

HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE

Tuesday, February 22, 2022

Meeting Chambers/Zoom

Committee Members Present

Brandee DuBois, Vice-Chairwoman, City of Oneida

Mary Cavanagh, City of Oneida, via Zoom

John Pinard, Town of Lenox

Melissa During, Town of Lincoln, via Zoom

Others Present

Michael Fitzgerald, Commissioner, Social Services

Eric Faisst, Director, Public Health

Ron Raymer, Director, Veterans Agency

Kathryn Hopkins, Mental Health Clinic Treatment Program Coordinator, via Zoom

Tina Louis, Director, Madison County Youth Bureau

Aubrey Kirley, School & Youth Development Program Coordinator & Safe Harbour Program

Tina Wayland Smith, County Attorney

Mark Scimone, County Administrator

Samantha Field, Public Information Officer

Keith Lummis, Assistant Director of Finance

Rachel Copland, MORE Employment Coordinator for Court Innovation

Peggy LeClair, via Zoom

Beth Piersall, Confidential Secretary, Mental Health

Call Meeting to Order

Supervisor Cavanagh called the meeting to order at 10:35 a.m., indicating that there was a quorum for the Health and Human Services Committee.

Approve Minutes

The Health and Human Services Committee reviewed the meeting minutes for January 25, 2022.

A motion was made by Supervisor Pinard to approve the minutes, seconded by Supervisor During and carried unanimously.

Mental Health

Kathryn Hopkins, Mental Health Clinic Treatment Program Coordinator noted there were no resolutions or updates to report this month for the Mental Health Department.

Public Health

Director Faisst provided an update on COVID-19. Over the recent 3 day weekend, there were 10 cases per day. Madison County had a 92% decrease in the number of positive cases since January.

Social Services

Commissioner Michael Fitzgerald presented the Commissioners Report. These numbers are through the month of January 2022. The JD line is at 13.7%, Social Services is currently seeking NYS placement for a few of the youth. Supervisor Pinard had a question regarding the salaries line. Commissioner Fitzgerald explained that Social Services currently has three clerical vacancies that haven't been filled.

Commissioner Fitzgerald presented the following resolutions to the Committee:

Authorizing the Chairman to Enter into an Agreement with Community Action Program, Inc.

A motion was made by Supervisor Pinard to approve the resolution, seconded by Supervisor Cavanagh and carried unanimously.

Authorizing the Modification of the 2021 Adopted Budget (Energy Crisis/HEAP)

A motion was made by Supervisor Pinard to approve the resolution, seconded by Supervisor Cavanagh and carried unanimously.

Fixing Foster Boarding Home Rates

A motion was made by Supervisor Pinard to approve the resolution, seconded by Supervisor During and carried unanimously.

Commissioner Fitzgerald provided the following detailed information regarding the foster boarding rate increase.

*They apply to all children in foster care (currently, 23), adoptions (89), and Kinship (4) so 116 children as of today.

*The rate increase is retroactive to April 1, 2021 and is required under state regulation for a minimum of 1 percent increase. Madison County is raising rates by 1 percent for normal and special categories and by \$15 per day for exceptional rates.

*The 2021 gross cost of raising the rates equates to less than \$60,000, with the vast majority of the costs (\$57,000) associated with adoptions, where we get approximately 70 percent reimbursement. The net local cost is less than \$20,000 which is within the DSS budget lines for 2021.

Part of the Adoptive and Foster Care legal settlement with NYS requires every local DSS to begin to pay the maximum state aid rate (MSAR) as of July 2023. Counties that are not currently paying those rates (including Madison County, along with 38 other upstate counties) have the option to do half in July 2022 and the remaining half in 2023. Those numbers are bigger with foster care coming in at \$14,000 and adoption at \$154,000 additional expenses for 2022 for a local cost increase of about \$61,000. Full annualized additional costs are \$49,000 for foster care and \$390,000 for adoption. Fortunately, the local cost increase in the out years will be about \$165,000.

NYPWA and NYSAC are taking up very strongly worded resolutions that calls on the State of New York to pay for these additional costs that they settled (like they did on the assigned counsel lawsuit).

OCFS is maintaining that there's "room" in the foster care block grant to absorb the costs but as you can see at an annual increase of \$165,000 for local costs (that is based on the current caseload with the children all being kept at the levels of payment they are), there's a significant local county impact.

Authorizing the Modification of the 2022 Adopted Budget (Code Blue)

A motion was made by Supervisor Pinard to approve the resolution, seconded by Supervisor Cavanagh and carried unanimously.

HEAP benefits have been extended until April 29, 2022. Applications for emergency HEAP benefits begins February 22, 2022. This is for individuals who have no fuel or are in danger of having their electricity shut off.

Commissioner Fitzgerald reported that a resolution abolishing a Welfare Employment Representative Position and creating a Senior Welfare Employment Representative position will go before the Government Operations Committee meeting and to the full Board on March 8th. This position will assist with the Rent Supplement Program. There is no local impact with this position.

Veterans Agency

Director Ron Raymer provided program updates and stated that the agency continues to meet client's needs and connect them with the services. The Veterans Agency welcomed Jermaine Graham to their staff on February 22nd. Total client contact for January was 394 and so far for February it is 287. The Oneida Elks Lodge will present a \$6000 grant to the Madison County Veterans Service Agency on March 8th for "Operation Care Drop".

Youth Bureau

Director Tina Louis presented the following resolutions to the Committee:

Authorizing the Amendment of the Madison County Youth Bureau Youth Board By-Laws

A motion was made by Supervisor Pinard to approve the resolution, seconded by Supervisor During and carried unanimously.

Authorizing the Modification of the 2022 Adopted County Budget (Bequest)

A motion was made by Supervisor Cavanagh to approve the resolution, seconded by Supervisor Pinard and carried unanimously.

Preferred Agenda

The Committee unanimously agreed to include all resolutions in their Preferred Agenda with the exception of the resolution Authorizing the Modification of the 2022 Adopted County Budget (Bequest), upon motion by Supervisor Cavanagh and seconded by Supervisor Pinard. .

Motion to Adjourn

There being no further business to discuss, a motion was made by Supervisor Pinard to adjourn the meeting at 11:00 a.m., seconded by Supervisor Cavanagh and carried unanimously.

Next meeting: March 22, 2022 at 10:30 a.m.

Respectfully submitted by Beth Piersall for Vice-Chairwoman Brandee DuBois