

**HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE  
MINUTES  
(REMOTELY)**

**TUESDAY, DECEMBER 8, 2020  
3:30 P.M.**

PRESENT: Rob Sassi, Chairman  
Michael Amo, Mike Anagnostakis, 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  
Thomas J. Faggione, Legislator  
John S. Vero, Legislator  
Antoinette Reed, Legislative Counsel  
Steven M. Neuhaus, County Executive  
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  
Deborah Slesinski, Budget Director  
Gretchen Riordan, Budget Analyst

Mr. Sassi opened the committee meeting at 3:30 p.m. and asked everyone to stand for the Pledge of Allegiance. All committee members were present.

Mr. Sassi commented that he recently spoke with AnnMarie Maglione, Director, Office for the Aging and he will have the Office for the Aging at their next meeting for an update.

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

Ms. Miller reported that homeless numbers continue to trend down in temporary housing and assistance; however, those figures will shift as the pandemic continues. Their homeless numbers are the lowest they have seen in years and that is related to the eviction moratorium. While the numbers are low warming stations in the cities of Port Jervis, Newburgh and Middletown are struggling to get volunteers as many are fearful of COVID-19. SNAP applications remain steady and HEAP is very active with staff working diligently to process applications. Orange County's medicaid number as of November 2019, was at 105,304 but they expect those numbers to be updated soon. Child Protective Services (CPS) numbers have increased as they continue to work with schools to provide and expand services and support to students by sharing resources. Raise the Age numbers are low and manageable, no PINS placements have been done and Juvenile Delinquent (JD) and Juvenile Offenders (JO) being placed are low. As a result of the Raise the Age and some of the change in need for placements they have a reduction in available services. Foster Care numbers continue to decline as adoptions are processed. Through the support of the County Executive and

with guidance from the Department of Human Resources and Department of Health they have moved to an A/B work schedule (group A works in the office one week and group B works remotely and vice versa the second week). They are struggling to get full remote work for their eligibility teams due to complications with the state systems and getting access.

Mr. Sassi commented that Child Protective Services (CPS) numbers have increased slightly over the last few months and would they expect that trend to continue as people remain in their homes. Ms. Miller replied that serious incidents of abuse and/or neglect have made their way to them through the Multidisciplinary Task Force (MDT) and Child Advocacy Center Team. However, the cases they are missing are lower levels of neglect and/or school neglect but she anticipates those numbers increasing. They are hopeful that any child that is unsafe and being neglected or abused are being assisted through the messages sent to text4teens, 3-1-1, advocacy through the schools and the child abuse hotline, as the last thing they want is for pandemic isolation to make children unsafe.

Mr. Sassi asked if the eviction moratorium was due to expire. Ms. Miller replied that it was due to expire in January, but they expect it to be extended based on the increase in numbers across the state.

Mr. Tuohy commented that he recently learned about a family that was being threatened with eviction two days before Christmas and should he advise the family to call the 3-1-1 hotline. Ms. Miller replied yes, they should call either 3-1-1 to get information on Hudson Valley Legal Services who could assist them, or they could call 845-291-4000 from 9-5 Monday through Friday to connect with the Housing Resource Center. These are the families they want to learn about before they are evicted to see if there is anything, they can do to assist them in maintaining their housing.

Ms. Miller clarified that the eviction moratorium is specific to people who cannot pay their rent due to COVID-19 and eviction proceedings can still go forward if the reason for the eviction is other than COVID-19 related.

Mr. Amo asked what role the Department of Social Services would have in ramping up the successful vaccination program as a lot of the people served in the Department of Social Services are very vulnerable. Ms. Miller replied that they do not have an active role, but they would assist as needed. She has been monitoring the New York State Department of Health website and roll out and where their frontline workers would fit in; however, it is not very clear on the Child Welfare side and Social Services side as they are exposed like many other frontline workers, but they are not on that list. She understands that our local Department of Health has been identified as the liaison with the state on how it will be implemented locally.

Mr. Amo emphasized that Ms. Miller should be included as they have a substantial number of individuals that are vulnerable (both clients and staff).

Ms. Sutherland thanked Ms. Miller and the Department of Social Services for their Text4Teens program.

The meeting adjourned at 3:50 p.m.