

HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE
Monday, March 11, 2024 - 10:30 AM

JoePete Wilson, Chairperson
Charles Harrington, Vice-Chairperson

Chairman Wilson called this Human Services Committee to order at 11:20 am with the following Supervisors in attendance: Clayton Barber, Matthew Brassard, Chris Clark, Shaun Gilliland, Charlie Harrington, Kenneth Hughes, Steve McNally, Jim Monty, Cathleen Reusser, Favor Smith, Matthew Stanley, Michael Tyler, Joe Pete Wilson, Meg Wood and Mark Wright. Robin DeLoria, Derek Doty and Davina Thurston were excused.

Department Heads present: Angie Allen, Linda Beers, Judy Garrison, Krissy Leerkes, Mike Mascarenas and Terri Morse.

WILSON: We'll call human services to order and ready to go here's Angie Allen from Social Services.

ALLEN: Good morning everyone. In terms of my report, does anyone have any questions? Any thoughts?

REUSSER: Your summer picnic traditionally has been at the golf course?

ALLEN: No that's actually the union, the CSEA.

REUSSER: Is that? Okay thank you for the correction.

ALLEN: Yup and the one that we do is right out here in the front lawn, I cook the burgers.

MASCARENAS: Yes I can connect you to the union membership if you have an issue.

ALLEN: Any questions?

WILSON: Anybody?

ALLEN: I know the last meeting I be boxed so I figured I keep this one nice and short for you all that way meeting minutes could be contained a little bit easier. Well, happy Monday. Thanks guys.

WILSON: Mental Health, Terri Morse

MORSE: Good morning everyone. I wanted to ask you first if you had any questions about my report before I dig into a couple items I want to bring to your attention and then resolutions. Great. Okay so one of the things I wanted to bring to your attention is I brought forth a resolution at the ways and means committee meeting about Joseph P. Dwyer arraignment that we have in Essex county in 2022, we meaning the county through the community services board we received \$100,000 in 2023, we received another \$100,000, in 2024 we'll receive another \$104,000. We did an RFP in 2023 for this funding and it was awarded to an organization called Homeward Bound Adirondacks and so I am asking them to come to the board meeting the Human Services

board meeting in June to make a presentation because they'll have a little under a year of their services and they'll have a better report to share. Do you have any questions about that? That topic or anything?

The other thing I wanted to bring to your attention is that in November of last year in Lake Placid and in Moriah we hosted an event called Community Conversations and the topic of it was about the connection between childhood trauma and then adult mental health and substance use concerns how that manifests itself. In April, we are hosting four more community conversations throughout Essex County. We are doing one at the Mountain View Campus in Elizabethtown, Schroon Lake on April 18, Willsboro on April 23 and then Ticonderoga Elementary School on April 25 for those entities that I just mentioned usually the town supervisor would make a presentation of some kind, speak on how this topic effects their constituents. If you don't want to do that I will certainly find one of your colleagues maybe that would be willing to do that but Derek Doty did participate in the Lake Placid one and Tom Scozzafava participated in the Moriah one so I'm going to have one of these flyers put in your boxes but we will be reaching out to those four towns or if maybe Shaun didn't want to do it maybe Mr. Hughes you would want to given that most your students go there? Just in case. That is it for my points that I want to bring to your attention I was just going to go through resolutions.

We have a few items that we want to transition from 2023 budget to our 2024 budget carry overs first of all, let me rewind. In item #1 on my resolution is for a carryover from the SAMHSA grant from year three to year four in the amount of \$75,045, so this is additional money that would attach itself to year four funding.

RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING A BUDGET AMENDMENT IN THE MENTAL HEALTH DEPARTMENT INCREASING REVENUES AND APPROPRIATIONS IN THE AMOUNT OF \$75,045.00, CARRY OVER YEAR 3 SAMHSA FUNDS. Wright, Brassard

WILSON: Any questions? All in favor aye.

MORSE: The other resolution about carry overs internally within the county is we have three carry overs that we want to do. The first one is about carrying over the LGU Opioid settlement funding that's the community services board opioid settlement money not the county opioid settlement money. That amount is \$20,582. Sorry, I was wrong on that amount it's \$98,654.97 distributed by Mental Health Association and the Prevention Team.

RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING A BUDGET AMENDMENT IN THE MENTAL HEALTH DEPARTMENT INCREASING REVENUES AND APPROPRIATIONS IN THE AMOUNT OF \$98,654.97, CARRY OVER 2023 MENTAL HEALTH ASSOCIATION AND PREVENTION TEAM FUNDS. Brassard, Hughes.

WILSON: Any questions? All in favor aye, any opposed – motion carries.

MORSE: I would also like to carry over suicide prevention coalition funding in the amount \$5,617.79.

WILSON: Is that a separate resolution?

MORSE: Yes, well it is part of all my carry overs.

RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING A BUDGET AMENDMENT IN THE MENTAL HEALTH DEPARTMENT INCREASING REVENUES AND APPROPRIATIONS IN THE AMOUNT OF

\$5,617.79, CARRY OVER 2023 SUICIDE PREVENTION COALITION FUNDS. Wright, Brassard.

WILSON: Any questions? All in favor aye, any opposed – motion carries.

MORSE: And then as you see item letter c we are not doing that resolution so I'm taking that off the table.

MASCARENAS: Yeah this is something that Terri and I spoke about late last week and it missed the meeting scheduling and I want to bring that project to Building & Facilities prior to making a determination on renovation. The folks that know this sit on that committee know how we prioritize those projects that happen. The department heads typically don't understand that because they have their own needs in their department and how that works and how funds are allocated for those things so you know we have a lot going on and to even see if we have the capacity to get it done is something we've got to look at.

MORSE: Thank you. And then the final resolution is at the community services board level authorizing an appointment of JoAnn Husslein and Dr. Kristin Mack to members of the community services board.

RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE APPOINTMENT OF JO ANN HUSSLEIN AND DR. KRISTIN MACK AS MEMBERS OF THE ESSEX COUNTY COMMUNITY SERVICES BOARD (CSB) FOR A TERM EFFECTIVE 2/14/2024 – 12/31/2025. Wright, Hughes

WILSON: Any questions? All in favor, aye, any opposed – motion carries. Thank you.

MORSE: That concludes my report.

WILSON: Any other questions for Terri? Alright, thank you very much. And Public Health, Linda Beers.

BEERS: Good morning. I'm going to do my resolutions first. I do have one you don't have. It comes up three times a year. My quarterly public advisory council meeting when that met last week and I would like a motion to approve the meeting minutes and the policies and procedures for that. It's a resolution adopting and approving the revised policies and procedures for the quarterly reports for the Home Health and the public health unit signed by Dr. Celotti at the PAC meeting on 3/5/2024.

RESOLUTION ADOPTING AND APPROVING THE REVISED POLICIES AND PROCEDURES AND QUARTERLY REPORTS FOR THE HOME HEALTH SERVICES AND PUBLIC HEALTH UNIT APPROVED BY THE PROFESSIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL (PAC) AND PUBLIC HEALTH ADVISORY COUNCIL (PHAC) ON 3/5/2024. Harrington, Wright

WILSON: Any questions? All in favor, aye, any opposed – motion carries. Thank you.

BEERS: Alright my second resolution is, this is unique and I'm hoping I get your support on this. Mountain Lake Services came to us and they are doing more early intervention and we are the only early intervention provider in our county that does evaluations exclusively for us and they also do the majority of our services that is OT, PT, Speech and SI recognized as a mandated service and I've been talking about this a long time and like every county around us have been

short in meeting the needs of our children. You were gracious enough last year or the year before to allow me to have a speech pathologist that you thought my solve some of this weight lift. I advertised it. I went to colleges. I went everywhere and to no avail we never hired one that speech pathologist position still stands in my budget because I moved it forward thinking I could. In the intern Mountain Lake Services came to me and said, we continue to fall short and I know they will because there is never enough funding and it's not a mandated service for them either and they've been doing this for eons I came from that department years and years ago so I really know how tight they try to run it staff turnover and lots of things have caused significant delays for our county anyway they asked if there was anything we could do. I talked to Mike Mascarenas we talked about this and I'm asking if you would be willing to move \$70,000 out of my budget in a contract with Mountain Lake Services to increase or help include an evaluation within the 45 day period something we haven't met and create a timeline and increase therapies of OT, PT and speech the reason for this request is Children's Services unit has been allocated the funds and in the current budget. The money would be better allocated to support Mountain Lake Services. They did provide documentation that shows actually it is \$109,914 deficit that they have that threatens our programs so I would like to support them with \$70,000 towards that deficit.

**RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE COUNTY CHAIRMAN OR COUNTY MANAGER TO EXECUTE A CONTRACT WITH THE HEALTH DEPARTMENT AND MOUNTAIN LAKE SERVICES IN THE AMOUNT OF \$70,000.00 FOR EARLY INTERVENTION SERVICES.
Wright, Wood**

WILSON: Any questions?

MASCARENAS: So just so the board knows I do support Linda on this. We talked extensively about it. This is mandated something we have to do so she had the position, she advertised it several times over the last couple years. We failed to attract a candidate. This isn't a way to help in solving the problem just a different way of getting there. This will be an annual contract that if it's not working we will have the opportunity to pull it back and hopefully meet some of the needs of early intervention and it is a solution moving forward but we'll have time see so I absolutely do support Linda in this.

HUGHES: Linda, good morning. Just a quick question, do we know why they find themselves in a deficit?

BEERS: Sure the reimbursement rate is lower than it costs to do quite honestly that's been a struggle across the state. Mountain Lake Services evaluation teams get together and they go to the parent's home which in our county is a lot right so they are driving there. We've had trouble securing and keeping evaluators and honestly not because people really left but this workforce is more aging out. The people that are in it are still the people I've worked with years ago and many of them are retiring and we really are struggling to attract a new workforce to this field because you're going to hang your own shingle and then do all your own taxes, do all of your own paperwork so Mountain Lake Services has had this team, evaluation team together for I was in it 15 years ago and they used to have more than one when Margie Carter closed that also was another hit to our county with really reduced services so right now they are the only one and I don't suspect anybody else will come to their aid anytime soon.

HUGHES: Have we ever done something like this before with Mountain Lake Services? Filling a gap like this?

BEERS: Not to my knowledge.

HUGHES: And is there a concern that because reimbursable rates are so low that we are going to have to continue to do this in the future? And is that sustainable?

MASCARENAS: We do kind of do this now. It's not filling the gap but she absolutely has contracts with Mountain Lake Services they see a certain level of her population now that is what is set up but I think losing this service is going to cost her greater issue than having that position that we are struggling to hire.

HUGHES: Understood.

BEERS: So to answer your question too as Mike said, we didn't set this up as a gift it's a contract and we buy in twice a year. We will give them the \$70,000 divided in half and in the contract we wrote a letter, I didn't write it yet but with your permission saying that they will decrease the 45 day wait limit which is what you have to have from the minute you meet a child to the time they get evaluated that's the timeline and I will tell you I haven't met in so long I can't even begin to tell you because there's too many kids and not enough evaluators and they are struggling and I have looked at their books and Lucianna Celotti has met with them. She actually has been going there and working with their new staff to try and get them to find any efficiencies they can to make those services smoother.

HUGHES: Thank you.

HARRINGTON: Yes, I'm not surprised that you have been unable to hire a speech pathologist and perhaps if the money allotment were drastically increased you would. With that having been said, what is the availability of speech therapists?

BEERS: I agree with that any amount of money. I will just tell you there is a significant shortage of speech pathologists and I'm going to tell you the person that was interested in the job was the person from Mountain Lake Services and had she come here I would had of lost the entire evaluation team and I would never not had taken her but that's what we're doing we are robbing Peter to pay Paul. We had and I will just throw this out there Mike Diskin's granddaughter was on, we were so excited because she had gotten out of school and in the end she had taken a job with BOCES instead of us which was a school calendar for the same pay. We weren't that far off but she had a school calendar verses working year round for us. So yeah, I thought the salary was fair. I really did. I thought we did a nice job but nobody is attracting a speech pathologist because there just isn't enough people so you know, as we get into raising the rising more just another organization is going to come to you and say we need people and you need to raise my salary that is my concern because it is a shortage of staffing there's not enough people coming out of colleges right now with speech pathology degrees. I'd also quickly blame the Office of Professions so it used to be a four year degree of course now they've made it a Masters you can't do it unless you have a Master's degree that dropped out all kinds of people that used to be able to do the job with a four year degree but the Office of Professions said oh, no you're getting it you need 2 more years of college. All the speech pathologist that have done it with me over the years that are amazing all had four year degrees not master's degrees but that's what is happening.

HARRINGTON: I don't know I've got an answer for availability of speech therapists?

BEERS: None. Mountain Lake Services ran an ad as well to try to hire one. Schools are struggling

to get speech paths in their own school districts and they would probably pay them equal to us with a school calendar so the availability of speech pathologist with a Master's degree is very hard to get right and equally that shift just happened so we have all these four year student that need to go on and get their masters and then their question is, "Is the juice worth the squeeze?" Where's Dan Palmer? Are they going to make enough money where it will validate the master's degree right? And I will tell you just so it's on the Governor's proposal we are arguing and advocating that many other fields they have things like an OTA an Occupational Therapist Assistant, we have Physical Therapist Assistant there's no such assistant in speech and I think Speech Pathologist can work with somebody or meet with you, evaluate kiddo and say they can't say, they can't do o and they could work with somebody like a speech pathology assistant and have them do that right now that's not a pathway and we're working hard to see it. Massachusetts and states around have all gone to this because you can't have the higher echelon of everybody all the time to do every service you just don't need that so we're working hard to see if we can do that in New York State and that would really help and offer a lot of jobs that don't require master's degrees. So, we're working on it but I don't see that happening quickly.

WILSON: All in favor of this resolution aye, any opposed – motion carries thank you.

BEERS: And I have a quick resolution, \$5,000.00 from the Lake Placid Rotary Club for the WIC and Pick this summer, a resolution to accept that.

**RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING A BUDGET AMENDMENT IN THE HEALTH DEPARTMENT INCREASING REVENUES AND APPROPRIATIONS IN THE AMOUNT OF \$5,000.00, LAKE PLACID ROTARY CLUB DONATION FOR THE WIC AND PICK SUMMER 2024 PROJECT.
Hughes, Wright**

WILSON: All in favor of this resolution aye, any opposed – motion carries thank you.

BEERS: And quickly on my report, just to point out I changed the format following Terri's and following Angie's more. You're going to get more numbers and I'm hoping you like that better instead of all the wordy stuff you're going to get actual numbers of what we do and quarterly my staff will track and chart them so you can see them in a grid format not just so they are numbers but what they were like to the next week.

Also, you know that I represent you all at NYSAC and I was just there with the board as well who I was able to eat lunch with thank you. Also big campaign, 45 is the new 50. 45 is the time in which you get colorectal exams so bottoms up here and we'll pushing that. We are in every bar and in all the bars in Essex County they have bottoms up coasters. Just saying, bottoms up coasters are in all your local bars and they tell you when you flip them over to go get colorectal exams but that is true 45 is the new 50 and thanks to Krissy Leerkes it hasn't aired yet but we made sure commercials with Great Range and Dr. Halloran here in Elizabethtown, Krissy Leerkes and a gentlemen who has just gone through colon cancer is on the other side of it and Krissy did an amazing interview and it's just amazing and hoping it sways hearts and minds to get that done. Also on the solar eclipse I heard lots of that and I do want to tell you Essex County Health Department has lent its support for communication on this and mostly everybody is communicating to the people coming but we're working hard on communicating with the people that live here. Like stay in place, make a plan, don't try to go out that day, and don't travel. One of the facts that I thought was amazing on a call with the state yesterday just so you know Office of Emergency Service is on this they are making calls all the time, they really are. They are opening up a an EOC in Ray Brook that day so there are things going on but I think it was 250 miles give or take 50% of New York can day trip to anyway to totality so that is what, if it's a nice

day anybody could expect which would be a real grid lock on the roads. Anyway that's what I have in my report. Please read the rabies clinic reports you can see when it is coming to your town or your neighboring town and I really point out the new respiratory guidance for Covid take a peek at that it's no more 5 day isolation it has gone down and they are really trying to normalize it like the flu.

WILSON: Thank you Linda and thanks, I like the new format with the data.

BEERS: Oh, you do? Good, thank you.

MASCARENAS: The obvious question to ask Linda is the and you don't have to answer that the 5 day from the CDC I'm getting a lot of questions and calls from some of you regarding the law and Covid time and all of that, that's still in place so until July 31st it looks like pending, passing of the budget so the Governor has detailed that in the legislative plan so if that budget passes Covid time will go away on July 31st.

WILSON: Thanks Mike. Krissy, the floor is yours.

LEERKES: Thank you. So you have my report that does not follow Angie's or Terri's or now Linda's format so stay tuned on that.

HUGHES: You do you.

LEERKES: I will probably. Just a few things, on your desks you do have colored flyers where we constantly do a lot of outreach and education about scamming because obviously older adults are hit hard so just last week social security did a Slam the Scam campaign so we just want to get that information up in your town halls you can share it however you like if you need anything a digit copy let me know and I can email it out to you but besides that I don't have a ton to report but I can field any questions.

WILSON: Any questions?

LEERKES: I do want to thank Mr. Monty for sharing I know that you attended at the NYSAC conference a presentation by Greg Olsen our Director for New York State Office for the Aging and Becky Previa. Becky reached out and said you and her had a conversation or you and Greg or somebody so I want to thank you for sharing that data. One of the documents I haven't seen yet so I appreciate that I got that from you.

MONTY: You're welcome.

WILSON: Anything else for Krissy?

McNALLY: No not for Krissy. Do we have any thoughts on the paid family leave? The state is now offering public employees are you familiar with that?

MASCARENAS: I have no thought on that right now. Counties have different types of paid family leave. Anything you would look at in terms of additional would be required to be negotiated with the local unit. Currently depending on the issue we have, obviously workers comp for people that were hurt at work. We have disability for people who are disabled for a variety of reasons there's lots of different things and we have sick leave bank people can get. We also have paid or unpaid

family leave depending on an individual's special circumstances so there's a lot to it.

McNALLY: There's a lot to it.

MASCARENAS: Private is supposed to be insured.

McNALLY: This is an opt in, opt out.

MASCARENAS: Yeah, employees typically pay for it in these situations.

McNALLY: It just became available for public employees. I know that I have been getting a lot of questions on it from my employees because I have some younger people that are having births and that twelve week program seems to sound good to them.

MASCARENAS: Yeah give Ken and I time to look at this a little bit more because most of them are buy in and most employees don't understand that so most people that want it don't realize that's fine but you have to pay for it and that can be a problem too. I think the paid benefit is also kind of minimal.

McNALLY: I think it's \$3700 or something?

MASCARENAS: Yeah but there's lots of options. Again if you have a long term employee that works here and most of them have accumulated a certain amount of benefit time that they don't need to do that and if you have a legitimate circumstance the sick leave bank typically picks that up where you have some of those new employees that may have unfortunate circumstances early on in their careers that could happen again, the sick leave bank normally would pick that up if it's a legitimate reason so there's lots of things to talk about again, anything that would be benefitted now we have to speak to the union about that in terms of if we're going to match that cost or how that's going to work.

McNALLY: What makes it enticing for the employees I spoke to is that if the birth of a child or caring for a sick relative or something like that you pay I believe?

MASCARENAS: Yeah so right now the birth of a child there's about three different things you can do in our county disability absolutely is allowable, there's two ways you can do that the county can get the disability check, you can use your benefit time and get a full check and then get a certain amount of your benefit time back based upon that amount of disability. You can choose not to use your benefit time and you could just take the disability check which is probably about 1/3

McNALLY: But I don't think you can take disability if you're the employee and your spouse has a baby?

MASCARENAS: No, you cannot.

McNALLY: Right and that is what's enticing with this program. In the public sector I know a couple of individuals who took twelve weeks off at 2/3rds pay with the birth of their child so I'm just letting you know I'm getting pounded with questions.

HUGHES: In the public sector?

McNALLY: No, in the private sector. It's going to eventually turn to a mandated program.

WILSON: Alright, anything else?

MONTY: I just want to clarify that Ike, Ken and Matt were also in on that Office for the Aging seminar as well.

WILSON: Alright, thank you all. Then we are adjourned. Thank you.

As there was no further discussion to come before this Human Services committee it was adjourned at 11:40 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Judith Garrison, Clerk
Board of Supervisors