

**HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE  
MINUTES  
SEPTEMBER 5, 2007 – 3:00 P.M.  
SCOTT HEYMAN CONFERENCE ROOM**

Present: N. Shinagawa, Chair, M. Robertson, M. Koplinka-Loehr, F. Proto, M. Sigler  
Staff: P. Carey, T. Herden, Department of Social Services; L. Holmes, Office for the Aging; S. Whicher, County Administrator; R. DeLuca, Mental Health; A. Cole, B. Crosby, S. Conners, M. GatchHealth Department; M. Lynch, Public Information Officer; K. Fuller, Deputy Clerk

**Call to Order**

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

**Chair's Report**

Mr. Shinagawa did not have a report.

**Additions to the Agenda**

There were no additions to the agenda.

**Deletions from the Agenda**

There were no deletions from the agenda.

**Mental Health**

**Single-Room Occupancy Update**

Mr. DeLuca reported the groundbreaking for the Single-Room Occupancy building project will occur at noon on September 17<sup>th</sup> at the location between Third and Fourth Streets. The property formerly owned by Ithaca Housing Authority had unoccupied dwellings that have been removed; it is hoped to begin construction in late September. Funding for this project was the result of tax credits from the Office of Mental Health and Housing and Urban Development. It is hoped that the project will be completed next year.

**2008 Budget Overview**

Mr. DeLuca reported there are six over target requests from his department for the 2008 Budget:

- Maintenance of Effort for one Forensic Counselor – works between Family Drug Court, City Drug Court, as well as Alternatives to Incarceration and the Doors Domestic Violence Program. Mr. DeLuca indicated the work is critical for the County. He would like to see this as target funding and noted the same individual has held the position since 2002. In response to a question, he said that this is the first year a multi-year request has come forward for local dollars. Although there is some revenue generated it is not a significant amount. In addition, it was noted that the Mental Health Department does not have rollover funds available to them like other departments in the County. Mr. DeLuca said the Department absorbed the work previously contracted by the DOORS program around 2002. At that time the County cost was \$34,000; if it were contracted out today the cost would be approximately \$38,000.
- Multi-Year Request for Polygraph Fund for SOAR Program – the request would cover the expense of court-ordered polygraphs which are not covered through Medicaid or third-party

insurance. The tests are more reliable than self-reporting and cost approximately \$300 each. These tests would be contracted out.

- Forensic program supplies (bullet proof vests, GPS, snow tires, testing materials) – requested to bring this particular area of the Mental Health Department up to date and in part safety issues.
- Technology Upgrades (file server, monitors, off-site connectivity) – this will provide appropriate upgrades for a five-year cycle through 2013).
- Continuing Day Treatment - Phlebotomy Chair, filing cabinets, therapeutic equipment, ceiling fans, vinyl flooring, mini-van – these items are to assist in the operation of this program as well as provide upgrades to some building items. The vehicle will be more energy efficient and provide more comfort for employees driving than the current van that is oversized and in poor condition.

### Office for the Aging

#### Budget Adjustment

It was MOVED by Ms. Robertson, seconded by Mr. Proto, and unanimously adopted by voice vote by members, to approve the following budget adjustment:

<u>Revenue Acct</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Amt</u>	<u>Approp Acct</u>	<u>Title(s)</u>
6777.43803	State Revenue	\$10,000	6787.43803	State Revenue

Explanation: The resolution for this has the wrong account number put on it.

#### Aging Services

Ms. Holmes referred to an article regarding Aging Services in *The Ithaca Journal* and provided members of the Committee a copy of the Upstate New York Regional Review report referenced.

#### 2008 Budget Update

Ms. Holmes reviewed the over target requests for the department, all covered through rollover funding, as noted below:

- Funding for Emergency Health and Safety Related Home Repairs for Low-Income Senior Citizens – this will cover the loss of a \$40,000 grant. A member item request will be made for this program as well.
- Replacement of two delivery vans for Foodnet Meals on Wheels.
- Purchase of 47 New Medical Alert Machines for the Personal Emergency Response System (PERS) Program.
- Printing Costs for Office Publications and Replacement of Office Equipment.
- Purchase of Training Materials for the Caregiver Program.

Ms. Holmes said the over target requests have been recommended for approval by the County Administrator.

Mr. Koplinka-Loehr inquired about the \$10,000 contract with Gadabout. Ms. Holmes said that in 2007 \$5,000 was received for transportation that should have been listed. In 2008 the amount received is doubled and is being passed along to Gadabout. An additional question regarding increases for Women's Opportunity Center, Caregivers, StafKings and all Metro, and Better Housing; Ms. Holmes said the increases are due to State funds received to provide cost of living adjustments. She said the contracts have a clause that stipulates the increases are to be passed to employees for this specific purpose. Mr. Proto asked if the agencies are providing wages above livable wage. Ms. Holmes said she is not certain, that the agencies bill between \$17 and \$21 but it is unclear how much of this amount is paid directly to the worker; she noted contracts request livable wage wherever possible. Mr. Proto asked Ms. Crosby if the Health Department is receiving a cost of living increase as well and was informed that their caregivers are outside of the certified home health agencies.

#### Home Health Aide Staffing

Ms. Holmes reported that at this time a saturation point has been reached with regard to home health aides. She said although there is funding and hours for programs that would provide assistance for additional clients, there are no home health aides available. She is concerned about this situation and has contacted contiguous counties to seek individuals to cover the need, however, it appears that a similar situation is occurring in these other counties as well.

#### Discussion of Recent Article

Mr. Proto spoke briefly about having read an article indicating that some downstate agencies had indicated it had provided training to individuals and provided certification when in fact they had not. He asked about how whether County departments verify certification of aides. Ms. Holmes said the agencies contracted with check the credentials as well as undertaking a Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) check. In addition to this, the Office for the Aging monitors the contacts and review documents in files.

Ms. Carey noted that the consumer-directed aides are a concern as there is not any regulation regarding certification. Ms. Holmes said the State Office for the Aging EISIP program is looking into regulations to provide consumer-directed component that could relieve some of the shortage of aides. Mr. Proto asked if it would be helpful to have educational material available to members of a family who may be in a position of caring for a family member. Ms. Holmes and Ms. Carey indicated there is a lot of material related to this available. Ms. Holmes said Ms. Norton at Social Services does a great deal of work to determine if the consumer directed program is suitable for individuals.

#### Department of Social Services

##### Overview of 2008 Budget

Mr. Herden reported that the 2008 budget would call for an increase in local cost of \$350,000. Eighty-seven percent of the amount is for A Mandates and the balance is B Mandate planning coordination programs. He said the over target requests submitted, with one exception, are requested annually as target increases that have been approved as one-time funding. He indicated that the over target request relating to the Federally mandated Statewide Automated Child Welfare Information System known as CONNECTIONS is requested *not* to be approved in the budget but to be considered as a contingent fund amount. He explained that the State has notified districts of its plans to replace the personal computers local districts are required to use with this system in 2008, and to charge local districts through revenue intercepts. Mr. Herden explained that the Federal government has provided many millions of dollars to the State for implementation of the system, however, due to the States improper implementation the Federal government several months ago declined to fund part of the project. As a result, the State is taking the position that the personal computers are due to replacement and to make up for the funds not provided by the Federal government are looking to make the replacement a local cost, paid for by intercepting revenues presently within the 2008 projected budget. He believes that New York State Association of Counties and the Public Welfare Association are working to amend this decision, however it is not known what the final outcome would be. Mr. Herden said there are also other agencies with the equipment and it is now certain how the State will assess or bill the local districts for this equipment.

Mr. Herden spoke of the Department of Social Services consistently having rollover funds available for budget requests in previous years, however, this year all rollover funds were turned over to the General Fund.

Ms. Carey and Mr. Herden reviewed the over target requests for the department, items of particular interest are noted below:

- Therapeutic Day Treatment Program – this request is to continue the pilot program with the intent to provide more data on its success. Interim information indicates it is saving more funds than initially expected.

- Project Assistants – through the use of project assistants the department has been able to successfully prepare individuals for required examinations.
- Workstation/unit reconfiguration – anticipated as an ongoing item, this will provide the funds to allow better interaction of divisions within the department that work closely together.
- Replacement of two fleet vehicles – this is an ongoing need. Ms. Robertson indicated that the Ithaca Car Share Program (ICSP) could perhaps be reviewed to determine if it is a viable option. Ms. Crosby said that while the ICSP has made presentations she does not believe they are ready for municipal partners. Ms. Carey indicated she would contact other area Department of Social Services to see whether they have a comparable program and if so how it is working.
- Local match for Public Transportation Improvement Program – without the local share it would mean the potential loss of \$1 million in grant funding; it will be known in September whether the grant award will occur.

**RESOLUTION NO. – AUTHORIZING ACCEPTANCE OF NEW YORK STATE AWARD TO PAY FOR ADDITIONAL CHILD PROTECTIVE SERVICES STAFF FOR SIX MONTHS AT NO LOCAL COST – DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES**

It was MOVED by Mr. Proto, seconded by Mr. Koplinka-Loehr, to recommend approval of the following resolution to the full Legislature. Ms. Carey indicated the increase is due to funding provided by the State, the increase is only for the time funds are available. A voice vote on the resolution resulted as follows: Ayes – 5; Noes – 0. RESOLUTION ADOPTED.

WHEREAS, New York State has awarded 100 percent funding to the Department of Social Services to pay for a temporary increase in Child Protective Services (CPS) unit staffing, and

WHEREAS, the State-approved plan for these funds combines two elements: creation of a temporary (6-month) Senior Caseworker position and, for the same 6-month period, allowing existing CPS staff to receive paid compensation (as opposed to compensatory time) when caseload demands require them to put in more than their standard 35-hour work week; now therefore be it

RESOLVED, on recommendation of the Health and Human Services and the Budget and Capital Committees, That effective September 1, 2007 a new, full-time position (35-hour) in the Senior Caseworker title be created in the Department of Social Services, which position is to sunset on March 31, 2008,

RESOLVED, further, That the Director of Finance is authorized to make the following pro-rated 2007 budget adjustments to reflect both the additional spending authority and the 100 percent offsetting state reimbursement identified above:

REVENUE:	A6010.43610	State – DSS Admin	\$25,292
APPROPRIATION:	A6010.51000.795	Salary – Family Services Coordinator	\$5,158
	A6010.51000.581	Salary – Senior Caseworker	\$13,038
	A6010.58800	Fringes	\$7,096

**SEQR ACTION: TYPE II-20**

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Medicaid Local Share Payment Option

Ms. Carey called attention to the memorandum that clarifies the department's position regarding the Medicaid Local Share Payment Option.

Health Department

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

It as MOVED by Mr. Koplinka-Loehr, seconded by Mr. Proto, and unanimously approved by voice vote of members, to recommend approval of the following resolution. RESOLUTION APPROVED.

WHEREAS, the Health Department had a Senior Clerk retire effective June 30, 2007, 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 the 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	\$8,758
TO:	A4012.51000518	Senior Clerk	\$6,301
	A4012.58800	Fringes	\$2,457

**SEQR ACTION:** TYPE II-20

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Presentation – Telehealth and Pay for Performance

Ms. Connors introduced Ms. Gatch, the Direct Care Supervisor for the Home Health program. She then provided a brief history of the services provided and then gave an oral presentation regarding a proposed new initiative, Telehealth, an electronic transmission of medical information from the patient's home to the office of the Health Department. This new system would allow clients to connect to the monitor a variety of standard medical information in real-time or during office hours, through the use of the electronic device with either a wireless Bluetooth<sup>®</sup> or hard connection, thus saving staff time going to a clients home if there is a concern as well as eliminating unplanned nurse or physician visits as well as potential trips to the emergency room. She stated that if desired, there is a model that provides a camera for additional monitoring purposes. Ms. Connors indicated this system would be extremely helpful in the event of a client who has to undergo quarantine. The office would have a central personal computer unit that receives and logs the data, thus providing a record for the department as well as the patient with the use of a password. Not only would these systems help provide additional monitoring for clients with unstable conditions, but would provide increased access to patients in rural areas as well. The cost would be approximately \$75 per month, compared to an emergency room visit of \$1,200. Ms. Connor said there are Federal and State grants for capital funds for the initiative.

Ms. Connors explained the start-up cost for the initiative would include five monitors and Bluetooth<sup>®</sup> hardware, at a cost of \$25,000 to \$35,000. Additionally, dedicated nursing time to monitor the system as well as a dedicated telephone line, and it would need to determined what staff would provide the installation and necessary periodic cleansing of equipment. She said that some concern has been expressed that the Telehealth system would replace nurse visits, however, she believes that there is nothing that could substitute the one-on-one relationship with caregivers in the home.

Ms. Connors noted that sometimes the Telehealth monitoring is medically ordered and experience has shown that some clients are upset when the systems are removed from homes. Ms. Connors stated the Department would start slow and that the systems would be used for chronic patients and she does not believe it would require more than fifteen units.

Ms. Connors said the Federal government is strongly encouraging initiatives such as this.

Ms. Connors spoke of the Pay for Performance Program, developed as part of the 2005 deficit Reduction Act, which included the need to have systems to improve the quality of Medicare funded homecare services. She indicated that this program provides financial incentives for agencies based upon standardized data of home care, through the required transmission of data to the State. Through the use of this data a determination is made regarding the level of quality care home care patients receive. Agencies

doing the care well or have shown improvement receive financial rewards. She indicated that the program requirements are to be budget neutral, therefore, funds are taken from poor-performing agencies and provided to those agencies who have shown the ability to be effective. She said another aspect is that they want the information of agency performance to be easy to obtain and therefore it is available on the internet. A demonstration of this project is underway and may start in 2008 or 2009. The Department has signed up to participate in the program. She noted that the data presently used is for 2003.

In response to questions, it was noted that the Telehealth system is not anticipated to increase emergency visits in the event the client requires assistance; a nurse would be sent to the location.

#### Universal Service Fund Eligibility Question

Mr. Proto stated it could be worthwhile to see if the Telehealth systems could possibly be funded in part or whole through the Universal Service Fund, particularly the rural health option.

#### Minutes of August 15 and 21, 2007

It was MOVED by Mr. Koplinka-Loehr, seconded by Mr. Sigler, and unanimously adopted by voice vote by members present, to approve the minutes of August 15 and 21, 2007.

#### Homeless Task Force

Ms. Robertson reported that several years ago the Learning Web assisted in undertaking a survey by independent youth (homeless youth). Ms. Powers at Cornell University spoke of how the youth had completed the survey on their own. This survey has been undertaken again and the questions revised as a result of areas thought to be lacking in the original survey. Twenty-one young people accomplished the task of obtaining the surveys and were able to have 204 answered by individuals under the age of 25 during March 2007. Approximately one-half were under twenty-one years of age, many of whom were teen pregnancies. The final report is being compiled and should be available shortly.

#### Adjournment

On motion the meeting adjourned at 4:30 p.m.

*Respectfully submitted by Karen Fuller, Deputy Clerk*