

COUNTY OF OSWEGO
HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE

February 25, 2009

PRESENT:

Jack Proud, Chair
Barbara Brown, Vice Chair
Art Gearsbeck
Margaret Kastler
Doug Malone
Morris Sorbello

STAFF/GUESTS:

Phil Church, County Administrator
Kathleen Fenlon, Director of Youth Bureau
Donna Kestner, Veterans
Frances Lanigan, Commissioner of Social Services
Dr. Dennis Norfleet, Interim Director of Public Health
Paul Santore, Legislator
Larry Schmidt, Aging Services Administrator
Christine Weaver, Coordinator of Client Services (DSS)
Jeanette Woodland, Administrative Secretary
Mr. and Mrs. Pringle

EXCUSED:

Daniel Chalifoux

MEDIA:

Aaron Curtis, Oswego Palladium Times

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Attendance:

Committee Chair Proud called the meeting to order at 10:05 a.m.

Old Business:

Committee Chair Proud asked for a motion to approve the January 28, 2009, minutes.

Motion: Legislator Brown

Second: Legislator Sorbello

Committee Business:

1. Youth Bureau

A. Budget Modification - Vehicle Request

Kathy Fenlon, Director of Youth Bureau, made a request to purchase a van that the department has been leasing for the Reality Check program since 2005. The lease is about to expire and the buyout cost is \$7,353. The van has 32,071 miles on it and is in good condition. The cost can be partially covered by the Reality Check grant and by moving monies from some other accounts it will fully cover the cost of the van.

Motion: Legislator Brown made a motion to approve the Budget Modification to move monies to purchase the Reality Check vehicle, as presented.

Second: Legislator Sorbello

Vote: All in favor

Motion carried.

2. Office for the Aging

A. Larry Schmidt, Director of Office for the Aging, requested approval to contract with Lifenet. This contract is to provide Personal Emergency Response Systems to qualified Oswego County senior citizens. The office currently contracts with multiple agencies for

this type of service because of the need to provide and there are times when they are not able to get service from one, and need to have more providers available.

Motion: Legislator Brown made a motion to approve the contract with Lifenet, as presented.

Second: Legislator Kastler

Vote: All in favor
Motion carried.

3. Social Services

A. Budget Modification - Workforce Investment Act Funds

Frances Lanigan, Commissioner of Social Services, brought forth a Budget Modification request for Workforce Investment Act (WIA) funds under the Federal Stimulus Act. This is to accept an anticipated allocation of \$1,299,625 in federal Workforce Investment funding to provide employment and training services to eligible population. The funding will provide services that address the needs of job seekers through training and services that respond to local workforce needs. It will also enable the workforce area to expand the summer work program to an additional 200 summer jobs for those 14-24 years of age, as well as training opportunities. It will also cover operating expenses including staff and equipment. This will fund two temporary positions that will be needed to cover the increase in numbers; positions will end when the funding ends. Both positions are 100 percent funded through the grant including the cost of fringe benefits.

Motion: Legislator Brown made a motion to approve the Budget Modification request for additional Workforce Investment Act funds, as presented.

Second: Legislator Sorbello

Discussion continued on the kind of positions available and transportation. Legislator Sorbello suggested that we may be able to contract with OCO, to lease buses. Christine Weaver, Coordinator of Client Services, advised that she would look into this. Commissioner Lanigan added that they lease vans that transport equipment such as tools and shovels that are needed for some of the youth worksite activities.

Vote: All in favor
Motion carried.

Legislator Sorbello congratulated Commissioner Lanigan on her new position as the President of NY Public Welfare Association.

B. Budget Modification –Workforce Investment Act –Central NY Works - DET

Commissioner Lanigan brought forth a Budget Modification to request acceptance of \$23,000 in federal funding awarded to Central New York Works. A component of the grant is to provide internships in “green” jobs as well as covering operational costs that local areas will incur in operating the internship program.

Motion: Legislator Brown made a motion to approve the Budget Modification request to accept \$23,000 in federal funding, as presented.

Second: Legislator Sorbello

Vote: All in favor
Motion carried.

- C. Budget Modification – NYS Department of Labor/ WIA - Gas Card Initiative
Commissioner Lanigan presented a Budget Modification request for the Division of Employment and Training to accept an allocation of \$6,250 in WIA funds. This will be to participate in a WIA funded initiative to provide gas cards to participants who meet the eligibility criteria including engagement in job search or training. The amount of the card is a maximum of \$50 issued quarterly. Funding ends June 2009.

Motion: Legislator Malone made a motion to move the Budget Modification request for discussion.

Second: Legislator Brown

Legislator Malone asked if the card could only be used for the purchase of gas. Christine Weaver advised that there will be a sticker on the card that will note that it can only be used for gas. Legislator Malone voiced his concern that an individual could buy cigarettes and/or alcohol with the card. Commissioner Lanigan said that there is no guarantee, but that the individual with the card would have to sign a waiver stating that it would only be used for gas. In order for a person to receive the gas card they have to prove that they are actively looking for employment. In reply to whether the Social Services does purchase a clients automobile, Commissioner Lanigan stated that they do not; they did in the past with OCO but found that this did not work out. Legislator Brown mentioned that the cards can be done so that they can be used for gas only at the Byrne Dairy. Legislator Kastler added that it should be added to the policy that person using the card must produce a receipt. Commissioner Lanigan stated that she would look into the suggestion of a purchase of a gas only card and or if not possible, to require a receipt. Legislator Gearsbeck said that we should help the State and give them back the money. Commissioner Lanigan said that it is federal funds and would only be given to another county. Legislator Gearsbeck said that he would not support this. Legislator Kastler stated that she would not support without a receipt. Additional discussion ensued and Legislator Brown called the question. Legislator Gearsbeck and Legislator Malone opposed calling the question and discussion continued. Legislator Sorbello stated that this program could help a lot of people and Ms. Weaver added that those who are eligible for the card are living within 200 percent of the poverty level.

Roll call vote:

Kastler	Yes, with receipt
Sorbello	Yes
Brown	Yes
Malone	No
Proud	Yes
Gearsbeck	No

Motion carried.

- D. Workforce Center
Christine Weaver, Coordinator of Client Services, gave an overview of the Workforce New York – One Stop Center

County Administrator Church reported on a meeting that was held regarding the nursing shortage. A group comprised of County Administrator Church, Dr. Norfleet, Committee Chair Proud and Maureen Sullivan, Personnel Director, met to determine why nurses have been leaving the County Health Department for employment elsewhere. Items discussed are the Personnel department conducting post employment interviews with those who have left our employ, survey who our competitors are and CSEA's willingness to work with us on this issue. Dr. Norfleet mentioned that a couple of positions have been filled but overall the situation has not changed. County Administrator Church said that they have contacted Lee Memorial Hospital to let their staff know of our hiring.

Legislator Gearsbeck requested that all Health and Human Services Committee members have a pass available to them to enter the Social Services building. Many of the Committee members agreed that a pass to enter the building was not necessary because the only time they went to the building was for meetings and once announced they were permitted to enter. Discussion between Commissioner Lanigan, Legislator Gearsbeck, and other committee members continued. Chairman Proud said that he follows a certain procedure by making a call to Commissioner Lanigan to make an arrangement to enter. He waits at the door and someone lets him in, adding that it is just common courtesy. County Administrator Church added that by state and federal law the Social Services building is a secure building.

Motion: Legislator Gearsbeck made a motion that special pass keys to the Social Services building be available to Committee members.

Second: Legislator Malone

Roll call vote:

Gearsbeck	Yes
Kastler	No
Sorbello	No
Brown	No
Malone	Yes
Proud	No

Motion defeated.

Adjournment

Motion: Legislator Malone motioned to adjourn the meeting at 11:52 a.m.

Second: Legislator Brown

Vote: All in favor

Motion carried.