

**COUNTY OF OSWEGO
HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE**

April 8, 2009
Special Meeting

PRESENT:

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

STAFF/GUESTS:

Kevin Caracioli, ESQ., Counsel for DSS
Philip Church, County Administrator
Shawn Doyle, Legislator
Kathleen Fenlon, Director of Youth Bureau
Mary Flett, Legislator
Robert Hayes, Legislator
Donna Kestner, Director of Veterans
Frances Lanigan, Commissioner of Social Services
Louella LeClair, Legislator
Barry Leemann, Legislature Chairman
Linda Lockwood, Legislator
Dr. Marshall Marshall, Supt. Pulaski Schools
Deborah Meyer, Probation
Milferd Potter, Legislator
Mr. Burdick
Sue Pringle
Jeanette Woodland, Administrative Secretary

MEDIA:

Aaron Curtis, Palladium Times
John Doherty, Post Standard
Steve Yablonski, Oswego County Today

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Attendance:

Committee Chair Proud called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m.

Committee Business:

Chairman Proud opened the meeting by welcoming Dr. Marshall Marshall, Superintendent of Pulaski School District, and introduced Committee Members. Others in attendance introduced themselves to Dr. Marshall. Dr. Marshall was present to share with the Committee the basis of a task force that was put together in the Pulaski area to better the lives of children and benefit the community.

Dr. Marshall explained the foundation for which the Pulaski Community Services Task Force was established. He stated that about three years ago an elementary principal, a school counselor and a nurse who was based out of the Pulaski Health Center, reached their frustration point when they had to deal with a situation in the community. There was a housing complex, owned by an absent landlord, which housed several families who had many children. The conditions of this complex were deplorable and they were frustrated by the lack of code enforcement. Not knowing where to go and yet knowing that other agencies were involved they ended up going to the Village of Pulaski board meeting to complain about code enforcement. At that time they found that the problem was much more complex. They went away frustrated thinking that someone has to fix this problem. A meeting was scheduled that included representatives from DSS, the Pulaski Village Mayor, County Legislator, Code Enforcement, and Law Enforcement. They got together on this particular situation agreeing that the situation was awful and "What can we do?" At this meeting each agency blamed the other accusing each of not doing their job with

the end result being that everyone's job was complex and intertwined with each others, as well as a number of other people. From that first meeting the group evolved and committed to spending time working through that particular situation. There was enough publicity that the absentee landlord sold the building to the first available buyer who has made a significant number of improvements to the building. The group decided that coming to the table was good, the dialog was good and coming together and understanding each other to share frustrations and find out how they could do some things together. For the last three years they have met on a regular basis and evolved into defining their purpose by going through a process of developing a mission statement, hiring a consultant, and doing some training. They focused on what it was that they really should be doing as a group. Dr. Marshall read the group's mission statement as follows:

To create and maintain a collaborative network of service providers, government representatives, and concerned citizens that will increase communication, share information, build relationships and foster a collective responsibility to enhance the quality of life for all citizens in the Pulaski Community.

The group went through several processes but made sure that the agencies involved understood each other's goals and collaborated as much as they were able to. The group is comprised of dozens of members that represent various agencies and organizations in the County. They don't all go to every meeting but they do meet and share information to better the lives of children in school and the community. Dr. Marshall also stated that to improve the quality of life in the community, you have to understand the affects of poverty.

Committee members posed questions to Dr. Marshall in which they gained insight into what the task force was all about. Dr. Marshall couldn't stress enough that this was all about agencies coming together and understanding what each did and how they could help each other. Communication between the agencies is key to the success of the task force.

County Administer Church reported that he met with County School Superintendents and it was a very productive meeting.

Commissioner Lanigan reported that there are a couple of community events dealing with poverty that will be coming up. A community task force that is partnered with the United Way will be having some community presentations. Part one will be in May and part two will be held in the fall. Another area that is coming up is COACH which is a homeless housing concerned community coalition in having a Sheldon Roundtable on May 19th. Commissioner Lanigan said that she would get information to Committee.

Adjournment

Legislator Malone asked about a motion that was tabled at the previous meeting. Legislator Chalifoux reminded him that this meeting was a special meeting and cannot entertain motions other than those for which the meeting is called.

Motion: Legislator Chalifoux motioned to adjourn the meeting at 4:30 p.m.

Second: Legislator Sorbello

Opposed: Legislator Malone

Vote: Yes - 6 No - 1

Motion carried.