

Health & Human Services Committee
December 5, 2023
Minutes

Members Present: Committee Chair Anthony Doldo, Legislators Allen Drake, John Peck, Jeremiah Maxon, Frances Calarco, Steel Potter, Corey Grant, Board Chair William Johnson

Others Present: Legislators Robert Cantwell, Philip Reed, Michael Montigelli, Daniel McBride, James Nabywaniec, Patrick Jareo, and Robert Ferris, County Administrator Robert Hagemann, Deputy Administrator Sarah Baldwin, County Attorney David Paulsen, Conf. Asst. for Fiscal Affairs Ashley Durham, Office for the Aging Director Bethany Munn, Community Services Director Tim Ruetten, Public Health Director Steve Jennings, DSS Commissioner Karen Marcum, Veterans Service Agency Director David Pavey, Human Resources Director Valerie Nugent, Planning Director Michael Bourcy, Treasurer Accountant Anne Converse, Confidential Secretary Jill Jones

Chairman Doldo called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. The Committee approved the minutes of the November meeting as written. Chairman Doldo offered Privilege of the Floor.

Bill Stoodley, 632 State Street, Watertown and representing the Jefferson County Funeral Directors Association thanked the Committee and Board for hearing their situation when they made a presentation a couple months ago regarding indigent burial reimbursements.

DSS Commissioner Karen Marcum commended her staff who went above and beyond with regard to an autistic, non-verbal teenage male who was placed into the care and custody of Jefferson County DSS in August, 2023. He was declined by every placement resource they have in New York State, claiming lack of resources to meet his developmental needs; even out of state resources told them no. She said Social Services is responsible for the care and custody of youth when there are no foster care resources, so two local agencies provided space for this youth, and caseworkers as well as other staff at DSS became his caregivers. They changed his diaper, helped him bathe, learned how to communicate with him, took him to school, prepared his meals, and taught him how to use the toilet. He improved so much that the school asked them to maintain his care. She said this is nothing her staff are trained to do and they took care of him with no questions asked. There were two workers per shift when he was not in school, and as of this last pay period staff had provided over 2,700 additional hours (outside of normal work hours) caring for this youth. Today he is on his way to a placement resource that is well equipped to meet his needs. She said too often we let complaints and the loud voices of dismay muffle the good work that is being done at their agency. She said the employees bonded with this young man and will miss him. She hoped everyone could find a special way to show our appreciation for these amazing employees.

DSS Commissioner Marcum updated the Committee with regard to the DSS Child Welfare Division Operational Analysis Action Plan that was detailed and put in place earlier in 2023 (copy attached for file reference). She provided a status update to each of the following fourteen recommendations: Enhance the current quality review process or establish a dedicated Quality

Assurance position that is committed exclusively to case review; Enhance the process to monitor and review board rates; Grade A position over Ongoing; Enhance the case transfer process; Ensure accurate listing of Foster Care Children by IV-E status; Ensure accurate listing of Foster Care Children by TANF-EAF status; Update the Sensitive Case Protocol; Increase transparency into Community Services Worker (CSW) utilization and availability; Offer employee wellness benefits targeted toward mental and physical health; Improve worker safety; Increase caseworker positions; Provide County vehicles and improve mileage reimbursement process; Examine ways to incentivize on-call shifts; Review the use of Personal Mobile Technology. Legislator Peck said this update takes to task many of the issues that were previously discussed and DSS deserves kudos for continuing to move these issues forward.

Chairman Doldo introduced a resolution Authorizing Agreement for Provision of the Aging Nutrition Program through the Office for the Aging and entertained a motion for consideration. A motion was duly made by Legislator Potter seconded by Legislator Calarco and there being no discussion, the Committee agreed to sponsor the resolution as presented.

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

Chairman Doldo introduced a resolution Amending the 2023 County Budget Relative to Mental Health Programs and entertained a motion for consideration. A motion was duly made by Legislator Maxon seconded by Legislator Grant and there being no discussion, the Committee agreed to sponsor the resolution as presented.

Chairman Doldo introduced a resolution Amending the 2023 County Budget to Allocate Additional State Aid for Credo Community Center for the Treatment of Addictions and entertained a motion for consideration. A motion was duly made by Legislator Peck seconded by Legislator Potter and there being no discussion, the Committee agreed to sponsor the resolution as presented.

Chairman Doldo introduced a resolution Authorizing Agreement with NYS Department of Education Approved Agency for the Provision of Special Education Services for Preschool Children with Disabilities and entertained a motion for consideration. A motion was duly made by Legislator Calarco seconded by Legislator Maxon and there being no discussion, the Committee agreed to sponsor the resolution as presented.

Chairman Doldo introduced a resolution Authorizing Agreement for Provision of Related Services in Connection with the Program for Preschool Children with Disabilities and entertained a motion for consideration. A motion was duly made by Legislator Maxon seconded by Legislator Potter and there being no discussion, the Committee agreed to sponsor the resolution as presented.

Chairman Doldo introduced a resolution Appointing Members to the Community Services Board and entertained a motion for consideration. A motion was duly made by Legislator Maxon seconded by Legislator Peck and there being no discussion, the Committee agreed to sponsor the resolution as presented.

Chairman Doldo introduced a resolution Authorizing an Agreement with CHJC Community Mental Health Clinic for the Provision of Mental Health Services in the Jefferson County Correctional Facility and entertained a motion for consideration. A motion was duly made by Legislator Maxon seconded by Legislator Grant and there being no discussion, the Committee agreed to sponsor the resolution as presented.

Chairman Doldo introduced a resolution Authorizing Agreements for Provision of Certain Professional Services to the Medical Examiner's Office and entertained a motion for consideration. A motion was duly made by Legislator Maxon seconded by Legislator Calarco and there being no discussion, the Committee agreed to sponsor the resolution as presented.

Chairman Doldo introduced a resolution Appointing Member to the Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Advisory Board and entertained a motion for consideration. A motion was duly made by Legislator Peck seconded by Legislator Grant and there being no discussion, the Committee agreed to sponsor the resolution as presented.

Chairman Doldo introduced a resolution Authorizing 2023/24 Comprehensive Planning Resource Allocation Agreement with the NYS Office of Children & Family Services and Authorizing a Contractual Youth Sports and Education Program Agreement for one-time Investments in Infrastructure for Physical Activity and entertained a motion for consideration. A motion was duly made by Legislator Peck seconded by Legislator Maxon and there being no discussion, the Committee agreed to sponsor the resolution as presented.

Chairman Doldo introduced a resolution Amending 2023 County Budget Relative to Social Service Department Accounts and entertained a motion for consideration. A motion was duly made by Legislator Calarco seconded by Legislator Maxon and there being no discussion, the Committee agreed to sponsor the resolution as presented.

Chairman Doldo introduced a resolution Affirming Schedule for Funeral Home Rates in Relation to Indigent Burials and entertained a motion for consideration. A motion was duly made by Legislator Maxon and seconded by Legislator Grant. Legislator Calarco said she would abstain from voting on the resolution due to a conflict of interest. Chairman Doldo thanked everyone who was involved in this process including the funeral homes for bringing the Board's attention to the fact that an increase in reimbursement was needed. He said indigent burials are very important to the less fortunate in the community and thanked the Committee for recognizing the need for an increase in the rate and supporting this resolution. There being no further discussion, the Committee agreed to sponsor the resolution as presented. Legislator Montigelli thanked Chairman Doldo for his extra efforts and research on this topic as it helped him understand the indigent burial process.

There being no further business of the Committee, on a motion by Legislator Maxon seconded by Legislator Potter and unanimously carried, the meeting was adjourned at 6:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Robert F. Hagemann, III
Clerk of the Board