

**HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE  
MINUTES**

**TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 19, 2019  
3:30 P.M.**

PRESENT: Rob Sassi, Chairman  
Michael Amo, Mike Anagnostakis, Kevindaryán Luján, James D. O'Donnell,  
Janet Sutherland, Laurie R. Tautel, Peter V. Tuohy

ALSO

PRESENT: L. Stephen Brescia, Chairman  
Katie Bonelli, Majority Leader  
Antoinette Reed, Legislative Counsel  
Harry Porr, Acting County Executive  
Dan Bloomer, Director, Operations and Cost Control  
Darcie Miller, Commissioner of Social Services and Mental Health  
Todd Craner, Fiscal Director, Department of Social Services  
Ann Marie Maglione, Director, Office for the Aging  
Colleen Grogan, Chief Budget Analyst  
Gretchen Riordan, Budget Analyst

Mr. Sassi opened the committee meeting at 3:30 p.m. and asked everyone to stand for the Pledge of Allegiance. All committee members were present.

Ms. Tautel moved request supplemental appropriation of \$90,000.00 in federal funds from the Office of Children and Family Services. The federal funds are being made available as a result of the Child Abuse/Neglect Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA) as well as the Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act of 2016 (CARA) and are to be used specifically for states to improve their response to families and infants affected by substance abuse disorders. Orange County will contract for a full-time behavioral health consultant to work alongside CPS and preventive services caseworkers to identify and support the behavioral health needs of both the adults and children where substance abuse is an issue. The funds are to be used only to reimburse expenditures beginning December 1, 2018 and ending November 30, 2019. OCFS intends to make such funds available each year for the next five years contingent on NYS receiving federal CAPTA/CARA funds, seconded by Mr. Tuohy.

Motion carried 7-1 with Legislators Amo, Anagnostakis, O'Donnell, Sutherland, Tautel, Tuohy and Sassi voting in favor and Legislator Luján abstaining.

On the agenda were the highlighted important issues from the Department of Social Services monthly report.

Ms. Miller explained that at year end they were down 15% in Family Assistance and 12% in Temporary Assistance with the numbers being attributed to the 3.3% unemployment rate in Orange County. SNAP benefits have decreased and HEAP remains very active with staff working diligently. Homeless numbers continue to be high due to the lack of permanent housing and they are working on the state plan that must be submitted by March 29, 2019 to the Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance. Medicaid remains consistent but they anticipate a change with increased responsibility to local Department of Social Services offices regarding long-term care. They are working closely with the Department of Health to support that work and final updates will be provided as final decisions are made by July 1, 2019. Child Protective Services caseloads continue to be high, Foster Care had an average of 402 placements in 2018, Adult Protective Services remained consistent and Child Support Collection came in at approximately \$42 million for 2018.

Mr. Amo asked what Ms. Miller would recommend as the next step with respect to homeless in Orange County. Ms. Miller replied that the state budget mentioned the need to increase shelter space; however, there was a push back as they really need permanent housing. She recently provided a letter of support for an agency that was putting forth an application to expand supported housing. They had 80 beds approved through Homeless Housing and Assistance Program (HHAP); however, they will not be available until 2020. In addition, she met with Community Development Acting Director Nicole Andersen on how those funds are used in the community and how they may help to support permanent housing in Orange County. The plan being composed for the state will allow the legislature to see the history of the work they have been doing as well as their ongoing planning. They have also met to discuss the amount that they put into temporary housing and could their local county taxation that is being used for temporary housing be used as a rent stipend for permanent housing and housing first model.

Mr. Amo asked what they could do to reduce the opportunity to homelessness. Ms. Miller replied that they work closely with Hudson Valley Legal Services who have funds to help prevent homelessness and prevent evictions. They also encourage through their community provider system that people come forward prior to becoming homeless but the most important thing is to prevent homelessness.

Mr. Amo commented that if unemployment has dropped then homelessness should follow the same pattern.

Ms. Miller replied no, as rents increase when the economy becomes richer and they have few legal Single Resident Occupancy (SRO) in the county with a single person receiving benefits only getting \$412.00 a month.

Mr. Luján addressed the need for a housing advocate and the need to invest in longer term housing in Orange County would be the game changer.

Mr. Luján pointed out that even though people are employed many are still under the poverty line.

Ms. Sutherland added that the housing first initiative is key.

Ms. Miller agreed.

Mr. Amo suggested they look into what they can do before they start the next budget cycle.

Mr. Sassi introduced Dan Bloomer as the new Director of Operations and Cost Control for Orange County.

On the agenda was a report from the Office for the Aging.

Ms. Maglione presented the committee with a handout (see original minutes) and provided a brief description on the Orange County Office for the Aging. They take care of adults 60 years of age and older throughout the county with Orange County having over 70,000 residents that are over the age of 60. They are a non-medical office that provides information, assistance, home delivered and congregate meals (7 sites throughout the county), in home personal care, legal services, caregiving, respite, health, nutrition counseling, education, volunteer opportunities, insurance information, counseling, tax preparation and home energy assistance.

Ms. Miller added that the Lower Hudson Valley Fall Prevention Coalition has been formed with Dutchess, Putnam, Westchester, Rockland and Orange counties in collaboration with Vassar Hospital, Orange Regional Medical Center and Westchester Medical Center as hospitals currently do not have a discharge plan in place.

The meeting adjourned at 3:53 p.m.