

**HEALTH AND MENTAL HEALTH COMMITTEE
MINUTES**

**TUESDAY, MAY 22, 2018
4:00 P.M.**

PRESENT: Mike Anagnostakis, Chairman
Michael Amo, James D. O'Donnell, Joel Sierra, Janet Sutherland, Laurie R. Tautel,
Peter V. Tuohy

ALSO

PRESENT: L. Stephen Brescia, Chairman
Katie Bonelli, Majority Leader
Barry J. Cheney, Legislator
Thomas J. Faggione, Legislator
Antoinette Reed, Legislative Counsel
Darcie Miller, Commissioner of Social Services and Mental Health
Laurence LaDue, Commissioner, Valley View Center
Donna Strecker, Director of Finance, Valley View Center
Colleen Grogan, Chief Budget Analyst

Mr. Anagnostakis opened the committee meeting at 4:00 p.m. and asked everyone to stand for the Pledge of Allegiance. All committee members were present with the exception of Legislator Stegenga who was absent.

On the agenda was an update on the non-state closure for Mental Health Services.

Ms. Miller expressed her appreciation for their support surrounding mental health services specifically those related to the state operated services that were negotiated for Orange County. Through the advocacy from state staff, discussions held here with this committee and with Assemblypersons Gunther and Skoufis a meeting was held with New York State Office of Mental Health Commissioner Sullivan. It was determined at the meeting that the ACT TEAM would continue to be state operated, would be staffed immediately to accommodate 48 individuals and over the next six months they would aggressively seek staffing to increase the number back up to 68 slots. She will closely monitor this to ensure they follow through with that increase. In addition, the Friendship Club would continue to be state operated with shared staff and they have committed to increasing their family care homes which were significantly decreased. This would also help homeless housing issues in Orange County. However, on a temporary emergency basis they have closed the state operated community residence on the grounds of the Middletown Psychiatric Center and relocated them into a transitional residence increasing the census of the transitional residence from 24 to 30. In their words this was done because of a "staffing crisis" and this would only be temporary as they would return and reopen the twelve bed community residence. In her opinion, that is extremely important because they negotiated 15 supportive apartment beds and an additional FTE for housing care management, which she will be monitoring closely. When the Chester 12 bed community residence closed for the same reasons, the county did not receive any additional services and they do not intend to reopen the Chester community residence.

Ms. Tautel asked if the Chester residency had significant remodeling done prior to its closing. Ms. Miller replied that the residence was closed for a year while they repaired two bathrooms.

Ms. Tautel asked if they moved back in for a few months before being closed. Ms. Miller replied yes.

Ms. Tautel asked if it was scheduled to be reopened. Ms. Miller replied no, she has tried to negotiate a deal for the house to be used with the Child Advocacy Center but it has not been available.

Ms. Miller added that the Forensic Support Team will continue to have one FTE from the state; however, it was originally a three FTE team but in 2015 it was permanently decreased to one. She advocates constantly for those positions to be filled and Commissioner Sullivan has agreed to meet with her and Assemblywoman Gunther as the assemblywoman may have some appropriation that could be used to expand their Forensic Jail Diversion Program.

Mr. Anagnostakis thanked Ms. Miller for all she has done for the people of Orange County and that this committee is always open to her.

Mr. Amo expressed his concern for services to the residents of Orange County. He understands that Commissioner Sullivan is throwing them crumbs but what is the system problem and how do they keep the heat on the people in Albany to ensure that this keeps moving forward and not regress. These individuals are mentally ill and need services yet the New York State Office of Mental Health keeps cutting beds.

Mr. Anagnostakis agreed, if they need to act as a legislative body they would look to Ms. Miller for input and act accordingly.

Ms. Miller stated that she would bring any new information to them in the form of updates as she understands their interest and ability to assist with advocating this issue.

Mr. Amo asked if their Consumer Advisory Board is as effective as it could be or was there something they could be doing better. Ms. Miller replied that a few of their providers are considering applying for ESHA funding and she was contemplating on providing signed letters of support for those that have Housing First models.

Mr. Amo noted that they have all been asked to write letters of support for their constituents and municipalities so why not have the committee provide a letter of support in addition to Ms. Miller's.

Ms. Miller replied that she would be meeting with the providers again on June 14, 2018 and she would share with them the legislature's willingness to offer letters of support to increase the competitiveness of their applications.

Legislative Counsel Reed expressed her concerns with issuing a blanket letter of support for an application as the agencies should be vetted.

Mr. Anagnostakis agreed and noted that they would not proceed without the advice of Legislative Counsel Reed.

Mr. O'Donnell agreed with Legislative Counsel Reed as the keyword was competitive and they need to be cautious in supporting one and not another.

Mr. Amo clarified that he supports the concept.

Legislative Counsel Reed noted that a blanket resolution could be done supporting the concept which could be provided to Ms. Miller who could supply it to the providers as part of their applications.

Chairman Brescia thanked Ms. Miller for her arduous work on this issue and his fellow legislators who brought it to this committee and the full legislature.

Mr. Anagnostakis agreed that without the legislature's acting nothing would have been done. However, it is important to remember that it is not who receives the credit but the outcome.

Mr. Amo asked if Commissioner Sullivan would be willing to come to the committee for a discussion on this issue. Ms. Miller replied that she would extend the invitation to Commissioner Sullivan.

Ms. Tautel thanked Ms. Miller and asked that they be kept informed with respect to the residences.

Ms. Miller reiterated that her position has not changed and she would be pleasantly surprised if the state was able to increase staffing and operate the service in full capacity.

Ms. Tautel moved request from Valley View to appropriate funds for a proposed 2018 capital expenditure to continue with residential unit refurbishments. Room finishes (wallcovering, handrails, signage, etc.) are dated, \$40,000.00, seconded by Mr. O'Donnell.

Ms. Tautel asked how many rooms the \$40,000.00 would cover. Mr. LaDue replied that these funds would be used to hire an architect and acquire designs. They currently have funding in place to eventually redo one unit at a time.

Mr. Anagnostakis asked about the previous appropriations. Mr. LaDue replied that they have not used very much as they realized they needed to hire an architect in order to form solid plan.

Mr. Amo asked if these improvements were geared toward marketing the facility for admissions. Mr. LaDue replied yes, as the facility is extremely outdated.

Ms. Sutherland added that while the facility is outdated it is extremely clean.

Mr. Anagnostakis asked if people have turned away from Valley View because of its appearance. Mr. LaDue replied that he is sure it has happened.

Mr. Tuohy asked if this would be paid through Valley View's reserve balance. Mr. LaDue replied yes, with 75% reimbursement from medicaid for a capital improvement.

Mr. Anagnostakis agreed with Ms. Sutherland and while the furniture and fixtures are outdated the facility is immaculate.

Mr. Cheney asked for the percentage that would be used toward the rooms. Mr. LaDue reiterated that the funds would be used toward an architect and design to determine the cost based on 30 rooms per unit. Once they have that information they will be back for a larger appropriation.

Chairman Brescia asked where the 75% reimbursement goes. Ms. Grogan replied that it was not actual reimbursement but a percentage built into their medicaid rate as the revenues they bring in will offset their operating account.

Motion carried. All in favor

Mr. O'Donnell moved request to appropriate funds for a proposed 2018 capital expenditure to replace various flooring, \$160,000.00, seconded by Mr. Tuohy.

Mr. Tuohy asked if this would replace the flooring in all eleven units. Mr. LaDue replied no, the floors would be done based on priority.

Motion carried. All in favor.

Ms. Sutherland moved request to appropriate funds for a proposed 2018 capital expenditure to engineer construction drawings and renovate sun porch windows, \$275,000.00, seconded by Mr. Sierra.

Mr. LaDue explained that the windows in the Couser buildings sunrooms are single paned glass and as a result pipes freeze.

Mr. Anagnostakis asked for the number of windows. Mr. LaDue replied eight.

Ms. Tautel asked what percentage of the \$275,000.00 would be used for engineering and what percentage would be used for windows. Mr. LaDue replied that the engineering would be approximately 10% or less.

Mr. Anagnostakis asked if the Department of Public Works assisted with this issue. Mr. LaDue replied the Anthony Sole the Director of Plant Operations worked on the issue.

Mr. Cheney pointed out that the Department of Public Works has on call contracts with certain engineers and architects.

Motion carried. All in favor.

Ms. Tautel moved request to appropriate funds for a proposed 2018 capital expenditure to begin upgrading resident furniture, \$133,000.00, seconded by Mr. Sierra.

Mr. Anagnostakis asked for the time frame for completion. Mr. LaDue replied approximately two years with this appropriation primarily for the Couser building.

Mr. Tuohy asked if they had looked at the cost of replacing all the furniture as opposed to piecemeal. Mr. LaDue replied that they had not and it would be a huge undertaking.

Mr. Anagnostakis asked if they would be shocked by that figure. Mr. LaDue replied that he does not see an issue with doing it piece-by-piece and while they have the surplus now, they need to be cautious about reducing the surplus.

Motion carried. All in favor.

Mr. O'Donnell moved request to appropriate funds for a proposed 2018 capital expenditure to upgrade food service equipment, \$50,000.00, seconded by Mr. Tuohy.

Motion carried. All in favor.

On the agenda was the monthly report on Valley View.

Mr. LaDue explained that IGT funding was budgeted for \$6 million with \$2.3 million having been received and other revenues at \$13.4 million. On the personal service side, personal services were at \$7 million, equipment at \$34,000.00, contractual at \$2.7 million and employee benefits at just under \$7 million.

Mr. LaDue added that the occupancy rate for April was at 92.32%. Medicaid utilization was at 44%, medicaid (HMO) at 28%, medicare at 17% and private pay at 8% and today's occupancy at 94.24%.

Mr. O' Donnell asked if they received any transfers from Sapphire Nursing Home. Mr. LaDue replied yes and he would get that number to the committee.

Ms. Sutherland commented that while visiting her grandmother she observed four former patients from the Sapphire Nursing Home.

Mr. Anagnostakis asked about the status of their audit. Mr. LaDue replied that it was nearly completed.

Mr. Amo moved resolution of the Orange County Legislature designating June 21 through June 27, 2018 as Helen Keller Deaf-Blind Awareness Week, seconded by Ms. Tautel.

Motion carried. All in favor.

The meeting adjourned at 4:46 p.m.