

**HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE  
MINUTES  
OCTOBER 1, 2008 – 3:00 P.M.  
SCOTT HEYMAN CONFERENCE ROOM**

Approved 11/5/08
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Present: F. Proto, Chairman, M. Robertson, C. Chock, N. Shinagawa  
Excused: T. Randall  
Staff: L. Holmes, Office for the Aging; R. DeLuca, Mental Health; S. Connors, B. Grinnell-Crosby, A Smith, Health Department; S. Martel-Moore, Human Rights Commission; N. Burston, Human Rights Coalition; N. Zahler, Youth Services; K. Fuller, Deputy Clerk

**Call to Order**

Chairman Proto called the meeting to order at 3:01 p.m.

**Approval of Minutes of September 3, 2008**

It was MOVED by Ms. Robertson, seconded by Ms. Chock, and unanimously approved by voice vote by members present, to approve the minutes of September 3, 2008, as amended.

**Changes to the Agenda**

**Health Department**

The grant application for the Health Promotion Program – Community Partnerships for Tobacco Control Grant was withdrawn until November 2008; the introduction of the new WIC Director was substituted for this item.

**Office for the Aging**

The resolution entitled Acceptance of Grant of Legislative Initiative Grant for Personal Emergency Response Systems (PERS) Machines was withdrawn.

**Chair's Report**

Mr. Proto said there were compliments received regarding the special meeting held to discuss budget items for the department/division the Committee is responsible for.

**Health Department**

**Introduction of WIC Director**

Ms. Grinnell Crosby introduced Andrea Smith, the newly hired WIC Director. Ms. Smith has been a member of the WIC staff and stated she is enjoying her new responsibilities.

Members of the Committee were provided a revised listing of approved food items through the WIC programs. These new items take into account current dietary standards.

**Resolutions**

It was MOVED by Ms. Robertson, seconded by Mr. Shinagawa, to recommend adoption of the following resolution to the full Legislature. Ms. Connors explained the grant award came about as a result of a sudden increase in the number of cases of syphilis. This will allow advertisement and web site design to increase awareness of syphilis and other sexually transmitted diseases. The web design would be hosted primarily at Cornell University but is standalone and will appear on Cornell University, Planned Parenthood, and the Department of Health sites as a link. It was noted that when there are outbreaks all schools, including local districts receive notification to increase awareness and assist in education.

A voice vote resulted as follows: Ayes – 4; Noes – 0; Excused – 1 (Legislator Randall).  
RESOLUTION APPROVED.

**RESOLUTION NO. - AUTHORIZATION TO ACCEPT GRANT FUNDS, EXECUTE AGREEMENTS AND BUDGET ADJUSTMENT – SYPHILIS ELIMINATION GRANT – HEALTH DEPARTMENT**

WHEREAS, the New York State Department of Health Bureau of Sexually Transmitted Disease (STD) Control has awarded the Health Department \$15,000 to increase awareness of syphilis and other STD's in Tompkins County through community-based education and through building the skills/knowledge base of local health practitioners and to increase syphilis and other STD screening, testing, and treatment of at-risk individuals in Tompkins County, and

WHEREAS, the grant objectives include, building a coalition of community partners, conducting an ongoing community education campaign and creating and maintaining a dedicated STD website, and

WHEREAS, the Health Department will contract with a community partner for development, implementation and maintenance of the website, and

WHEREAS, the Health Department will receive \$15,000 for the period October 1, 2008 through December 31, 2008, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, on recommendation of the Health and Human Services Committee, That the Health Department is authorized to accept said funds,

RESOLVED, further, That the Department is authorized to execute any and all agreements necessary to complete the requirements of the grant,

RESOLVED, further, That the Finance Director is authorized to make the following budget adjustment on his books for the Syphilis Elimination grant:

REVENUE:	A4016.43489	Other State Grants	\$ 15,000
APPROPRIATION:	A4016.54330	Printing	2,000
	.54333	Education and Promotion	9,000
	.54442	Professional Service Fees	4,000

**SEQR ACTION: TYPE II-20**

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Grant Application

The Committee was informed of a State grant application having been made for a tobacco prevention program; it is the largest grant every sought, in the amount of \$235,000 per year for a five-year period. The grant would cover fifty percent of the Health Evaluator salary, one-hundred percent for a new Health Educator position, and twenty percent for an existing staff member. The result would be a reduction of local share being utilized for tobacco programs. If awarded, the work would begin mid-2009.

It was MOVED by Ms. Robertson, seconded by Mr. Shinagawa, and unanimously adopted by voice vote by members present, to recommend adoption of the following resolution by the full Legislature. RESOLUTION APPROVED.

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

WHEREAS, the Health Department had a Community Health Nurse retire effective July 11, 2008, and

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

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RESOLVED, on recommendation of the Health and Human Services and the Expanded 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	\$ 8,806
TO:	A4016.51000580	Community Health Nurse	\$ 6,381
	A4016.58800	Fringes	\$ 2,425

**SEQR ACTION:** TYPE II-20

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Department Plan

Mr. Proto spoke of the Health Department starting the process to review their plan. It was noted that previously it has been a two-year plan, however, it is now being revised to a four-year plan that should prove helpful for budget planning.

Office for the Aging

It was MOVED by Mr. Shinagawa, seconded by Ms. Chock, to recommend adoption of the following resolution to the full Legislature. Ms. Holmes noted previously requests for grants only brought in \$40,000; the application was in the amount of \$50,000, however, the grant award was \$125,000. She noted it is the State's recognition of need to assist seniors and low-income individuals who require emergency repairs as defined by the grant. The department is allowed to charge a five percent administration fee and contracts for the actual repairs. Ms. Holmes stated she works with Ithaca Neighborhood Housing Services as well as Better Housing for Tompkins County. A voice vote on the motion resulted as follows: Ayes – 4; Noes – 0; Excused – 1 (Legislator Randall). RESOLUTION ADOPTED.

**RESOLUTION NO -- ACCEPTANCE OF GRANT FROM NEW YORK STATE HOUSING TRUST FUND CORPORATION FOR RESTORE PROGRAM— OFFICE FOR THE AGING**

WHEREAS, the Tompkins County Office for the Aging assists low-income seniors to make emergency health-and-safety-related repairs to their homes, and

WHEREAS, home repairs have been identified as a major need for low-income seniors in two decennial countywide needs assessments, and

WHEREAS the Tompkins County Office for the Aging has been awarded a grant from New York State Housing Trust Fund Corporation to fund the RESTORE program in the amount of \$125,000, and

WHEREAS, the grant will serve the home repair needs of an estimated fifty-eight senior households who are in emergency situations, and

WHEREAS the Tompkins County Office for the Aging has expressed a willingness to administer the RESTORE program, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, on recommendation of the Health and Human Services Committee, That the County hereby accepts this grant of \$125,000,

RESOLVED, further, That the Finance Director is authorized to make the following budget adjustment:

REVENUE:	A6779.43803	State Revenue	\$125,000
APPROPRIATION:	A6779.51000215	Salary-Director	\$ 2,500
	A6779.51000517	Salary-Outreach Worker	\$ 2,250
	A6779.51000529	Salary-Senior Acct. Clerk/Typist	\$ 1,500
	A6779.54400	Program Expense	\$118,750

**SEQR ACTION:** TYPE II-1

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It was MOVED by Ms. Robertson, seconded by Mr. Shinagawa, and unanimously adopted by voice vote by members present, to recommend adoption of the following resolution to the full Legislature. RESOLUTION ADOPTED.

Ms. Holmes said there is not the restrictions on these funds as others and provides more flexibility on how it may be used.

**RESOLUTION NO. – ACCEPTANCE OF LEGISLATIVE INITIATIVE GRANT FOR HOME REPAIRS – OFFICE FOR THE AGING**

WHEREAS, the Tompkins County Office for the Aging maintains a last resort fund to pay for health-and-safety-related repairs to homes of low-income senior citizens, and

WHEREAS, client payments and subsidies are sought to cover costs of repairs, and

WHEREAS, funding is often not adequate to cover costs without further assistance from the last resort fund, and

WHEREAS the Tompkins County Office for the Aging has been awarded a grant from Senator George Winner as a member item to fund the home repair program in the amount of \$10,000, and

WHEREAS, home repairs have been identified as a major need for low-income seniors in two decennial countywide needs assessments, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, on recommendation of the Health and Human Services Committee, That the County hereby accepts this grant of \$10,000,

RESOLVED, further, That the Finance Director is authorized to make the following budget adjustment:

REVENUE:	A6796.43803	State Revenue	\$10,000
APPROPRIATION:	A.6796.54400	Program Expense	\$10,000

**SEQR ACTION:** TYPE II-1

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Budget Adjustments

It was MOVED by Ms. Robertson, seconded by Ms. Chock, and unanimously adopted by voice vote by members present, to recommend adoption of the following budget adjustments to the full Legislature. BUDGET ADJUSTMENTS APPROVED. It was noted the EISEP program reduction would result in fewer hours for aides to assist clients.

<u>Revenue Acct</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Amt</u>	<u>Approp Acct</u>	<u>Title(s)</u>
6793.44772	Federal Revenue	\$ 5,824	6793.54491	Subcontract
6793.44772	Federal Revenue	\$ 502	6793.51000559	Salary
6793.44772	Federal Revenue	\$ 6,616	6793.54400	Program Expense

Explanation: Federal revenue increase for the HIICAP Program.

<u>Revenue Acct</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Amt</u>	<u>Approp Acct</u>	<u>Title(s)</u>
6780.43803	State Revenue	(\$ 7,762)	6780.54491	Subcontract

Explanation: Revenue decrease for the EISEP Program.

<u>Revenue Acct</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Amt</u>	<u>Approp Acct</u>	<u>Title(s)</u>
6774.43803	State Revenue	\$31,347	6774.54491	Subcontract

Explanation: Revenue increase for Foodnet in the SNAP Program.

Discussion of Block Grants

Ms. Robertson spoke of recent discussions at the New York State Association of Counties conference regarding the possibility of the State providing block grant funding. She asked if it would

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make sense to encourage funding in this manner. Input from several department heads indicated that block grant distributions are very complex and that budget reductions appear to be more frequent than standard accounting practices, resulting in a higher local level of funding responsibility. It was also noted that a block grant would still require a good deal of staff time for reporting purposes. Overall, the department heads present did not believe it would be beneficial.

#### 2008 Funding

It was noted due to State cuts affecting departments in 2008, there could be the need to provide contingent funds in some areas.

#### Youth Services

##### Information Relating State Reductions

No additional information has been received from the Office of Family and Children Services about the six percent reductions for 2008 or allocation of revenues for calendar year 2009.

##### Update on Recent Grant Activity

Ms. Zahler spoke of looking for grant opportunities for community-based youth programs and activities. She spoke of submitting a grant to the Legacy Foundation for printing costs of the OJ Guide in the amount of \$6,600; to date no word has been received. In addition it is hoped to work with Information Technology Services to make a web-base OJ Guide more interactive than the previous PDF format. Ms. Zahler spoke of being contacted by the TALK Foundation who desires revise their guidelines in an effort to become more involved with the community. As a result, Youth Services is assisting in revising their grant notice and get it into the hands of youth programs to apply. In addition, they reached out specifically to Learning Web and other agencies. Ms. Johnson worked with Groton to put together a proposal for their walking sites. It is hoped that by October 16<sup>th</sup> it would be known if grant award is possible. It was noted that when Youth Services assists other agencies in grant writing, no funds come to the department. She noted that Primitive Pursuits program also received a site visit for potential grants.

##### Community Coalition for Healthy Youth – Response to College Presidents Call to Consider

Ms. Zahler spoke of the industry-driven requests to reduce the drinking age to 18 to reduce binge drinking, and noted her pleasure that local colleges did not support the proposal. It was noted that alcohol is a legal drug in the nation, it is important to teach responsible drinking to the youth. Ms. Zahler noted a child could have some alcohol within their home, however to provide alcohol to non-custodial minors is illegal. *It was suggest to request the Health Promotion as well as Alcoholism Council attend a meeting to further this discussion.*

##### Tompkins County Highlighted at New York State Youth Bureau Conference

Ms. Zahler spoke of Ms. Bennet and Ms. Zook assisting in the planning of the Youth Bureau Conference to be held in Syracuse. The Youth Outreach program operated by the Learning Web report regarding peer-to-peer research for homeless youth was highlighted will be highlighted at the conference through a workshop to outline the steps taken to obtain the information. Although others have good services for runaway youth, the peer research has proved to be unique. Ms. Robertson spoke of the Homeless and Housing Task Force said most housing for youth starts in a restricted environment and then to less restrictive. This program takes children from no structure to one that does have it. This is what makes the program unusual. Ms. Zahler spoke of individuals who were participants of the survey are now part of the screening team.

##### Budget Transfer

It was noted the transfer is simply to place the funding in the proper accounting line.

#### Department of Social Services

#### 2008-2009 State Funding Reductions

Ms. Carey spoke of the State reductions in funding and believes that for 2008 budget it would be a wash, and it is not yet known what would occur for the 2009 budget. As a result, we are notifying agencies contracted with that there is an unknown factor that could result in amendments later in the year. It was clarified there is not a reduction planned, rather, discussions to determine what a tipping point might be before the program would no longer be effective.

#### Foster Care Expenses

Ms. Carey spoke of an increase in foster care expenses this year. A review is occurring to assist in determining the reason for the increases; it was noted there have been two increases in rates as well as those coming into foster care not falling into the categories eligible for Federal reimbursement for costs. Ms. Carey said other counties are also experiencing this same increase and the Federal ineligibility. If there is no Federal funding, the costs are equally shared by the State and County. In response to questions from the Committee, Ms. Carey provided the formula utilized to determine what Federal reimbursement eligibility rates are. Since the figures are based on a 1996 income level; states are attempting to have the Federal government adjust the tables. At the present time there is an increase in the number of children placed in foster care – it is presently between 70 to 120 calls per month. Ms. Carey stressed how foster care placement is an unknown due to individual cases. It could be a single placement, or a placement of families with multiple siblings. The present expenses are driven by the number of youth combined with the services that may be required for the child being placed. Prior to any program cuts the department would come to the Committee for notification.

#### Hoarding Conference

Ms. Carey spoke of an upcoming conference coordinated between Mental Health, Office for the Aging, Health Department, and Social Services to discuss the mental health issue of hoarding. The conference, to be held in December will discuss hoarding, a creating a situation that would endanger their health, not saving items or by having collections, but rather, the inability to give things up. It is hoped to have a community discussion that would include landlords, ambulance personnel, fire departments, public safety officers, health inspectors, etc. It was noted this includes animals as well. Suggestions were made to include code inspectors and the solid waste facility personnel to assist in this endeavor. The Ithaca College Department of Gerontology will assist in funding the conference, with the speaker being an expert on the subject hailing from Massachusetts.

Ms. Carey said it is hoped to develop a “task force” that could assist landlords when a situation of hoarding arises.

#### Safe Havens Grant

Ms. Carey spoke of the grant that would provide funding to assist with supervised visitations for families of domestic violence. The grant, in the amount of \$150,000 total over two years, will assist in the planning and implementation of the visits for individuals having come before the domestic violence courts as well as those who come into contact with them. The development of the program must be done in a manner to ensure there is no risk of harm to participants, which could include funding security cameras or other safety features. Once the plan is in place there are funds available for the structure.

#### MyBenefitsNewYork.gov

Ms. Carey reminded members of the Committee of the New York State benefits site. This is an interactive site that allows individuals to determine eligibility for various programs offered.

In addition, Tompkins County is one of five who will be able to take Food Stamp applications via telephone and other forms via fax machine.

#### Pre-Natal Dental Grant

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Ms. Carey reported on the grant from the Health Department that provides outreach for dental services for pre-natal up to three years old. It has been very successful in connecting with pediatricians which has allowed correspondence to be sent to individuals.

#### Tompkins Community Action Housing Grant

Ms. Carey reported a supportive housing grant application with Tompkins Community Action has been made to provide housing for up to eight protective service clients. It is hoped the application would be awarded to provide stability to those most in need of potentially losing their housing.

#### Paralegal - Recovery

Ms. Carey reported the paralegal hired to assist in recovery of funds has obtained \$150,000 in refunds. The cost for the individual is approximately \$70,000. The pharmaceutical lawsuit taken on received \$27,000. It was noted later in the meeting the funds for this employee's wages are paid by Medicaid.

#### Child Protective Service Caseload

The Department will receive Child Protective Services enhancement funds. This will assist in assuring the workers have no more than 15 cases each per month to assure appropriate coverage of cases. If caseloads exceed this number the State sends a report indicating disapproval.

#### Mobility Project

The State has provided approval for a mobile reporting grant that would allow Child Protective Workers to have laptops to assist in reporting.

#### Monthly Reports

Ms. Carey reported that upon reviewing the matter, to provide monthly reports previously received by the Committee would require a full-time individual to collect information from the various areas. She spoke of last month having 4,000 HEAP recipients and 2,000 this month; however it shows 2006 cases that close. As a result of the variables, she suggested is that it be kept to Child Protective Services indicating calls, investigations, and preventive services. She noted the financial aspect is readily available, however the statistics regarding caseloads of various programs is difficult. Ms. Carey will prepare a sample report as well as provide the previous reports for comparison.

#### Office for the Aging – Lifelong Update

It was suggested by the County Administrator that the 2009 budget \$30,000 in the event the Office for the Aging should have to lease space, anticipating an estimated cost of \$60,000 annually and a move-out date of June 2009. Lifelong will be meeting on October 16<sup>th</sup> to determine their course of action.

#### Resolution

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

**RESOLUTION NO. – CALLING ON THE NEW YORK CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATION TO SUPPORT AN INCREASE IN THE FEDERAL MEDICAL ASSISTANCE PERCENTAGE (FMAP) TO PROVIDE NEW YORK COUNTIES WITH PROPERTY TAX RELIEF**

WHEREAS, under Federal Law, local governments are not responsible for any portion of Medicaid funding, however, Congress has given states the ability to require local governments to share in financing the non-Federal share of Medicaid costs, and

WHEREAS, the United States Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services data demonstrate that no other state in the country financially burdens its localities like New York State, and

WHEREAS, Medicaid represents the largest single program expense in every county budget and competes with the limited resources available to fund other critical budgetary needs at the county level, and

WHEREAS, the National Governor's Association (NGA), including Governor Paterson, have supported a proposal for a temporary increase in the Federal Medical Assistance Percentage (FMAP) as an economic stimulus option that would provide more Federal funding for state Medicaid programs, and

WHEREAS, the NGA has indicated that it would both help to stimulate the nation's economy and shore up the safety net for low-income families, and

WHEREAS, this proposal would provide nearly \$1.6 billion in fiscal relief to New York State, including \$480 million in relief to county government, and

WHEREAS, this FMAP increase would reduce the local Medicaid burden and provide immediate property tax relief to the residents of New York State, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, on recommendation of the Health and Human Services Committee, That Tompkins County calls upon the New York Congressional Delegation to support an increase in the Federal Medical Assistance Percentage (FMAP) to provide New York's local taxpayers with relief from the crashing financial burden of the Medicaid program,

RESOLVED, further, That the Clerk of the Legislature shall forward copies of this Resolution to the New York State Congressional Delegation, Governor Paterson and all others deemed necessary and proper.

**SEQR ACTION: TYPE II-20**

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### **Human Rights Commission**

The Committee discussed the request to utilize rollover funding for the paralegal position, which Ms. Martel-Moore indicated fell short of the total cost. She provided a history of the position, noting that in 1999 the paralegal aide was a full-time position. In 2005 the position was reduced prior to her taking the position of Deputy County Administrator. Over the course of years she continued to reduce positions to utilize rollover funding. At the time she did not have funding, and eliminated the position, with the Legislature awarding \$10,000 for Professional Services to utilize interns. When funds were available the Paralegal Aide was added back in and the Professional Service line reduced. She is attempting at this time to bring staffing back to whole. Mr. Whicher indicated only 3.6 FTE. She also has needed to increase the Director's staff as well. At this time she has two staff funded by Cornell University who work 10-12 hours per week. It was noted that the funding required to bring the paralegal aide to full time is \$36,558 for 35 hours, with \$13,000 being requested. She indicated she is not certain why Administration amended the number to \$44,213. Total rollover funding is \$23,553. Presently in the Paralegal aide is \$7,655, if all the rollover were added it would still have a shortfall. It was suggested that the full Legislature be provided an explanation of the funding requests. *Ms. Chock requested a program report be presented in the near future.*

### **Liaison Reports**

#### **Homeless and Housing Task Force**

Ms. Robertson reported met this morning and provided a heating programs chart.

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Single-Room Occupancy

Ms. Robertson reported on the ribbon cutting for the newly constructed Single-Room Occupancy housing occurred September 30<sup>th</sup> so the Commissioners could be present. The building should open within two weeks with a Community opening will occur in November 2008.

New York State Affirmative Action Office Association

Ms. Martel-Moore reported the meeting would take place at the Borg Warner Room on Friday, October 3<sup>rd</sup>. Carolyn Downey will be present to discuss hiring of individuals with records.

International Human Rights Conference

Ms. Martel-Moore reported on the conference and noted she met the cousin of Langston Hughes who will be visiting and bringing artifacts.

Acknowledgement of Employee Actions

Mr. Proto spoke of Senior Account Clerk Kelly Nickerson's actions that resulted in saving a life.

**Adjournment**

On motion the meeting adjourned at 5:07 p.m.

*Respectfully submitted by Karen Fuller, Deputy Clerk*