

**HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE
MINUTES**

**TUESDAY, MARCH 21, 2023
3:30 P.M.**

PRESENT: Janet Sutherland, Chairwoman
Michael Amo, Mike Anagnostakis, Glenn R. Ehlers, Genesis Ramos, Laurie R. Tautel,
Peter V. Tuohy

ALSO

PRESENT: Katherine E. Bonelli, Chairwoman
Barry J. Cheney, Legislator
Betsy N. Abraham, Esq., Legislative Counsel
Richard B. Golden, Esq., County Attorney
Carol C. Pierce, Esq., Deputy County Attorney
Darcie Miller, Commissioner of Social Services and Mental Health
Todd Craner, Fiscal Director, Department of Social Services
Kerry Gallagher, Commissioner of Finance
Ann Marie Maglione, Director, Office for the Aging
Liz Matis, Budget Analyst
Christopher Molinelli, Executive Director, HONORehg,
President, Orange County Housing Consortium

Ms. Sutherland 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 to accept and appropriate COLA funds from the New York State Office for the Aging, \$131,398.00,
Seconded by Ms. Ramos.

Motion carried. All in favor.

On the agenda was an update on Office for the Aging.

Ms. Maglione provided a brief update on the Orange County Office for the Aging. They have an approximately \$8 million budget and are currently working on their 2024 preliminary budget. They are focusing on loneliness and isolation, which was a huge issue during the pandemic with many seniors still afraid to go out and, in some cases, have forgotten how to socialize. They have a new day program called "Discover Orange" where once a month with the assistance of the Tourism Department and Historians Office they visit various locations in the County. They have visited Shingle House in the Town of Warwick to tour an archaeological dig followed by lunch, toured the Fireman's Museum and City Winery in the Village of Montgomery followed by lunch at City Winery. Next month, they will be in the Village of Highland Falls for a walking tour of West Point including the West Point Library followed by lunch. In the past they held Senior Games for two weeks in September; however, they are now doing one event a month. In April, they will have a fishing derby with mocktails and a Sip and Paint at the Boat House at Thomas Bull Park in Montgomery. In February, they hosted a movie "80 for Brady" with 125 seniors attending and they will be hosting a

movie every other month. They are also addressing nutrition, education and physical activity in order to keep people active and healthy. In collaboration with the Tourism Department, they are working on a program called "Welcome Wagon" where volunteers greet and welcome people at Stewart Airport, Woodbury Commons, Legoland and farmers markets. New York State is preparing their first master plan for aging and all counties were required to submit their top three issues with aging and for Orange County that was housing, transportation and aides. Their goal is to keep people independent as long as possible, and aides are a huge asset to do that. As the New York State Representative for the U. S. Aging Board, she will be in Washington, D.C. next month to express her concerns on the budget and non-support for aging. Lastly, they are conducting a five-week wellness series for caregivers which is being in both Spanish and English.

Ms. Sutherland requested that a list of all their upcoming events be forwarded to the committee.

On the agenda was an update on HONORehg and the Point-In-Time Count.

Mr. Molinelli addressed the committee and presented a brief overview of HONORehg and a hard copy of the Orange County Housing Consortium (on file in Clerk, Legislative Office). HONORehg is in the process of completing a nine-month \$3.6 million renovation including sensory rooms to accommodate children that have gone through the trauma of homelessness and/or are sensory deprived. He highlighted the following in the handout on Orange County Housing Consortium. The Orange County Continuum of Care (CoC) program was designed to promote a communitywide commitment to end homelessness. The mission of the (CoC) is to improve the quality of life for their communities by cultivating and promoting access to housing opportunities. Any municipality that receives United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) funding is responsible to conduct a Point-In-Time count (PIT) annually during the last ten days of January. The Point-In-Time count allows the community to get the most accurate picture of homeless people in their area and provide critical feedback to (HUD). The PIT count is twofold as it counts those residing in shelters and those in uninhabitable conditions. The preparation for the count occurs weeks and/or months prior to the count with numerous participants assisting including agencies, local law enforcement and hospitals. Nationally the Point-In-Time Count was 582,462 and counting. He also provided information on emergency housing vouchers, unsheltered raw data, sheltered raw data, and a three year comparison.

Ms. Sutherland thanked Mr. Molinelli for the presentation and asked if a tour of HONOR would be possible once the renovations have been completed, especially the sensory room. Mr. Molinelli responded yes; and he looks forward to conducting a tour of the building.

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

Ms. Miller explained that SNAP continues to be a challenge but with the assistance of staff from other units they are now processing applications from February. HEAP applications continue to come in and during a recent audit from New York State they received an A+ rating. Emergency Housing placement numbers have returned to pre-pandemic numbers with all providers completely full. Both the Senate and Assembly have proposed returning the Federal Medical Assistance Percentage (eFMAP) federal pass-thru to counties; however, it will ultimately be the

decision of the Majority, Minority and Governor Hochul. Family Assessment Response (FAR) has balanced out and Child Protective Services has seen a reduction in reporting. Raise the Age numbers remain low and to date no referrals have been received for Raise the Lower Age and Foster Care numbers were at 242.

Chairwoman Bonelli asked for an update on the Fuel Fund. Ms. Miller replied that she did not have that information with her but would send a report to committee members.

Mr. Amo asked about the staffing impact of the medicaid recertification on the Department of Social Services. Ms. Miller replied that they have seven new employees in that division and 22,000 open cases for Orange County and that should be manageable.

Mr. Craner added that they have twelve months to complete the recertification.

The meeting adjourned at 4:09 p.m.