

**COUNTY OF OSWEGO**  
**HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE**  
March 26, 2008

**PRESENT:**

Jack Proud, Chair  
Barbara Brown, Vice Chair  
Daniel Chalifoux  
Margaret Kastler  
Doug Malone  
Morris Sorbello

**STAFF/GUESTS:**

Phil Church, County Administrator  
Kathleen Fenlon, Director of Youth Bureau  
Donna Kestner, Director of Veteran Services  
Frances Lanigan, Commissioner of Social Services  
Barry Leemann, Chairman of Legislature  
Fred Maxon, Purchasing Director  
Dr. Dennis Norfleet, Medical Consultant  
Larry Schmidt, Aging Services Administrator  
Lee Walker, Legislator  
Evan Walsh, Acting Director of Public Health  
Jeanette Woodland, Administrative Secretary  
Mr. and Mrs. Pringle

**EXCUSED:**

Art Gearsbeck

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Attendance:

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

Old Business:

Committee Chair Proud asked for a motion to approve the March 3, 2008, minutes.

**Motion:** Legislator Brown

**Second:** Legislator Sorbello

Minutes were approved, with all in favor.

Committee Business:

1. Youth Bureau

a. Budget Modification

Kathleen Fenlon, Director of Youth Bureau, advised that the department has received a \$1,000 grant from the Cultural Resources Council. The money will be put into the Camp Hollis – other expense line and will be used to expand and print a book that was created last year by a student intern. Copies of the book will be donated to area libraries and any profits will be used for camper scholarships.

**Motion:** Legislator Brown made a motion to approve the Budget Modification.

**Second:** Legislator Chalifoux

**Vote:** All in favor

Motion carried.

2. Veterans

a. National Guard and Reservist Education Benefits

Donna Kestner, Director of Veteran Services, advised of new changes in GI Bill benefits. This change means that eligible members of the National Guard and Reserve are now able to use the Montgomery GI Bill for Selected Reserve after they separate from military service for the number of months they were activated plus four more months. They may also add multiple periods of activation to further increase this extension, or portability.

b. PTSD and Health Care Eligibility

Director Kestner gave an update on posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD), which is second highest in the number of claims that are put through besides traumatic brain injuries. Veterans are being educated to recognize the signs. Claims are being processed faster as soon as the diagnosis is made. A health care training seminar is being offered in June.

3. Health

a. Meningitis Case Update

Evan Walsh, Acting Director of Public Health, updated the Committee on the recent meningitis case at the State University College at Oswego. Mr. Walsh stated that this was a very difficult case as there was no student to interview because of the few short hours in which the student, whose illness mimicked the flu, was diagnosed with meningitis just before expiring. The student was admitted to the Oswego Hospital in the early morning hours on Friday and the County Health Department was notified when they opened that morning that the student was diagnosed with meningitis. By 9:00 a.m. that morning he died. The bacterial infection can be spread by body fluids such as sharing glasses, kissing, using funnels while partying, etc. The disease is not spread by routine or casual contact, such as being in the same dining hall or dorm room. It was advised that anyone who had close contact with the student to seek treatment, which resulted in the treatment of 200 to 300 individuals. Students and parents sought help or called the Oswego Hospital, Walker Health Center and the County Health Department. Staff members of the County Health Department did not administer treatment to anyone.

Mr. Walsh gave credit to the combined efforts of Philip Church, Janet Clerkin, Dr. Norfleet, Judy Lester, and other staff members, for keeping everyone informed from the time that the department was notified of the illness and the days that followed. Leg. Malone and Leg. Chalifoux thanked County Administrator Church for keeping them informed and Mr. Church advised that Mr. Walsh had kept him well informed throughout the weekend and that it was a good cooperative effort.

Leg. Proud suggested that a letter of thanks be composed and sent to all employees who were involved. Mr. Walsh said that he would provide the County Administrator with a list of names.

**Motion:** Legislator Sorbello made a motion to approve sending a letter of thanks.

**Second:** Legislator Brown

**Vote:** All in favor

Motion carried.

3. Central Square Health Clinic

Legislator Proud reported that he had a letter prepared and sent to State and Federal representatives regarding the closure of the Central Square Health Clinic. He advised that a call for help is out there but as of yet has not gotten a response.

4. Office for the Aging

Legislator Proud advised that he had attended the Office for the Aging Advisory Council meeting. Larry Schmidt, Aging Services Administrator, reported that the by-laws were 30 years old and out of date. Mr. Schmidt has made revisions and passed them out to Committee members. Legislator Proud urged members to look the revisions over and share any comments at the next meeting.

5. Social Services

Fran Lanigan, Commissioner of Social Services, reported on recent business at Social Services. Ms. Lanigan advised that the office has had an extremely busy season with the HEAP program resulting in staff working additional hours to meet the demand. Ms. Lanigan also reported that the Child Support staff experienced great satisfaction as a case they had been working on resulted in a conviction.

Legislator Kastler asked a question regarding HEAP and elderly individuals who may not be able to pay utility bills. Ms. Lanigan explained that if someone is qualified, the benefit level is set by the State. It is a flat amount, which this year is \$450. This is not meant to pay the bill, but to offset it.

Legislator Sorbello asked Director Schmidt about senior exemptions on property taxes. Mr. Schmidt advised that he would look into this and report back at the next meeting.

County Administrator Church reported on the letter that the EPA sent out about the air quality. Administrator Church advised that the EPA has lowered its standards. The new standards are .084 to .075 and we are at .076. We are not in a crisis and we are not on a list.

Committee Chair Proud reported that at the last Strategic Planning and Government Committee meeting Legislator Walker brought up the smoking age and changing the age limit from 18 to 19 years of age. Legislator Walker said that he lives near the Oswego High School and has observed 15 to 25 students who meet on a corner across from the school to have a smoke. In his observation he believes that 95 to 99 percent of them are under the age of 18. He advised that he has found out that there are grants out there to support the age change, and the cancer society supports this as well. Nassau County has faxed him laws, facts and figures. Legislator Walker will speak at the April 4<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Board of Health. Kathleen Fenlon said that to change the age is an environmental strategy and is a process that takes a long time, but does reduce the use of tobacco as it presents another barrier for underage youth. This is in line with what the Reality Check program does. A discussion ensued regarding smoking in the immediate area outside the doors of the county buildings. A report will be brought back to the next Committee meeting.

Executive Session

**Motion:** Legislator Brown made a motion to go into Executive Session to discuss a Personnel matter.

**Second:** Legislator Kastler

**Vote:** All in favor

Motion carried.

The Committee moved into Executive Session at 10:50 a.m.

The Committee returned from Executive Session at 11:00 a.m.

**Motion:** Legislator Chalifoux made a motion to appoint Dr. Dennis Norfleet to the position of Interim Public Health Director.

**Second:** Legislator Malone

**Vote:** All in favor

Motion carried.

Leg. Walker said that he was on the interview committee and Dr. Norfleet was head and shoulders above everyone else.

Leg. Chalifoux said that Dr. Norfleet proved his ability during the recent meningitis case and that recent losses and institutional knowledge of the Health Department make Dr. Norfleet the obvious choice.

Evan Walsh who has been Acting Public Health Director advised that he has known Dr. Norfleet for many years and has good common sense; a good choice.

Dr. Norfleet expressed his appreciation to the Committee.

#### Adjournment

**Motion:** Legislator Brown motioned to adjourn the meeting at 11:05 a.m.

**Second:** Legislator Chalifoux

**Vote:** All in favor

Motion carried.