

**HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE
MINUTES**

**TUESDAY, JULY 18, 2023
3:30 P.M.**

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

ALSO

PRESENT: Katherine E. Bonelli, Chairwoman
Lisa M. James, Assistant County Attorney
Darcie Miller, Commissioner of Social Services and Mental Health
Kerry Gallagher, Commissioner of Finance
Christian Farrell, Director, Veterans Service Agency
Liz Matis, 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 Amo, who was absent.

Ms. Tautel moved to request supplemental appropriation to the capital projects budget for Veterans Memorial Cemetery Columbarium project. This project has been approved under the 2023 Capital Plan as Capital Project No. 134. Upon approval, a new capital project will be created, \$150,000.00 (bonding), seconded by Mr. Tuohy.

Mr. Farrell explained that this would be a matching columbarium with ninety-six units. The existing columbarium has two units available.

Mr. Tuohy asked how long it would take to build. Mr. Farrell replied that he was unsure, but the company will be here in early August.

Mr. Tuohy asked if arrangements could be made to hold cremains until the new columbarium is built. Mr. Farrell replied yes.

Motion carried. All in favor.

Legislator Tautel expressed her gratitude to Mr. Farrell and his staff who assisted a disabled veteran during the recent flood disaster in her community.

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

Ms. Miller provided a brief overview of their outreach efforts during the recent flooding with the call center receiving approximately 1,300 calls over the past week in addition to the normal calls received. She explained that they have seen a slight increase in temporary and family assistance. SNAP applications have seen a small decrease in caseload size; however, applications remain high with 40% of applications being denied and 85% being denied for over income. HEAP

season closed with 25,000 payments and they are now in cooling season. Emergency Housing placement remains a struggle with all 386 shelter beds full resulting in hotel/motels being used. Medicaid recertifications remains busy. Child Protective Service numbers have increased, and Foster Care numbers continue to decline. They received one referral for Raising the Lower Age and Raise the Age numbers remain consistent.

Mr. Tuohy asked about vacancy issues at hotel/motels in the county. Ms. Miller replied that when hotel/motels are full they look at hotel/motels in other counties.

Mr. Tuohy asked about the significant increase in Child Protective Service (CPS) cases. Ms. Miller replied that they are trending back up to their pre COVID numbers.

Ms. Tautel asked about post COVID pandemic adoptions and are they starting to reach pre pandemic levels. Ms. Miller replied that of the 215 children in foster care, 16 are in pre adoptive homes with one child discharged for adoption.

Ms. Tautel commented that every county department has gone above and beyond for her community during this recent disaster.

Ms. Sutherland added that as a county and as community that is what we do.

The meeting adjourned at 3:54 p.m.