

**HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE MEETING**  
**August 25, 2006**  
**OSWEGO COUNTY BUILDING**  
**4<sup>TH</sup> FLOOR CONFERENCE ROOM**

**Present:**

Legislators

John Proud, Chairman  
Barbara Brown, Vice Chair  
Art Gearsbeck  
Leonard Ponzi  
Paul Santore  
Kimberly Seager

Staff

Kathleen Fenlon, Executive Director, Youth Bureau  
Laurence Schmidt, Office for the Aging  
Donna Kestner, Director of Veterans' Services  
Kathleen Smith, Director of Public Health  
Marti Babcock, Child Support Coordinator  
Kim Briest, Senior Typist, Office for the Aging

Guests

Russ Johnson, Chairman of the Legislature  
Stephen Lyman, County Administrator  
Phil Church, Director of Purchasing  
Steven Yablonski, Media  
Missy DeStevens-Valenzuela

**Excused:**

Dan Chalifoux

Chairman Proud called the meeting to order at 10:02 a.m.

**1. Approval of Minutes**

Chairman Proud asked for a motion to approve the July 26, 2006 meeting minutes.

Motion: Legislator Santore made a motion to approve the July 26, 2006 meeting minutes with correction as requested by Legislator Brown regarding the number of handicap children increasing in relation to better prenatal care.

Second: Legislator Ponzi

Vote: All in favor. Motion carried.

**2. Heath**

**A. Bid Report - Volney Landfill Fencing**

Purchasing Director Phil Church addressed the Committee regarding the perimeter fence at the Volney Landfill. The fence has fallen into disrepair and has become rusty. The Health Department requested bids for replacing the fence with specifications; chain link fence with top /bottom mid-rails and double swing gates the entire perimeter which is approximately 5000 feet.

Legislator Gearsbeck asked where the money comes from for this project. Mr. Lyman stated that the money comes from the capital project fund. He also stated that it is cheaper to fix the fence rather than dealing with the Environmental Protection Agency. Legislator Ponzi asked if the entire fence was being replaced. Mr. Church replied that the entire fence (approximately a mile perimeter) would be replaced by Atlas Fence of East Syracuse. They submitted the lowest bid at \$32,883.45 and they meet all the specifications required.

Motion: Legislator Santore made a motion to accept the bid by Atlas Fence to replace the Volney Landfill fence.

Second: Legislator Brown

Vote: All in favor. Motion carried.

## **B. Automobile Purchases**

Kathleen Smith requested replacement of eight vehicles in the Health Department.

Currently, 33 of 46 cars in the Health Department are operable. An analysis was done on whether it would be more economical to replace the vehicles or to put more money into the mileage account for the department. Kathleen Smith presented a handout to the Committee showing the money necessary to replace the vehicles. She noted that employees in the Health Department are out driving to clients' houses in all types of weather and that replacing the vehicles is also safety conscious.

Legislator Brown asked if any of the vehicles were four-wheel drive. Ms. Smith replied that they were all front-wheel sedans. Legislator Gearsbeck asked how many hospice nurses were employed in the Health Department. Ms. Smith answered that there are four, and one volunteer coordinator. The department's supervisors are on call too, but they do not operate county cars. Legislator Gearsbeck asked who else in the department needs use of county vehicles and do any of the employees share usage. Ms. Smith informed him that the sanitarians also use the county cars, the rabies technicians share use of a vehicle and the Early Intervention Unit uses one. Home Care nurses are out at night sometimes as well. Legislator Johnson pointed out that at times it is more cost-efficient to have vehicles accessible to those workers at their home. He also asked Ms. Smith how the revenues relate with the vehicle use. Ms. Smith informed the Committee that the County can apply the cost of using the vehicles to state reimbursement costs and depreciation factors can also be considered. A discussion followed on the vehicles up for replacement.

Legislator Seager would like to see an overall plan for the capital funds project and a long-term replacement plan for vehicles. Mr. Lyman said that when the cars wear out, they must be repaired or replaced. Kathleen Smith was asked to look at the efficiency of employees using their own vehicles instead of county cars and that is why the Health Department has brought this request forward at this time. He noted that part of the capital funds plan was laid out last year taking vehicle purchases into consideration, but it was not department specific. A discussion followed on the most economical way to replace the cars.

Motion: Legislator Brown made a motion to approve the Health Department's request to purchase eight vehicles deferring to Purchasing Director Phil Church's judgment.

Second: Legislator Seager.

Vote: All in favor. Motion carried.

## **C. Budget Modification - Mosquito Control**

Kathleen Smith informed the Committee that reports on positive pools for Easter Equine Encephalitis (EEE) have been received from Toad Harbor and Central Square. She said that Dr. Howard as well as Evan Walsh are their resources for mosquito control. She noted that 1990 was the last time the County sprayed for mosquito control.

The mosquito population this year is extreme. There are high numbers of pools that are testing positive for EEE in Oswego County (33 were counted before spraying occurred). A public health threat was declared and a request for spraying was made. Onondaga County delayed our spraying by one day. The sprayer hired by the County is out of Lewis County (Mr. Duflo) and he charges \$4.75 per acre. Approximately \$50,000 was spent on spraying for mosquitoes. The County will receive a 50% cost reimbursement for the spraying because a public health threat was declared. Legislator Seager asked if the money will go back into contingency when it is received. Mr. Lyman stated that it does not happen automatically, but the money will be included in 2006's revenues regardless of when it is received. Kathleen Smith informed the Committee that a second spraying is not necessary at this time.

Legislator Brown asked Ms. Smith if the Lot 10 swamp in the Town of Palermo had been monitored. Ms. Smith reiterated that pools were monitored across the county and several pools tested positive for EEE. Due to the high numbers, spraying was deemed necessary.

Motion: Legislator Santore moved to accept the budget modification as presented.

Second: Legislator Brown

Vote: All in favor. Motion carried.

### **3. Social Services**

#### **A. Budget Modification - TANF Block Grant**

Marti Babcock, Child Support Coordinator, addressed the Committee. She presented information on a \$758,000 grant to assist TANF families in Oswego County - the working poor. Expenses are 100% reimbursable by the State.

Motion: Legislator Brown made a motion to accept the budget modification as presented.

Second: Legislator Santore

Vote: All in favor. Motion carried.

#### **B. Child Support Helpline**

Marti Babcock informed the Committee that the state is moving to a customer service hotline for child support information. Over 2600 calls regarding child support are received monthly. The state recognizes that most counties spend much of their time on the phone. They are phasing counties in to this new system. November 1, 2006 is Oswego County's date. Less than 25% of calls going to the helpline first are referred back to the originating County for those already implemented in this system. The business hours for the helpline are longer. If a district must take action on an inquiry made to the helpline, an electronic request is sent to that county. For many callers to the helpline, answers are received immediately.

Ms. Babcock stated that child support payment collections were approximately 4% higher in 2005. Over \$13.7 million was collected. She said that it is part of a federal plan to try to automate services when available to allow local social services departments to focus on collections. A discussion on child support collections followed.

#### **4. Youth Bureau**

##### **A. Update on AmeriCorps Program**

Kathleen Fenlon spoke regarding the AmeriCorps Program. The program has been in existence ten years in Oswego County. The AmeriCorps program in Oswego County focuses on services for children and families. Members receive a stipend plus an allowance to use for education/student loans. Members range from young adults to seniors. Kathy Andolina has been the AmeriCorps Coordinator for 10 years. Ms. Fenlon introduced Missy DeStevens-Valenzuela . She has seen AmeriCorps from both sides. She served as a member when she got out of college. One term of service was at the Oswego Public Library and one was at the Oswego YMCA. For the past two summers, she has worked as staff to the program to assist with the summer component. She thanked the Committee for the opportunity to speak with them about this program.

##### **B. Budget Modification – AmeriCorps**

Motion: Legislator Brown made a motion to accept the budget modification as presented and commented that she thought that AmeriCorps was a wonderful program.

Second: Legislator Santore

Vote: All were in favor. Motion carried.

Chairman Proud asked Laurence Schmidt of the Office for the Aging if he had any updates for the Committee at this time. Mr. Schmidt responded that In June of this year, a budget modification was approved for computer software for the OFA. He wanted to inform the Committee that the software was in place and everything was going well with it so far. Mr. Schmidt also told the Committee that the OFA received over 500 Farmer Market Coupon booklets this year from the State. The office had the biggest request for the booklets ever this year; far higher request than booklets available.

Chairman Proud then asked Donna Kestner of the Veterans' Services if she had any updates for the Committee at this time. Ms. Kestner replied that both offices were very busy. Legislator Santore asked Ms. Kestner if she had received any complaints from veterans going to the VA Hospital regarding construction work/relocation of parking for those with disabilities. Ms. Kestner told Legislator Santore that she would check into the situation.

#### **5. Adjournment**

Motion: Legislator Santore made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 10:55 AM.

Second: Legislator Brown