

HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
JUNE 30, 2021

HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT: Clary, Campbell, Skellie, Ward, Wilson

HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT: Ferguson (Zoom), Losaw

SUPERVISORS: Hall, Henke, Hicks, O'Brien

Debra Prehoda, Clerk

Roger Wickes, County Attorney

Al Nolette, County Treasurer

Melissa Fitch, County Administrator

AGENDA AS PRESENTED IN COMMITTEE NOTICE:

1) Call to Order

2) Accept Minutes – May 26, 2021

3) Department Reports/Requests:

A. Youth Bureau

1. Youth Board Appointments

2. Agency Updates

B. Public Health

1. Preschool Services Coordinator – EI Program

2. Epidemiology and Lab Capacity (ELC) Funding for Schools

3. Appointment of Director of Public Health

4. Miscellaneous

C. Social Services

1. Department Updates

D. Veterans

1. Staffing Request – Backfill Part-time Bus Driver

4) Other Business

5) Adjournment

Chairwoman Clary called the meeting to order at 10:02 A.M.

A motion to accept the minutes of the May 26, 2021 meeting was moved by Mr. Campbell, seconded by Mr. Ward and Wilson, and adopted.

DEPARTMENT REPORTS/REQUESTS:

YOUTH BUREAU – Mike Gray, Director, addressed the following items:

- Youth Board Appointments – A motion to reappoint J. Anthony Jordan, Town of Jackson, Kathy Jo McIntyre, Town of Granville, Chrys Nestle, Town of Hartford, and appoint Drew Carson and Kaylee Osterhautd, Town of Kingsbury and Brandon Chenier and Emily Powers, Town of Granville to the Washington County Youth Advisory Board was moved by Mr. Campbell, seconded by Messrs. Skellie and Ward and adopted.
- Agency Updates: He was approached by the State to explore the opportunity about merging with Warren County Youth Bureau. He met with the Warren County Commissioner of DSS and staff to put together a scope of services if the two agencies were to merge and what the State cost would include. Warren County met with their oversight committee and there was no push back on going forward with this proposal. He provided a brief overview of the scope of services. Warren County is looking to promote positive development wherever they can and they do not have a full time staff person doing that and Washington County does not either due to cuts from the State. If we were to merge, we would provide them with a 50% Youth Bureau person to promote youth development as well as for Washington County and it would allow us to do more and are asked all the time to do more but have to say no to like school districts programming. The scope of services would cover

all that cost and would not increase any local cost to Warren County but we would be compensated through the contract to provide those services to Warren County and he thinks it would increase our position for future funding as grant funds become available. He would like to meet with County officials to discuss this further to work on a scope of services prior to budget. He feels this is a great opportunity for the County. Mr. Campbell, Budget Officer, mentioned including this in our shared services submission. If the merger moved forward, he would need to hire a Youth Program Coordinator at a grade 14 and estimates with fringe it would cost \$63,000. The amount given to Warren County for this merger proposal was \$105,000 and probably receive 60% reimbursement from the State. The salary and fringe would be covered under the contract and the term of the contract also needs to be determine; i.e. two-years, four-years. The State will need to approve this merger and he does not anticipate any reluctance. Across the State there are two other counties that have joined together. Anticipates this merger would start January 1, 2022. A motion to allow the Youth Bureau Director to continue developing the plan and come back to committee with a fully development plan with the structure, shared services, and associated costs for the budgeting process was moved by Mr. Wilson, seconded by Mr. Campbell, and adopted.

- Youth Bureaus across the State are reporting that the Department of Health are actively going out in some areas and getting involved in recreation programs. In 2012 they expanded their roll. Any activity with risk of significant injury have to file as a day program. If approached by DOH reach out to the Youth Bureau and they would like to help. They could shut down smaller recreation programs and it would be expensive. The DOH and Comptroller have been checking to ensure staff have been cleared through the sex registry which they can do at no cost.
- In preparation of the budget, he plans on addressing people working out of class in his department with Personnel and will bring to budget.

PUBLIC HEALTH – Kathy Jo McIntyre, Interim Director, addressed the following items:

- Preschool Services Coordinator for Early Intervention Program – This backfill was approved a while ago but never filled and would now like to proceed to fill the position. A motion to approve moving forward with filling the Preschool Services Coordinator position and forward to the Personnel Committee for consideration was moved by Mr. Wilson, seconded by Mr. Campbell, and adopted.
- Epidemiology and Lab Capacity (ELC) Funding for Schools – The State is providing funding for Public Health to help schools do required testing in the fall but those requirements are unknown at this time. The budget for providing these services was due Monday. They have met with surrounding counties who all are trying to figure this out. Public Health is looking towards actually using that money and contracting with either the schools themselves if they have a laboratory service already in place that they are contracting with or they did have a meeting with a company that does testing in relation with Upstate Medical – Quadrant Biometrics. They are gathering information and will give schools options for what they want to do and keep 15% for administrative costs. County Administrator stated if they decide to go with this company they need to come back to committee for a waiver or request an RFP for those services. All school districts will get a share of this funding.

- Appointment of Director of Public Health – Continue to move along in the process and will be bringing more information to the committee.
- Miscellaneous:
 - Last per diem Clerk hired for COVID is finishing this week. They have kept her on payroll for the extra help with the pods. Pods are scheduled in Whitehall, at the fairgrounds and a college and community pod at the Burgoyne complex on July 17th and August 7th. Some of the private colleges are requiring students to be fully vaccinated. They are still able to use the paramedics with vaccinating and that has been a great partnership.
 - Rabies clinic on July 10th. Only required to have three clinics to meet grant requirements but will have more than that.

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES: Tammy DeLorme, Commissioner, addressed the following items:

- Department Updates:
 - ERAP – Today is the 30th day of this program where the priority groups were to be given that preferential status within the program. The Commissioner has been keeping Supervisors updated on the participation numbers and Mr. Campbell thanked the Commissioner for that information. The program will continue but categories will open up and the money will go more quickly.
 - Broadband - The State plans to start the office broadband work next week but currently a piece of equipment scheduled to be addressed is down and the office computers and phones are out of service.
 - Reviewed some programs that work within the child welfare system within DSS. Explained what happens when child welfare services are involved in families within the County because it is her intent to ask to sort of retool the department and rebuild a part of the foster care unit that was eliminated after the recession of 2008. They have child protective services and preventive services in foster care. The goal for all their services is to strengthen families keeping them intact, case management and refer families to other services. They also contract with other voluntary agencies that provide intensive preventive services and to provide more contact and access to additional support beyond what the caseworkers are able to do. Those contracts can cover 14 families. Try to leave kids in their home but if they have to be taken out look first for a relative or known adult and the goal is always reunification. If kinship does not work then placed in foster care and keep them as close as possible to home and school district and keeping siblings together. Forty six children are in foster care: 14 are free for adoption, 6 are in pre-adoptive homes leaving 8 that do not have pre-adoptive placement to look forward to and 26 are in family level homes within the County and 10 out those in higher level, 10 in higher level care like a group home or residential treatment center all outside county. There are not enough family foster homes in the County. Caseworkers are required once a month to see these children and their parents and arrange visitation. Many of these foster homes also have their own children and sometimes multiple placements that can create stress and sometimes the placement does not work out. Federal legislation called the Family First Prevention Services Act will be instituted in New York State on Oct. 1st that

makes significant changes to title IV-E of the social security act and the intent is to promote interventions that keep children safely at home with relatives or in the child's community whenever possible and that is their intent anyways. It changes the eligibility and claiming requirements that right now can be drawn for children that are in foster care and what it is doing nationwide is opening it up to allow for the funding to also support preventive services. The intent of the law is to provide a higher quality of care in those congregate settings and more preventive services. Through the State, the County has 62% reimbursement on preventative services but that is not the case throughout the country. The Commissioner stated the fiscal impact of the implementation of this legislation will be greater if we don't have children that are in homes where they can have the sole focus of the families and have their needs attended to and addressed at the same time as DSS is providing services to parents those kids are going to be in foster care longer. With more homes they would be able to shorten that length of time and care and prevent some of those higher level placements. The foster care unit was cut back in 2008 and have utilized outside agencies since 2011. She would like to rebuild the program and start recruiting and licensing families again. DSS would be the direct communication with them as opposed to going through another agency and have the sole focus to be able to control for not putting other children in those homes. The Commissioner wants to be able to rebuild that program and will be asking for that at budget time. They do not have the positions now for this foster care rebuild but have other vacancies that has resulted in at least \$240,000 unspent and could consider starting this year prior to budget. Talking with Rob York, Community Services/Mental Health about that agency providing the required assessment services and will come to the committee about making those arrangements.

VETERANS – Ken Winchell, Director, addressed the following items:

- Staffing Request – Backfill Part-time Bus Driver – Requesting to backfill and it is an as needed position. A motion to approve backfill, part-time bus driver, was moved by Mr. Wilson, seconded by Mr. Skellie, and adopted.
- Adirondack Peer to Peer Program - Mentioned a few activities scheduled this month in the County and for more information contact the Veterans Office or Nicole Trottier, Program Coordinator at Warren County.

OTHER BUSINESS:

OFA – Gina Cantanucci-Mitchell, Director, addressed the following items:

- Updates:
 - American Rescue Plan – Received \$241,243 and looking to put that in the 2022 budget unless other opportunities arise and possibly use to purchase vehicles if the state approves.
 - NYSOFA will be providing addition unmet needs funds, 100% State funding through the State Office for Aging, in the amount of \$85,000 to spend by the end of March 2022 and will focus on using the funds for their wait list for in-home services but home care aides are difficult to find. Otherwise will look into using the funding to

- expand transportation services possibly looking at non-traditional programs like the go go grandparents' model and uplift model.
- Two congregate meal sites will be starting to serve meals, Kingsbury and Cambridge, subcontractors. They have been open most of the time throughout the pandemic offering recreational and educational activities. In conversations with the American Legion in Whitehall where the Whitehall meal site is located and under our jurisdiction about opening up.
 - Mr. Campbell recognized Chairwoman's Clary efforts in getting Hudson Headwater Health Services to the Salem area. She stated it was a collaborative effort.

The meeting adjourned at 11:09 A.M.

Debra Prehoda, Clerk
Washington County Board of Supervisors