

**HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE
MINUTES**

**TUESDAY, APRIL 18, 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
Harold J. Porr, III, Deputy County Executive
Lisa M. James, Assistant County Attorney
Darcie Miller, Commissioner of Social Services and Mental Health
Todd Craner, Fiscal Director, Department of Social Services
Laurence LaDue, Commissioner, Valley View Center
Christian Farrell, Director, Veterans Service Agency
David Andryshak, Cemetery Superintendent, Veterans Service Agency
Erin Sztendor, Budget Analyst

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 with the exception of Legislator Ramos, who arrived at 3:35 p.m.

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

Ms. Miller explained that SNAP continues to be a challenge with applications tripling; however, with assistance from other units they are now between 30 and 45 days in processing applications. The HEAP season has closed but they are still processing payments and the Fuel Fund has disbursed \$66,400.00 of the \$100,000.00 they were provided. Emergency Housing placement remains a struggle. Child Protective Services has seen a slight decrease. Raise the Age numbers remain low and to date no referrals have been received for Raise the Lower Age and Foster Care numbers continue to decline. The Child Support Collection Unit has received the accolade for "Best Performing Large County Unit of 2022." Lastly, the Children Mental Health Awareness Walk will be from 9:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m. on Saturday, May 6, 2023, at Algonquin Park in the City of Newburgh.

Mr. Anagnostakis asked if they are seeing signs of a recession. Ms. Miller replied not yet.

Mr. Amo moved request to accept and appropriate the Local Assistance and Tribal Consistency Fund award from the U.S. Department of the Treasury in the amount of \$50,000.00 for 2022. The source of the funds is federal grant funds. The 2022 funds have already been received, with an additional \$50,000.00 expected to be released in 2023. The grant will be

used to purchase and install a monument at the Veteran's Cemetery in Goshen. The grant does not require a match. Requesting that said funds be appropriated into the Veteran's Department operating budget, \$50,000.00, seconded by Mr. Tuohy.

Mr. Farrell explained that during the last fifteen years they have held events at the cemetery to honor the forty soldiers that were killed on September 29, 1918, during the Battle of Hindenburg Line. These funds will be used to create a permanent memorial honoring their sacrifice.

Mr. Andryshak added that they are in the process of designing a large granite and bronze structure that will include a brief history of the battle and the names of the forty Orange County residents that died. Per the stipulations of the grant this is a domestic project, and they are hopeful that it will be installed prior to this year's ceremony.

Mr. Porr stated that that the name "Newburgh Goldback's" was adopted by the Newburgh Enlarged City School District after World War I because Newburgh native Walter Alison was one of the soldiers that died that day, and his football sweater was discovered with the fallen soldier and to honor him they named them the "Newburgh Goldback's".

Mr. Anagnostakis asked if any of the forty soldiers were buried within Orange County and if so, have they considered reinternment at the cemetery. Mr. Andryshak replied yes, there are two brothers that died that day, and they are both buried in Middletown; however, he was not sure if any others were buried in Orange County. He never contemplated reinternment, but it could be something to consider.

Legislators Tuohy and Tautel expressed their gratitude to Mr. Andryshak and his staff for all their hard work at the cemetery.

Mr. Andryshak added that they are in the process of applying for another grant to create a POW/MIA memorial.

Motion carried. All in favor.

An update on the Veterans' Service Agency.

Mr. Farrell presented the committee with a brief update on the department. Orange County has 22,000 veterans and they had 257 burials in 2022. The PACT Act is a law that expands VA health care and benefits for veterans who were exposed to toxic substances. Since its implementation they have added to the list of health conditions that they "assume" or "presume" are caused by exposure to these substances. This law helps to provide generations of veterans and their families with the care and benefits they've earned and deserve. Veterans can call the Orange County Veteran Service Agency to learn more about it and to find out if they qualify. They are having their Annual Spring Picnic and Resource Fair on Saturday, May 6, 2023, from 11:00 am to 3:00 pm at the Thomas Bull Memorial Park's Day Camp Pavilion in Montgomery. The twenty dollar Fresh Connect Food Vouchers should be received from New York State in June for local farmers markets. Once

received they will have representatives at the local farm markets for distribution. They are currently planning their next free movie night at the Flagship Premium Cinemas in the village of Monroe and once the date and time is determined he will share it with the committee. Lastly, the non-for-profit organization called the Committee for the Families of War Veterans and website: <http://familiesofwarveterans.org/>. This organization assists veterans that are struggling financially to pay their bills. They can apply online and they must have a copy of their DD214 (Certificate of Release or Discharge from Active Duty).

The meeting adjourned at 4:04 p.m.