

Health & Human Services Committee

March 30, 2021

Minutes

Members Present: Committee Chair John Peck, Legislators Allen Drake, James Nabywaniec, Robert Ferris, Corey Grant, Anthony Doldo, Board Chair Scott Gray

Others Present: Legislators William Johnson, Michael Montigelli, Daniel McBride, Patrick Jareo, and Frances Calarco, County Administrator Robert Hagemann, Deputy Administrator Sarah Baldwin, County Attorney David Paulsen, Conf. Asst. for Fiscal Affairs and Information Technology Director Gregory Hudson, Community Services Director Timothy Ruetten, Office for the Aging Director Kathy Kazakoff, Public Health Director Ginger Hall, Real Property Tax Services Director Roxanne Burns, Secretary Torri Richmire, Confidential Secretary Jill Jones

Chairman Peck called the meeting to order at 6:15 p.m. The Committee approved the minutes of the February Committee meeting, as written. Chairman Peck offered privilege of the floor however no one present wished to speak.

Chairman Peck introduced a resolution Appointing Members to the Jefferson County Office for the Aging Advisory Council and entertained a motion for consideration. A motion was duly made by Legislator Nabywaniec seconded by Legislator Doldo and there being no discussion, the Committee agreed to sponsor the resolution as presented.

Chairman Peck said before the next two resolutions are considered he asked Community Services Director Tim Ruetten to give some context to the need for these resolutions.

Community Services Director Ruetten advised that one of the responsibilities of the Community Services Department under Mental Health Law is to assist the Courts in establishing competency (Criminal Procedure Law §730) of an individual to understand the proceedings against them. If a person is unable to understand the proceedings they have to be restored to competency which is done at a State facility. Prior to December 31, 2019 these costs were shared 50% State and 50% County; as of January 1, 2020 the NYS Governor's Budget reflected those costs at 100% County responsibility. The State sets their own rates for these facilities which currently range from \$1,100 - \$1,400 per day.

Mr. Ruetten explained that if a person's competency is in question, a (NYS) judge will issue an order to have the person examined by a psychiatrist and if deemed incompetent to understand the proceeding and/or assist in their defense, they are sent to a (NYS) psychiatric facility until such time as their competency is restored, with no time limit. He said the services provided at these facilities are only to bring the person back to competency to stand trial and assist in their defense, they do not address any other mental health needs. Community Services is not involved in any step of the process until they receive a bill months after the person has been in the facility. He said basic information sharing with counties in terms of diagnosis, meds,

discharge, etc., is allowed but not done regularly. Director Ruetten said he has a power point presentation that goes into greater detail about this for interested legislators.

Mr. Ruetten advised that it is impossible to accurately budget for this expense because you don't know in any given year how many people will need services, however they generally budget \$50,000 annually. People in service for the last few years are: 2018 - 1 (\$180,000); 2019 - 0; 2020 - 3 total; and 2021- 2 since January. Chairman Peck indicated the next two resolutions will address costs for 2020 and 2021.

Chairman Peck introduced a resolution Amending the 2020 County Budget Relative to Community Services Department and entertained a motion for consideration. A motion was duly made by Legislator Ferris and seconded by Legislator Drake. There was discussion concerning the frustration in having these costs passed down to the local level at 100%; use of contingency fund monies for this purpose; the need for more transparency with the whole process; and there should be a better way to get mental health services or treatment for these individuals before they get into the criminal justice system. The Committee begrudgingly agreed to sponsor the resolution as presented.

Chairman Peck introduced a resolution Amending the 2021 County Budget Relative to Community Services and entertained a motion for consideration. A motion was duly made by Legislator Doldo and seconded by Legislator Nabywaniec. Mr. Hagemann advised that the \$244,000 in this resolution covers costs from January - April (plus the \$50,000 budgeted) and further budget amendments may be needed if the individuals remain in service for a longer period of time, which will be a substantial amount of money. He said the New York Association of Counties has tried and continues to work on making changes to this program as it has major effects on every county in the State. Chairman Peck advised that the Committee would be happy to provide any support the Community Services Board may want to create a better situation, as we do not begrudge helping these individuals, but a better way of operating that is more transparent would be desired. The Committee agreed to sponsor the resolution as presented, with reservation.

Chairman Peck introduced a resolution Amending the 2021 County Budget to Accept Funding for Veterans Peer Support (P2P) Program and entertained a motion for consideration. A motion was duly made by Legislator Doldo seconded by Legislator Ferris and there being no discussion, the Committee agreed to sponsor the resolution as presented.

Chairman Peck introduced a resolution Amending the 2021 County Budget Relative to Community Services Department and entertained a motion for consideration. A motion was duly made by Legislator Doldo seconded by Legislator Nabywaniec and there being no discussion, the Committee agreed to sponsor the resolution as presented.

Chairman Peck introduced a resolution Authorizing Agreements with Area Veterinarians for Preparation of Specimens for Rabies Testing and entertained a motion for consideration. A motion was duly made by Legislator Grant seconded by Legislator Doldo and there being no discussion, the Committee agreed to sponsor the resolution as presented.

Chairman Peck introduced a resolution Appointing Member to Jefferson County Public Health Services Professional Advisory Committee and entertained a motion for consideration. A motion was duly made by Legislator Doldo seconded by Legislator Nabywaniec and there being no discussion, the Committee agreed to sponsor the resolution as presented.

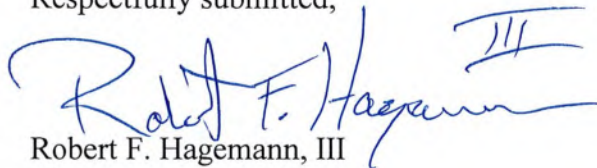
Chairman Peck said the Public Health Department received an Home Health Care Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems (HCAHPS) Award of Distinction from Fazzi Associates for patient satisfaction in 2019 for the Home Healthcare Program. He said it is a very high honor and commended Public Health for providing outstanding service to our home health care clients and being recognized.

Chairman Peck introduced Kathleen Kazakoff, the new Director of the Office for the Aging Department who was present.

Chairman Peck noted that Jefferson County has had 49% of the eligible population receive their first dose of Covid-19 vaccine and said it is important to encourage people to receive the vaccine when they are eligible. Legislator Doldo expressed appreciation to the Public Health employees and other County employees who are helping with the vaccination clinics as he has heard many positive comments about how well it is run, and to Chairman Gray for being available for any questions or concerns throughout this process. Chairman Gray noted that in our 7 county Region, Jefferson County is leading in the % of population that is vaccinated, due to the efforts of Public Health.

There being no further business of the Committee, on a motion by Legislator Nabywaniec seconded by Legislator Doldo and unanimously carried, the meeting was adjourned at 6:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Robert F. Hagemann, III". The signature is stylized with a large initial "R" and "H".

Robert F. Hagemann, III
Clerk of the Board