

**HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE  
MINUTES**

**April 4, 2007 – 3:00 P.M.  
SCOTT HEYMAN CONFERENCE ROOM**

Present: N. Shinagawa, Chair, M. Robertson, M. Koplinka-Loehr, M. Sigler, Vice Chair (arrived at 3:09 p.m.), F. Proto  
Staff: A. Cole, Health Department; P. Younger, S. Martel-Moore, Deputy County Administrators; M. Lynch, Public Information Officer; N. Zahler, J. Johnson, Youth Services; L. Holmes, Office for the Aging; K. Schlather, N. Burston, Human Services Coalition; P. Carey, Social Services Commissioner; R. DeLuca, Mental Health Commissioner; K. Fuller, Deputy Clerk

**Call to Order**

Chair Shinagawa called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m.

**Human Services Coalition**

**Update of 2008 County/City Funding Review Process**

Ms. Schlather and Ms. Burston provided written information regarding agencies/programs to be reviewed by the Human Services Coalition in 2007 for 2008 funding. They noted the site visits, that are open to all members of the Legislature, would be in April. The site visits are followed by pre-screen applications, budget conferences with agencies to answer any final questions, deliberations, with a final determination by the Human Services Coalition Board of funding recommendations coming forward June 22<sup>nd</sup>. Ms. Schlather stated public notification would be made to indicate the start of the funding request process to allow adequate time to prepare requests.

The Committee was informed that the Human Services Coalition also assists in the Social Services League Foundation's funding request process. At the present time the Foundation has received 37 applications totaling \$109,000; the maximum request is for a \$5,000 grant; the total available through the foundation for 2008 is \$17,000.

Mr. Sigler arrived at this time.

The Committee was informed that an additional question being asked of agencies/programs is where else they have applied for funding. In addition, the period requested to review outcomes is from August of the prior year coming forward, providing approximately 1 ¼ year of history. Ms. Robertson asked if there was any way to delay the process so that it would be more in line with the Legislature's budget process. Ms. Burston said that experience has proven the time schedule allows for a full review, coupled with the ability to bring forward any additional information the legislature may request. *Ms. Robertson requested that any important updates later in the year regarding agencies be provided to the Legislature for a full understanding of the financial situation of agencies/programs.*

Mr. Proto inquired if any members of the review committee have connections to the agencies/programs being reviewed and was informed that every attempt is made to have as little conflict as possible. He also asked about the volunteer review committee members' attendance at the meetings and was informed the attendance, while not one-hundred percent; it is extremely high. Mr. Proto expressed concern that a recent radio spot implied free services through Information and Referral. He asked that there perhaps should be a disclaimer that services may be free, depending on income levels and

meeting program criteria. In addition, he thought announcements should indicate that Tompkins County funding pays in part for services offered.

It was clarified for members of the Committee that the Budget Conferences provide a one-on-one with agency/program directors and staff to discuss areas of concern and provide clarification of programs offered.

Ms. Robertson noted the Human Services Coalition review of agencies has proven to be a very economic, thorough process for many years and is a benefit to the County.

**RESOLUTION NO. – IN SUPPORT OF NEW YORK STATE FUNDING FOR 2-1-1 NEW YORK IN THE NEW YORK STATE BUDGET**

MOVED by Mr. Koplinka-Loehr, seconded by Ms. Robertson. Mr. Swayze stated it appears the proposed State budget will include \$10 million of the \$10.6 million requested. This amount will not be verified for two weeks. Mr. Swayze believes it is important to forward the resolution, even though it appears the budget is set; in the event items are vetoed this will provide the local viewpoint on the importance of 2-1-1 services. Mr. Proto expressed concern that the funding for this service would not be raised by the addition of a fee. Mr. Swayze said the 2-1-1 staff specifically asked that there not be a fee derived and that it be funded through the General Fund.

A voice vote on the resolution resulted as follows: Ayes – 5; Noes – 0. RESOLUTION ADOPTED.

WHEREAS, for almost thirty years, the Information and Referral Service of Ithaca and Tompkins County has provided community information, as well as referral to community services to thousands of citizens and organizations, and

WHEREAS, Information and Referral for Tompkins County (through its affiliations with the New York State Alliance of Information and Referral Systems and the United Way of New York State) is an integral part of the 2-1-1 Finger Lakes Regional designation for delivery of 2-1-1 information services to the region, and

WHEREAS, the value of 2-1-1 Community Information Systems during disaster and in recovery periods in recent hurricanes and flooding has been proven, and

WHEREAS, planning, development, and implementation of the 2-1-1 NY system has been underway in New York State and the Finger Lakes Region since 1994, and

WHEREAS, the New York State government recognized the value of a state-wide 2-1-1 system by providing funds for operation and continued development in fiscal year 2006, and

WHEREAS, state funds requested for 2-1-1 operations and development have thus far not been included in budget deliberations for fiscal year 2007, and

WHEREAS, lack of continued state support would substantially cripple further development of a state-wide 2-1-1 Information and Referral system, now therefore be it

RESOLVED on recommendation of the Health and Human Services Committee, That the Tompkins County Legislature thanks and urges the New York State Legislature and Governor to appropriate sufficient funds, but not less than \$10.66 million in fiscal Year 2007 in support of operations and development of a state-wide 2-1-1 Information and Referral System.

**SEQR ACTION:** TYPE II-20

**RESOLUTION NO. – IN SUPPORT OF FEDERAL RECOGNITION AND FUNDING FOR 2-1-1 IN THE 110<sup>TH</sup> CONGRESS**

MOVED by Mr. Koplinka-Loehr, seconded by Ms. Robertson. Mr. Swayze said this national initiative has been introduced in the Congress for several years. He said that only seven New York representatives have endorsed the measure at this time. Congressmen Arcuri and Hinchey are not among the sponsors and it is believed to be important to indicate the local support of the measure. It was noted that in the event the Federal initiative is passed there may be the possibility of a pay-back to the state for work completed. The Committee again expressed a desire for funding to be from the General Fund rather than a fee.

A voice vote on the resolution resulted as follows: Ayes – 5; Noes – 0. RESOLUTION ADOPTED.

WHEREAS, for almost thirty years, the Information and Referral Service of Ithaca and Tompkins County has provided community information, as well as referral to community services to thousands of citizens and organizations, and

WHEREAS, Information and Referral for Tompkins County (through its affiliations with 2-1-1 New York and the national 2-1-1 Initiative, a collaboration of the Alliance of Information and Referral Systems and United Way of America) is an integral part of the 2-1-1 Finger Lakes Regional designation for delivery of 2-1-1 information services to the region, and

WHEREAS, the value of 2-1-1 Community Information Systems during disaster and in recovery periods in recent hurricanes and flooding has been proven, and

WHEREAS, 2-1-1 services are available to over sixty-five percent of the United States population; 212 active 2-1-1 systems cover all or part of 41 states (including 19 states with one-hundred percent coverage) plus Washington, D. C., and Puerto Rico, and

WHEREAS, planning, development, and implementation of 2-1-1 has been underway in New York State and the Finger Lakes Region since 1994, and

WHEREAS, the New York State government recognized the value of a state wide 2-1-1 system by providing funds for operation and continued development in Fiscal Year 2006, and

WHEREAS, the “Calling for 2-1-1 Act” (HR211, S211) has been introduced in the 110<sup>th</sup> Congress, and

WHEREAS, a robust and professional national system of 2-1-1 Call Centers is essential to the security and quality of life of the United States citizenry, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, on recommendation of the Health and Human Services Committee, That the Tompkins County Legislature urges the 110<sup>th</sup> United States Congress to recognize the benefits of the national 2-1-1 initiative and to move forward on the “Calling for 2-1-1 Act” that authorizes \$700 million from General Revenues over six years to ensure universal access to 2-1-1.

**SEQR ACTION:** TYPE II-20

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**Office for the Aging**

Appointment

It was MOVED by Mr. Koplinka-Loehr, seconded by Ms. Robertson, and unanimously approved by voice vote by members, to recommend approval of the following appointment to the full Legislature.

Office for the Aging Advisory Board

Sally I. Lee, At-Large representative, term to expire December 31, 2008.

PERS Grant

Ms. Holmes reported that a \$10,000 member-item from Senator Winner has been received to assist with the purchase of Personal Emergency Response Systems (PERS).

Notification of Obituary Policy Amendment – *The Ithaca Journal*

Ms. Holmes reported she had received information from local funeral director Kevin Bangs regarding a notice from *The Ithaca Journal* that outlined a significant amendment to their obituary policy. Effective Monday, April 9, 2007, *The Ithaca Journal* will no longer include information regarding services in their unpaid obituaries. Following discussion with the newspaper, Mr. Bangs stated he was informed the only information that would be included in a free obituary is name, age, and the town an individual resided in. Ms. Holmes stated it appears that to provide the information that was formerly included in the non-paid notice will now result in a charge of approximately \$50.

A discussion followed, during which the Committee members and staff expressed their concern for what seems to be an inappropriate policy change. The general consensus was that this policy amendment would result in placing further constraints on the elderly and low-income residents of the County. The Committee discussed various actions that may be undertaken to insure maintaining the current practice of including services information in the obituaries. Mr. Shinagawa has an upcoming meeting with Mr. Bruce Estes, and will discuss the matter further. In the meantime, it was suggested that individuals express their opinion to the newspaper as an opinion piece.

**Youth Services**

Overview of 2006 Municipal Youth Services Programs

Ms. Zahler noted that 80 percent of her department's funding from the County and State go directly to contracted services for various programs.

Ms. Johnson reported that all the municipalities of Tompkins County receive funding through their office for the youth programs. Each municipality is required to form a local planning group to determine the needs of the community, as well as provide matching funds for the programs. She noted that as a result of the budget constraints the County has faced over the past several years, there are municipalities that exceed the matching funds policy and pay a greater percentage of program costs. She indicated the Municipal Youth Services Program provides technical assistance to the planning groups and municipalities, including such programs as the Groton summer camp, the 2006 Dryden Comprehensive Needs Assessment, and the JobsLink program that finds employment for school-age youth.

Ms. Johnson reviewed the charts of various municipal programs and participation levels. Fifty-six percent of the youth between the ages of 10-15, with the balance (forty-four percent) were between the ages of 16 – 20. Ms. Johnson shared annual reports from various municipal youth programs for Committee review. Ms. Zahler noted some municipalities have indicated that if the programs were to receive cuts in County funding they would also have to reduce their match. She expressed concern as this could eliminate programs due to the lack of funding.

Ms. Robertson inquired about availability of programs for youth under the age of 10; she was informed that although there are some programs offered for younger individuals, the majority of programs are for the middle-school children; community members designing the municipal programs have targeted this group as a means of preventing other potential difficulties within the community due to lack of supervision.

Ms. Zahler shared comments from youth about the benefit of the program as it relates to support and prevention, including a statement of appreciation for setting boundaries.

#### Overview of 2008 – 2010 Resource Allocation Guidelines

Ms. Zahler reviewed information on the Youth Services Board Resource Allocation Policy and Guidelines, funding priorities, and criteria for funding. She reported that the April 12<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Youth Services Board would be an open invitation to agencies to hear information regarding funding information, obtain an application, and answer other questions as necessary. It is anticipated that all twelve agencies presently funded will make requests for funding, as well as new program proposals as well.

Ms. Zahler reported that it appears that the target age group appears to be shifting down to youth at age 12 and above. Ms. Robertson noted some difficulties are a result of family issues rather than an individual youth. Ms. Zahler said they have contracted with Tompkins Community Action (TCA) who operates Head Start to assist in being certain Head Start families continue to receive support as the children go through the public school system.

Ms. Zahler spoke of discussions with TCA staff and Ms. Jane Powers to assist in developing a simple manner to follow the children's progress for a five-year period. This information will be compared with other counties and schools where programs are in existence to determine how successful the program has been, both within the county and also with the general population.

#### Needs Assessment

Members of the Committee were provided a written needs assessment compiled with a variety of information. It was noted the full assessment is available on the county website.

#### General Budget Information

Ms. Zahler said it appears that the approved State budget has added approximately \$1 million statewide increase in core funding for youth development delinquency prevention area. Another area that was increased was to provide \$500,000 to counties for programs serving

homeless and runaway youth. It is not certain what portion the County may be eligible for. There also is an increase of \$75,000 for the youth JobsLink program.

Next week the newspaper will feature the summer camp information.

## **Mental Health**

### **Update on Single-Room Occupancy Project**

Mr. DeLuca reported it is anticipated that Lakeview, upon notification of funding application acceptance, will be using a bridge loan to start construction of the \$6 million project in September 2007. The funding for this application would be shared by the State Office of Mental Health (OMH), Housing and Urban Development, as well as additional tax credits. He said that due to the delays in starting the project construction costs have increased from the initial estimates. At this time the existing dwellings have been removed for site preparation. The construction designs for the 38-bed facility are eighty-five percent complete, and it is believed the design includes the additional beds the County was provided and will not require additional site review.

Mr. DeLuca spoke of the State Office of Mental Health's contribution of approximately \$1.5 million to the community for facilities on Cascadilla Street and Albany Street. OMH suggested Lakeview attempt to receive the tax credits, which could possibly be used to offset direct service cost when the facility becomes operational.

Mr. DeLuca spoke of Ontario, Wayne, and Seneca Counties looking at the possibility of having a joint SRO project that would have 100 beds. At this time, Tompkins County is the smallest community seeking to construct a SRO project.

### **Unity House**

Mr. DeLuca reported that Unity House closed its operations in Tompkins County on February 19<sup>th</sup>. Residents were dealt with in a variety of manners, depending on need and desire. Seventy-five percent remain predominantly within the City of Ithaca, and the remaining twenty-five percent moved elsewhere to be closer to family, moved with friends, or the community the individual grew up in. It was also reported that all but two of the staff remain employed with Unity House, and those not remaining left on good terms. The physical plant, given to Unity House by the HOMES program, is presently being considered for future development within Unity House's MRDD department. Mr. DeLuca anticipates continued conversations regarding the future use of the physical plant; strong suggestions from the Community Mental Services Board and others to maintain community disabled residential treatment has occurred.

### **Review the State Budget and Recent Legislation Impacts**

Mr. DeLuca reported three new Commissioners have been appointed at the State: Michael F. Hogan, Office of Mental Health; Diana Jones Ritter, Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities, and Karen Carpenter-Palumbo, Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services. The new Commissioners desire to integrate services more at both the local and state level. Members received a written summary discussing the integrated model of treatment at

substance abuse facilities. Locally, the Mental Health department is providing on-site services and is attempting to provide a satellite that would assist in better service to clients. Although OMH has indicated it should not be done, they have not found regulations that disallow it. Mr. DeLuca spoke of the need to find creative ways to assist clients. He shared information on how he assisted a client through the courts to enable appropriate treatment.

Mr. DeLuca said generally, the State budget is optimistic and does not appear to have any cuts in the various areas of mental health budgeting. The Child and Family Clinic Plus project funding remains in the budget; discussions with Groton and Ithaca City School Districts have occurred, with other county school districts to be approached in the future. In addition, the collaborative application between Mental Health, Department of Social Services, and others, for geriatric mental health appears to have two million dollars within the new budget. It is not yet known if the application that will provide funding for a psychiatric nurse and community training will be approved.

Mr. DeLuca reported that some cost of living increases in all three mental health areas are in place at a 2.5% level. He also noted there is a lot of emphasis in all three areas regarding housing that should be viewed positively for projects such as the SRO.

Regarding areas of concern, Mr. DeLuca reported approximately 157 new Medicaid Insurance General Inspectors have been hired to enforce the Medicaid system. This may result in additional expenses for the documentation review. With regard to third-party billings, it appears that the State desires to take back funds as being ineligible due to reimbursement requests being in excess of the allowable charges. Mr. DeLuca has had extensive conversations throughout the state and with OMH to clarify the matter as erroneous, that the add-ons requested are proper.

Mr. DeLuca reported on the state budget having approximately \$20 million set aside for civil commitment of sexually violent offenders. This would be for offenders exiting the penal system who would then be placed within the mental health system. Although the State has indicated the cost will be covered, it is an area of concern as it may cost approximately \$100,000 per person/per year. In effect, this is being treated as a new kind of mental illness. At the conference of Mental Hygiene Directors the area was discussed and it appears parole officers may also have local supervision of some of the offender cases upon release into the community. Although it appears the State may cover this cost it may become one at a later date.

### **Approval of Minutes of March 20, 2007**

It was MOVED by Ms. Robertson, seconded by Mr. Proto, and unanimously approved by voice vote by members, to approve the minutes of March 20, 2007. MINUTES APPROVED.

### **Chair's Report**

#### Liaison Reports

Mr. Shinagawa said the liaison reports would be deferred until the next meeting due to time constraints.

Review of Liaison Assignments

Mr. Shinagawa reported he is having conflicts with the Health Planning Council meetings and inquired if other members could act as liaison. Due to the time of the meetings other members indicated they would not be able to. This liaison assignment will be opened up to the full Legislature to determine interest and availability of a liaison.

Topics for April 18<sup>th</sup> Committee Meeting

Following discussion, it was determined there will be a report from the Human Services Coalition regarding the Home Health Aides, Homelessness, Health Planning Council. *Mr. Shinagawa requested that department heads and Administration review budgets to determine what unfunded mandate costs are. Ms. Robertson requested information be provided on Catholic Charities Security Deposit program's inability to provide funds until October.*

Adjournment

On motion the meeting adjourned at 4:05 p.m.

*Respectfully submitted by Karen Fuller, Deputy Clerk*