agency assists in the application portion and makes a significant savings to the individual who could require critical medical care and is unable to do so. Ms. Vargas shared information on an immigrant who could not receive a necessary kidney transplant until citizenship was received.

Ms. Chock inquired how many of the 257 immigrants provided assistance have integrated into the community. Ms. Vargas indicated that although not specifically tracked she has seen that they are stable; if they are helped into housing they have a tendency to stay for many years, and the same is true regarding employment. Mr. Proto said a measurement of success of the program should be developed.

Ms. Robertson inquired about temporary immigrants and whether they are primarily from the college population, and if so is it an area to seek funding from the colleges. Ms. Vargas said although occasionally individuals are from Cornell University, clients are often employees of the university who are unfamiliar with benefits to which they may be entitled.

Ms. Schlather said Catholic Charities provided a presentation to the Human Services Coalition funding committee which was very helpful; an item not yet noted is that many agencies were having immigrants seek assistance and having the services consolidated at Catholic Charities is very beneficial so

other agencies can send individuals to one program. The review committee was able to fund them for one year through City funding for 2009.

Ms. Chock inquired whether there is any religious affiliation associated with the programs. She was informed that although there is the name attached, there is no connection with any segment of the church other than renting from Immaculate Conception for space to operate. It is totally non-religious.

Office for the Aging

Resolution

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

RESOLUTION NO. — APPROPRIATION FROM CONTINGENT FUND — TERMINAL PAY — OFFICE FOR THE AGING

WHEREAS, the Office for the Aging had an Outreach Worker resign effective August 15, 2008, and

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

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

FROM:	A1990.54440	Contingent Fund	\$2,776.66
TO:	A6796.5100517	Outreach Worker	\$2,776.66

SEQR ACTION: TYPE II-20

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Additional Budget Information

Ms. Holmes reported on preliminary information received at this time regarding the final funding cuts are more than originally estimated. There will be a reduction of \$32,223 for the remainder of 2008. Out of those cuts, \$8,700 would be one-time member-item funding and the Restore funding for housing; with an ongoing budget cut of \$23,500 in the base budget submitted to the County Administrator. Programs that would be affected include: SNAP (Foodnet) - \$9,060, EISEP - \$7,300 (Expanded In-Home Services for the Elderly – hours of service available), Community Services to the Elderly - \$3,000, Long Term Care Insurance Education Outreach - \$2,600, HIICAP - \$870, and Transportation (Gadabout) \$355.

Mr. Proto inquired how the reduction would affect Foodnet and was informed by Ms. Holmes that Mr. Griffin, Director of Foodnet, would have to review his budget; the funds are operational costs and they have already absorbed additional costs for food and gas.

The \$7,300 would be a reduction in hours available for aide services.

Lakeside Nursing and Rehabilitation

At this time there is nothing known of potential concerns. At an Aging Services meeting on Friday, September 5th Mr. Deptula of Lakeside will be speaking and could advise Ms. Holmes of any updated information.

Lifelong/Office for the Aging Co-Occupancy

Ms. Chock inquired if there is any information on what the affect of the resolution of intent passed on September 2nd has had for Lifelong. Ms. Holmes has spoken to Mr. Hawley, Director, and was informed it gives Lifelong assurance of the County's intent and at this time it is up to Lifelong to

determine what happens next. Their capital campaign consultants would be meeting with the Lifelong Board and provide information later this month; they should have information to make a determination of whether they could move forward. Ms. Chock noted her concern was whether the resolution had more detail than Lifelong desired or expected. Ms. Holmes said Lifelong had reviewed and approved the resolution prior to presentation to the Committee and Legislature.

Budget Transfers

The Committee had no questions on the budget transfers provided for review.

Health Department

Health Promotion Program

Ms. Lyczko provided an overview of the Health Promotion Program (HPP), noting it is their responsibility as set forth by the federal government: “Inform, educate, and empower people about health issues.” The HPP provides accurate information and encourages a healthy community where people are informed about their health and safety in order to reduce their risk of debilitating and deadly chronic disease, the tragedy of unintentional injury, and the social and financial burdens these events place on individuals, families, and the community at large. To facilitate this goal HPP implements community outreach and education strategies with other agencies and divisions within the Health Department.

Ms. Lyczko provided members with a “portion plate” that shows the appropriate size of servings of the necessary foods for a healthy meal. She also shared information on various other programs such as the Step-Up Program, Tobacco Cessation Program, New York State Quit Line, etc., and the work completed by Mr. Schiele, Evaluator/Planner and Tobacco Free Coordinator, and Ms. Dunlop, Community Health Nurse.

In addition to the various duties, including updating of the Health Department website, which receives the most hits of any Tompkins County page, Ms. Lyczko acts as the public information officer for the Health Department, emergency planning, and various ways to support the community. She spoke of Ms. Dunlop’s working with residents regarding various programs that are available as well as Health Department Community Health nurses. Mr. Schiele’s responsibilities are linked to the tobacco-free programs as well as web design.

HPP is also responsible for producing the county's Community Health Assessment (CHA). Article 6 of the New York State Public Health Law describes the system for planning and funding local public health services, and stipulates that counties produce a CHA. The CHA provides a detailed look at the county's socio-economic and health profile. It gives planners a means to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the county's health care system, the health needs of its residents, and the underlying causes that may contribute to those needs.

With regard to the over-target requests, she noted one is the Community Health Nurse position. If it is not funded the decrease could be within her division; she stressed the importance of the work done by Ms. Dunlop.

Mr. Schiele and Ms. Dunlop spoke of the amount of work done by the three individuals in this division, noting they assist many areas of public health throughout the county.

Vehicle Purchase Proposal/Budget Adjustment

Ms. Grinnell-Crosby informed the Committee the proposal and budget adjustment would permit the department to purchase five vehicles this year, and it is expected to replace five more in 2009.

Originally the department was approved to purchase hybrid vehicles, however, the state contract expired. The vehicles being purchased are Ford Focus, and the Green Fleet review indicated the emissions exceed that of the initial hybrid approval. A discussion followed during which it was noted that the department has a fleet of 30-35 vehicles, and experience has proven the optimum return for trade-in is approximately six years. Ms. Grinnel-Crosby has received approval of both Green Fleet Committee and County Administration to utilize funding set aside for reduced emission vehicles.

Ms. Robertson noted it is difficult to understand the information presented on the Green Fleet Budget Allocation Request Form

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

Health Department

Revenue Acct	Title	Amt	Approp Acct	Title(s)
4090.42665	Sale of Equipment	\$11,308	4090.52310	Vehicles

Explanation: Sale of 2005 Jeep Liberty and purchase of 2009 Ford Focus to improve fuel consumption and reduce carbon emissions. Funds will offset new purchase.

Tanning Salons

Ms. Robertson spoke of the increase in tanning salons across the county and expressed her concern regarding health implications. Ms. Cole said the State is presently looking into regulating this type of facility.

Youth Services

Tompkins County Student Survey Update

Ms. Zahler referenced last month's report from Kris Bennett on the collaboration with TST BOCES and local school districts, with the exception of Newfield, to undertake a survey of students in grades six through twelve in October regarding drug and alcohol use. Since that report, she has continued discussions with New York State Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services who had begun an independent survey of students statewide. County staff has worked closely with the organizers in Albany and as a result the survey was amended to meet the needs of Tompkins County and other communities. As a result of working with OASAS, instead of being able to survey only three districts, the State has agreed to utilize their budget to provide a survey of all interested school districts for students in grades 7-12, which provides a significant savings in completing the surveys. In addition, the department has been working with the national vendor preparing the survey and as a result of discussions will have additional services provided to communities in New York State. She expressed appreciation to TST BOCES personnel for their assistance in the collaboration. Ms. Zahler reported the survey would be given during the last two weeks of October, with the preliminary results in December. Statewide comparisons of the schools would occur in May 2009. The survey will provide information about substance use and abuse as well as provide information to assist in determining what is required to meet the need of youth. It will address both home and community life.

In response to the questions regarding Newfield's participation Ms. Zahler said she has not had a positive response regarding participation, however, hopes it could still occur.

Community Coalition for Healthy Youth

Ms. Zahler reported that as a result of previous surveys indicating a perception that it is acceptable to allow underage youth to drink with parental permission, particularly young, white males, a series of billboards would be highlighting the need to not provide alcohol, but time to youth. [It was noted that Legislator Sigler had disclosed he is an employee of the company that is contracted for the

September 3, 2008
Health and Human Services Committee

billboards]. The first would be erected in the Town of Caroline on September 25th, with additional billboards to be erected in Newfield, by the Shops at Ithaca Mall on North Triphammer, by Ithaca College, and on Route 96 by Perry City Road. Ms. Chock asked if there is a distinction between providing alcohol to your child and providing them a small portion to teach responsibility. Ms. Zahler said not in this campaign; she said it is designed to counteract a perception that it is appropriate. She noted it is a myth that there is not a less alcoholism in European countries where families drink together. The individuals appearing in the advertisement are local. Ms. Zahler asked members of the Committee to participate in a five-minute survey for adults. She also noted subsequent to the billboard advertising she would be having follow-up surveys.

Budget Updates

Ms. Zahler said she is not certain what the State Office of Family and Children's Services cuts would be like. She is attempting to get information from the State and will be speaking with Mr. Whicher to determine whether to fulfill contracts or if they would require amendment. As the State legislature cut six percent across the board it would represent approximately a two percent reduction of overall funding as the State revenue is approximately one-third of their budget.

Updated Information

Ms. Zahler provided the Committee with corrected handouts of youth served by municipalities, showing unduplicated counts of youth participants by municipalities.

Adjournment

On motion the meeting adjourned at 5:04 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Karen Fuller, Deputy Clerk