

HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE MEETING
November 29, 2006
OSWEGO COUNTY BUILDING
4TH FLOOR CONFERENCE ROOM

Present:

Legislators

John Proud, Chairman
Barbara Brown, Vice Chair
Dan Chalifoux
Art Gearsbeck
Paul Santore
Leonard Ponzi
Kim Seager

Staff & Others

Kathleen Fenlon, Executive Director, Youth Bureau
Donna Kestner, Director of Veterans' Services
Kathleen Smith, Director of Public Health
Frances Lanigan, Commissioner of Social Serv
Larry Schmidt, Director, Office of the Aging
Kathleen Smith, Director of Public Health
Tammy Thompson, Early Intervention
Robert Plenge, Director of Finance, Social Services

Others:

Steve Lyman, County Administrator
Phil Church, Purchasing Director
Debbie Bishop, Director, Friends of Hospice
Steve Yablonski, Daily News
Charles Mc Chesney, Post Standard

Chairman Proud called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m.

1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Chairman Proud asked for a motion to approve the October 25, 2006 meeting minutes.

Motion: Legislator Santore moved to accept the minutes of the October 25, 2006 meeting.

Second: Legislator Ponzi

Vote: All in favor, motion carried.

2. HEALTH DEPARTMENT

Bid Report

Phil Church, Purchasing Director, reported that the bid for 12 automobiles for the Health Department went out. He is going to wait to see what the state bid prices are, which are due out in a few days, so that those prices can be compared with the bid prices he received. The Health Department is in agreement with this. If the state bid is used, the dealer will not take a trade in so vehicles would need to be sold at auction—this will need to be factored into the comparison.

Presentation by Friends of Hospice

Public Health Director Kathy Smith introduced Debbie Bishop, who is Director of Friends of Hospice. Ms Bishop indicated that Friends of Hospice originated in 1994 and was primarily set up to be a conduit for fund raising and for accepting memorial

contributions. The organization was run by volunteers for several years. There has been a full time director's position since 2003. Friends of Hospice does several large fundraising events each year including the Hospice Cup Regatta in June. This year they are initiating a membership campaign. November is National Hospice month and several smaller events were planned for that month. Other organizations do fundraisers to benefit Friends of Hospice including a golf tournament and the Oswego County ATV Club Ride for Hospice. The main source of income is from memorial donations and the organization does receive some grants. Last year they had a bequest of over \$150,000 so they are in good financial shape. Last year 60% of expenses went directly for patient services. Friends of Hospice can pay for things that the county cannot, such as helping a family get back on track with a mortgage payment, getting a family's lights or phone turned back on, paying for some extra caregiver hours, etc. Purchases are made locally, and funds are invested locally. Friends also helps with volunteer training and volunteer recognition. Ms Bishop went on to explain that Hospice has two memorial gardens. She also talked about the bereavement camp for children age 7 thru 12 who have lost a loved one. It is called Camp Rainbow of Hope and is held at Camp Hollis each summer. A maximum of 30 children can participate and this year the program had to turn children away. Legislator Brown asked that Friends of Hospice work to add another camping session so that children are not left out. Chairman Proud thanked Friends of Hospice for their support.

Other

The committee discussed the report that just came out about consolidation of health facilities. There is great concern in the Fulton community about the recommendation to make A Lee Memorial a critical care facility and eliminate the hospital beds. The recommendation has to be signed by the Governor by December 5th and the state legislature votes either for all of it or none of it by the end of December. If they do not take action, the recommendations go into effect. If the recommendation is enacted, there will be sanctions if a facility does not comply. Public Health Director Kathy Smith indicated that 60% of our population goes out of the county for health services. She has an Executive Summary of the report, and will get that out to committee members. It is also on the NYS Health Department website. Legislators expressed concern over the short turn around time. It is evident that changes need to be made in the health care system in NYS, but there is no time for local communities to study or analyze.

Director Smith also noted that the Home Health Agency has been listed in the Home Care Elite report as one of the top 500 programs in the county, and is among the top 10% in the country.

3. SOCIAL SERVICES

Contract for Child Care Subsidy Management System

Commissioner Frances Lanigan said that Social Services has been looking at the payment system for childcare payments. The process is cumbersome and they have been exploring a model to streamline the process. The KinderTrac system that Commissioner Lanigan is recommending is currently being used by 12 social services

districts and three more are in the implementation stage. This system is on state contract and is the only one with the approval to do the necessary data migration from the WMS (Welfare Management System) legacy system. The \$2.5 million child care subsidy allowance provides for up to 5% of funds to be used administratively. The \$53,556 for this program would be covered by the administrative allocation. There will be no local expense.

Motion: Legislator Chalifoux moved to approve the contract for the Child Care Subsidy Management System.

Second: Legislator Santore

Discussion: Commissioner Lanigan indicated that the funds for the contract are in the 2006 budget. The \$500/month maintenance fee would come out of next year's budget, and would be part of the administrative allocation.

Vote: All in favor, motion carried

Budget Modification – Intensive Case Services

This budget modification is for funds for intensive case services to work with non-compliant families on Temporary Assistance. The \$35,483 will allow the opportunity to hire a staff person for six months who was recently laid off. A question was raised about the current sanction for non-compliant families, and Commissioner Lanigan explained that there is not a full family sanction. Funds are decreased because of the non-compliance, but are not eliminated. A question was raised whether children would be better if sent to foster care. Commissioner Lanigan indicated that this is not desirable; if children are safe, it is better to work with families and keep children with their families. There is no local cost.

Motion: Legislator Brown moved to approve the budget modification.

Second: Legislator Santore

Vote: All in favor, motion carried

Budget Modification – Special Incentive Allocation

This modification accepts incentive funding under the federal Food Stamp program. It is to be used by local districts in any way to enable efforts that support self sufficiency. There is no local cost.

Motion: Legislator Santore moved to approve the budget modification.

Second: Legislator Ponzi

Vote: All in favor, motion carried

Budget Modification – HEAP

This modification moves HEAP funds from regular and emergency HEAP budget lines to the under-funded NPA (non public assistance) funding category that covers HEAP costs for elderly and low income families. This will allow for funds to come out of the correct accounts. This modification does not add additional funds to the budget.

Motion: Legislator Chalifoux moved to approve the budget modification.

Second: Legislator Ponzi

Vote: All in favor, motion carried

Veteran's Director Kestner thanked Legislator Gearsbeck for visiting her office yesterday. He is interested in a program Herkimer County does that takes bus loads of World War II veterans to Washington DC to visit the WWII memorial. Ms Kestner has made phone calls and is waiting to get more information.

Legislator Brown mentioned that Central Square is losing their senior citizen meal site. She has looked at alternative sites. OFA Director Larry Schmidt indicated that this is an Oswego County Opportunities (OCO) program and that they are looking at alternatives. Most sites are donated and OCO likes to avoid using a location where there is a fee as this impacts upon their budget. Chairman Proud asked that the committee be kept informed.

Youth Bureau Director Kathy Fenlon informed the committee that the Youth Bureau is working with the United Way and other community partners to update and print a Community Services Directory. This directory was printed annually for many years, but has not been done since 2004. The directory will be put on a disc and the United Way is arranging with local businesses to print a few hundred copies each which will then be distributed to agencies and schools. The directory is expected to be out in March 2007.

Both Commissioner Fran Lanigan and Public Health Director Kathy Smith indicated that their departments are expecting several retirements in January 2007.

At 10:52 Legislator Santore moved to adjourn, second by Legislator Seager. All in favor.