

**HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE  
MINUTES  
(REMOTELY)**

**TUESDAY, JULY 21, 2020  
3:30 P.M.**

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

ALSO

PRESENT: L. Stephen Brescia, Chairman  
Katie Bonelli, Majority Leader  
Leigh J. Benton, Legislator  
Barry J. Cheney, Legislator  
Kevin W. Hines, Legislator  
Kevindaryán Luján, Legislator  
Kathy Stegenga, Legislator  
John S. Vero, Legislator  
Antoinette Reed, Legislative Counsel  
Harold J. Porr, III, Deputy 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  
Stephen Knob, Director, Employment and Training  
Gretchen Riordan, Budget Analyst

Mr. Sassi opened the committee meeting at 3:31 p.m. and asked everyone to stand for the Pledge of Allegiance. All committee members were present with the exception of Legislator Anagnostakis who was absent.

Ms. Tautel moved request to accept \$44,505.00 in federal revenue in support of the Aging and Disability Resource Center (ADRC) program funded under the Coronavirus Preparedness and Response Supplemental Appropriation Act, seconded by Mr. O'Donnell.

Ms. Maglione explained that the funds would be used for virtual projects, a food pantry, Shoprite gift cards as the amount of people they serve meals to has doubled and to prepare for the possible second wave of the Coronavirus.

Motion carried. All in favor.

Mr. Tuohy moved request to accept \$618,557.00 in federal revenue in support of CARES, \$393,460.00 to be appropriated in the 2020 budget and remaining \$225,097.00 has been included in 2021 budget, seconded by Mr. O'Donnell.

Ms. Maglione explained that the funds would be used to help with their resources including overtime for staff and an outdoor freezer in preparation for a possible second wave. In addition, they subcontracted with Jewish Family Services of Orange County and RECAP who assisted them with grocery shopping, prescription drug shopping, meals and doctor's appointments.

Motion carried. All in favor.

Ms. Tautel moved request to accept \$189,621.00 in federal revenue in support of Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA), seconded by Mr. O'Donnell.

Ms. Maglione explained that they were able to use \$143,000.00 of the \$189,621.00 to supplant the overmatched county dollars as the county recognizes the needs of older adults and often place additional funds in the county match portion with the remaining funds used to support other areas.

Motion carried. All in favor.

Ms. Tautel moved request to accept COVID-19 Response Funding grant from Meals on Wheels, \$12,500.00, seconded by Mr. O'Donnell.

Ms. Maglione explained that as a member of the Meals on Wheels program they were able to apply for this grant when the pandemic hit, and purchased shelf stable meals with the funds.

Motion carried. All in favor.

Ms. Tautel moved request to accept COVID-19 Response Funding grant from Meals on Wheels, \$75,000.00, seconded by Mr. Tuohy.

Ms. Maglione credited Kevin Monahan, Nutrition Director, Office for the Aging who pursued any available funding or grants with this also going toward their food production.

Mr. Sassi expressed his appreciation to Ms. Maglione and her staff for pursuing these funds as it is a great deal of money that will be used for various items.

Motion carried. All in favor.

On the agenda was a Department Update from Ann Marie Maglione, Director, Office for the Aging.

Ms. Maglione commented that they are extremely busy, and she thanked her staff for all their hard work. Since they cannot go out and do their programs, they have started a virtual Elder Abuse Awareness Symposium, Nutrition Education and Awareness and Caregivers Support Group.

On the agenda was a Department Update from Stephen Knob, Director, Employment and Training.

Mr. Knob explained that their Seward Avenue Career Center in Middletown has opened with between 25% and 30% of the staff working at the location depending on the day. However, the Newburgh Career Center operated by the New York State Labor Department is not open but could reopen after Labor Day. They are seeing the public by appointment only, but everyone is pleased with the virtual services they implemented when the pandemic started in March. They contact over 600 unemployment recipients weekly to offer assistance and they have seen on average between 100 to 115 that were contacted are returning to work. The unemployment rate for Orange County was 11.9% in May and this time last year it was at approximately 4%. They have seen a slight increase as people continue to file unemployment claims which is something that they and the labor department are trying to figure out. They are in the process of getting their Summer Youth Employment Program up and running as it as it would have normally started in late May, early June. The New York State Division of Budget held onto those funds because they did not want to release the funds until they received information from local areas on how they would be operating their summer youth program under the current circumstances. The funds were finally dispersed about two weeks ago and they have been scrambling to get that up and running. Last year they serviced 225 kids; however, that would not be the case this year as they could not find enough places for the kids to work. Many of the kids work in summer camps in the cities of Newburgh and Middletown with most of those camps not operational this year. However, they will have students working with RECAP on the census count in the city of Newburgh, meal deliveries, the city of Port Jervis Trail Project in coordination with Orange/Ulster BOCES, Orange County Office for the Aging, Orange County Parks and Recreation and the Orange County Food Pantry in the Town of Cornwall. They will also offer virtual services depending on the number of kids they serve, and they will be maximizing the allocation the best they can, but it will be difficult to spend the entire allocation of approximately \$640,000.00.

Ms. Sutherland asked for the number of kids they anticipate employing and how they determine which kids are chosen. Mr. Knob replied that they were taking applications regardless, so they had around 125 applications that were on hold and they are hoping for 100 intakes. They have started intakes in Middletown and Port Jervis, and they will start Newburgh this week with a lot of the kids showing up and they are hopeful that they can get to 100. He does not think it will be a matter of turning kids away as they have a good pool of candidates as long as they bring the appropriate documentation.

Ms. Sutherland asked if there were any issues with students and their working card due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Mr. Knob replied no, schools have been fantastic, and all schools are open in one capacity or another and if a student needs a working card, they just need to contact their school district.

Ms. Tautel moved to request supplemental appropriation to the 2020 budget to receive and expend \$64,272.00 as a result of the SNAP bonus award allocation, seconded by Mr. O'Donnell.

Ms. Miller explained that the call center takes thousands of calls a month and these funds would be used to upgrade that call system.

Motion carried. All in favor.

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

Ms. Miller reported that Temporary Assistance and Family Assistance continue to trend downward, but they anticipate that changing because if people do not return to the workforce quickly, they will see an increase in applications. They have seen an increase in SNAP benefit cases as the applications have tripled, the HEAP benefit has been extended with payments continuing to go out, they have seen a slight increase in Child Protective Services and Raise the Age numbers remain low and manageable. Hotel/motel numbers increased because the shelter run by HONOR was doing isolation housing, but they anticipate HONOR returning families to the shelter. While there has been some hearsay that the eviction waiver may be extended beyond August they are preparing for its eventual end. They are working closely with Community Development who received state and federal funds that will assist them in putting a program in place to prevent evictions. If people are struggling to pay their rent and they have not paid it for the last two, three or four months it would behoove all of them to have these individuals maintain their stable housing versus them becoming homeless. They also have other partners such as Hudson Valley Legal Services who are able to fund up to 80% of the poverty level and they are ensuring that they are all working together in determining which eligibility program is best to avoid eviction. They have marketing material going out and if legislators know of anyone who is struggling to pay their rent please have them call 845-291-4000 in order to support them in maintaining their housing. They continue to see increases in medicaid with 105,448 residents of Orange County on medicaid as of June 2020. They lost a number of employees in their medicaid unit due to the early retirement incentive. Medicaid staff is 100% reimbursed and she thanked County Executive Neuhaus for his support in filling those positions; however, it takes approximately six months to a year to train them in managing a medicaid caseload. Lastly, New York State has a huge gap in their medicaid cost versus the ability to pay and the decisions was made to conduct a lookback for people who are applying for home health assistance through medicaid. In the past they would have done eligibility based on their current circumstances but just as with skilled nursing facilities and long-term care they need to do a five-year lookback and could eliminate people's ability to be eligible for home health aides.

The meeting adjourned at 4:01 p.m.