

## **Minutes of Meeting**

### **SOCIAL & MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES COMMITTEE MEETING Department of Social Services**

February 27, 2012

Present: James Goldstein, Town of Lebanon  
Lewis Carinci, City of Oneida  
Alexander Stepanski, Town of Stockbridge  
Roger Bradstreet, Town of Nelson  
Michael Fitzgerald, Commissioner  
John Becker, Chairman, Board of Supervisors  
Mark Scimone, Administrative Assistant to the Chairman  
Julie Dale, Executive Director, Community Action Program  
Diane Ryan, Community Action Program

Julie Dale, Executive Director of Community Action Program (CAP) and Diane Ryan, Deputy Director at Community Action, were present to discuss the successful homeless prevention funding CAP had managed over the past 22 months. The agency received federal funding of nearly \$750,000 that assisted 128 households. There was discussion about outcomes from the funding. CAP is leading the county in applying for Continuum of Care (COC) funding by joining the Mohawk Valley COC. This would ensure that agencies, including CAP, would have access to over \$100,000 annually for homeless prevention. Additionally, CAP has applied for funding to construct four three-bedroom apartments on their agency-owned property in Canastota for transitional apartments, replicating the successful program in Morrisville. Finally, Chairman Becker shared with Julie and Diane the pressing need for their support for the state to assume more of the mandated costs, namely Medicaid. John wanted not-for-profits to understand that tough choices would have to be made, and despite the good things that they do, they could suffer cuts.

Mike wished to publicly thank Julie and Diane for their tireless efforts in managing the HPRP grant. Throughout the program, they kept the needs of the citizens of Madison County the focus. There were many setbacks in working with the HUD agency (Madison Business Development). Original estimates of need were completely inaccurate, paperwork was continually lost, access into the voucher program was routinely denied, and, in the end, the number of families successfully able to become HUD eligible was a fraction of the actual need. One thing that became evident as a result of this experience was the ineffectiveness of Madison Business Development and the professional capabilities of CAP. Should the Section 8 program ever be offered to another entity in Madison County, CAP would be a strong contender and a logical choice.

The meeting minutes from January 23, 2012, had previously been distributed and on a motion from Roger, which was seconded by Lewis, they passed unanimously.

Mike reviewed the caseload and expenditures report. He noted that food stamp caseloads continue to inch towards 4,000 families. On a bit of good news, the number of foster children has never been lower, with a total of 41 children in care – 16 of them residing at higher institutional settings. As a matter of perspective, when Mike became Commissioner, there were over 50 kids in care, and that was just those at institutional level. In total, there were over 100 kids in foster care. Mike noted that DSS is serving many more kids in their homes (or homes of relatives if the kids cannot stay with parents). This shift is good for the children and the county.

Mike had the ten performance evaluations completed for his management staff. Mike explained that he does five of them that are direct reports to him, while the remaining five are done by the Deputy Commissioners and are signed by the deputies and Mike. The evaluations were given to Chairman Becker. Mike's annual evaluation is scheduled for March 14 at 9:00 a.m.

Mike had six resolutions for the committee. Five of the six were "NYSAC" resolutions. The first resolution was to amend the daycare contract with Cornell Cooperative Extension of Oneida County. Mike explained that the previous not-for-profit, Mid-York Child Care Coordinating Council, was taken over by Cornell Cooperative Extension of Oneida County. In reviewing the contracts Mid-York had, this contract was identified as needing the language modification that is present in the Madison County Extension contracts regarding the hold harmless clause. The contract has been reviewed by the County Attorney's Office, who gave their blessing for the amended language. On a motion by Roger and seconded by Lewis, the resolution passed.

Mike reviewed the resolutions that closely mirror the NYSAC-sponsored resolutions passed in January. Mike, together with his staff and Mark, inserted any local data to reflect impacts on Madison County. The first was regarding the elimination of state funding for Food Stamps and Safety Net for administration, all the while the state continues to promote and expand these programs. On a motion by Alex and seconded by John, the resolution passed unanimously.

The next was a call for the state to not eliminate funding for the child support program. On a motion by Alex and seconded by Roger, the resolution passed unanimously. The third was calling on the state to not further reduce child protective/preventive funding and to fund kinship care from adoption funds and not foster care. Mike explained that this resolution was really about doing no further harm to counties rather than, like the others, asking the state to undo something they had already done or planned to do. On a motion by Roger and seconded by Lewis, the resolution passed unanimously.

The last two resolutions were dealing specifically with Medicaid. The first of the two was calling on the state to not diminish the Medicaid administration funding until such time as the state had assumed substantial functions in their takeover plans. Mike explained that the state proposal is to cap administrative costs at the 2011 amounts, already placing the county in a five percent hole (the increase budgeted for 2012) all the while they have no plans to provide for administrative relief, by their own admission, for several years. On a motion by Jim and seconded by Lewis, the resolution passed unanimously.

The final resolution was calling on the state to assume the local share costs of the Medicaid program. Mike noted that, specifically, this resolution of the Board would become one of three that Madison County would submit to the Governor's Mandate Relief Council. Minimally, the county would be seeking that the state assume any increases (scheduled to be three percent)

immediately. On a motion by all committee members and Chairman Becker, the resolution passed unanimously.

There being no further discussion, the Mental Health Department began its presentation.

Respectfully submitted,

Michael A. Fitzgerald  
Commissioner

Approved by Committee Chairman: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_