

**HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE
MINUTES**

**TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 17, 2019
3:30 P.M.**

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

ALSO

PRESENT: L. Stephen Brescia, Chairman
Katie Bonelli, Majority Leader
Barry J. Cheney, Legislator
Antoinette Reed, Legislative Counsel
Steven M. Gross, Commissioner, Human Resources
Alison Tyack, Director of Personnel Management, Human Resources
Irina Gelman M.D., Commissioner of Health
Christopher Ericson, Deputy Commissioner of Health
Michael Ventre, Deputy Commissioner of Health
Robert Deitrich, Director, Community Health Outreach
Darcie Miller, Commissioner of Social Services and Mental Health
Todd Craner, Fiscal Director, Department of Social Services
Laurence LaDue, Commissioner, Valley View Center
Donna Strecker, Director of Finance, Valley View Center
Ann Marie Maglione, Director, Office for the Aging

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 reallocate the
Employment and Training Director position
From Management Grade 24 to Management
Grade 25, seconded by Ms. Sutherland.

Mr. Gross addressed the committee and explained that this was presented to the Personnel and Compensation committee on Monday and passed unanimously. He presented the committee with a handout on management Grade 24 title listings and management Grade 25 title listings (see original minutes). The Director of Employment and Training oversees a staff of 60 employees and manages a \$8 million federally funded budget. The position should be appropriately classified as a Grade 25 which would fall in line with the Director of Probation, Director of Tourism and Director of Office for the Aging which are all Grade 25. In addition, the County Executive supports this reallocation.

Mr. Amo asked why this was being "piecemealed." Mr. Gross replied that management positions were brought forward to the Personnel and Compensation committee last month and tabled and it was pulled yesterday as they plan on retooling it before coming back to committee. This position and the Real Property position were both on the Personnel and Compensation committee agenda yesterday and the County Executive felt that the Real Property position was timely and given

that this position was 100% funded and the responsibilities in conjunction with the other titles, matched the grade 25 and that it was appropriate to move forward.

Mr. Amo stated that while he understood the reallocation for the Director of Real Property, he does not see the need for the reallocation of the Employment and Training Director at this time as he would like to see the full picture. In his opinion, it should be done when the other management positions are addressed.

Motion carried 5-1 with Legislators
O'Donnell, Sutherland, Tautel, Tuohy
and Sassi voting in favor and Legislator
Amo voting against.

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

Ms. Miller stated that Family Assistance and Safety Net cases continue to decline but SNAP benefits have increased slightly. They have seen an increased use of meals being served in soup kitchens in the Newburgh area and they encourage people to apply and determine their eligibility, and HEAP letters have gone out. The most significant change they have seen is in their homeless numbers. They have worked diligently with their community partners and have used some of their mandated county taxation that was being used to cover the cost for temporary housing with their partnership with HONOR housing and reallocated it to allow for a rent stipend in their Housing First pilot. Child Protective Service cases have increased and on October 1, 2019, 17-year-olds go into Raise the Age and they are beginning the process of looking at their submissions and staff time that goes into Raise the Age in order to see if they have enough hours and cost to support additional staff.

Ms. Tautel noted that they have 192 more SNAP cases in July as compared to the totality for last year and do they have enough to get them through the rest of the year. Ms. Miller replied that SNAP is a federal benefit and does not have a limit as it comes down to eligibility. They have clear regulations on timing and when they must be processed. They have found that while their caseloads have decreased their applications have not, but their staff is processing them within the 1% of overdues and they are encouraging people to apply.

Mr. Tuohy moved request to accept \$75,908.00
in support of the Unmet Needs Program, seconded
by Ms. Sutherland.

Ms. Maglione explained that for several years the New York State Office for the Aging has been discussing and researching the waitlists and unmet needs of older adults throughout the state. In the fall, the New York State Office for the Aging requested their waitlist, compiled the information and came up with a figure of \$15 million which was approved and appropriated into their budget with no county match required to address the waitlists and unmet needs. Each county must indicate what they will do with the funds, and their waitlist included aides, legal services, transportation, home modification and New York Connects with approximately \$18,000.00 going towards making a part-time employee full-time. They are trying to be creative and are looking at providing the home health agencies with a few dollars more that would go directly to the aides and not the agency, aides that work with difficult individuals and Ubers and/or Lyfts for certain areas that

need an aide. In addition, these funds will be available annually and when they stipulated to the state who the funds would be used, they also requested an additional \$200,000.00 as she is aware that some counties will not be able to spend all their funds.

Ms. Bonelli asked to see the completed application. Ms. Maglione replied that she would forward it to the Legislature.

Motion carried. All in favor.

Mr. Amo addressed an issue not on the agenda. In February Mr. Sassi presented at NYSAC on the opioid crisis and at their meeting yesterday they released a draft law that was not precisely what they wanted and was very confusing. Due to the importance of this issue they are going back and will try to create a committee that would include representation from law enforcement, defense attorneys, prosecutors and pharmacists.

Mr. Sassi asked if this was the law that was borrowed from another state. Mr. Amo replied that he was unsure.

Mr. Sassi added that they are still in the throes of the opioid epidemic and he recently read that they have lost more people to the opioid epidemic than all they lost fighting in World War II, and the Korean and Vietnam wars.

The meeting adjourned at 3:51 p.m.