

Minutes of Meeting

SOCIAL & MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES COMMITTEE MEETING Department of Social Services

April 23, 2012

Present: John Salka, Town of Brookfield
Roger Bradstreet, Town of Nelson
Alexander Stepanski, Town of Stockbridge
Michael Fitzgerald, Commissioner
Mark Scimone, Administrative Assistant to the Chairman

Theresa Davis, OFA Executive Director, presented information regarding her organization. She stressed the importance of the county's support, noting that Madison County OFA is one of four in the state that are not part of county government. If county government were to provide the services of OFA, it could not do so as effectively, efficiently, and with the ability of the agency to change based on needs. Theresa asked for the opportunity to address the entire Board of Supervisors and welcomed all committee members or other board members to tour their offices. The committee expressed support for OFA, but also that difficult times require difficult choices.

Mike began the DSS presentation by reviewing the meeting minutes for March 26, 2012, that had previously been distributed. On a motion by Roger and seconded by Alex, the meeting minutes were approved.

Mike next reviewed the caseload and expenditures report. With a quarter of the year to report, it is still early, but no accounts are over expected amounts.

Mike had two resolutions for the committee. The first was to increase the amount of federal funding to be applied to the CAP mentoring contract. As a result of the reduction in foster care placements, there is additional funding that can be applied for preventive services. Since CAP mentoring has been shown to be an effective tool to reduce the reliance on foster care and there is a wait list for the program, \$60,000 in additional funding will be applied to the program year beginning April 1, 2012, to March 31, 2013, for a total cost of \$196,129. A budget modification was included on the resolution. On a motion by Alex and seconded by Roger, the resolution passed unanimously.

The second resolution was to shift funding from a source that has been unreliable to the more stable (and completely federally subsidized) FFFS for the KAG Consulting (Dr. Scott Petosa) program. The actual annualized program costs are the same as previous years (no increase) and DSS is extremely pleased with the results this program has shown over the years. Specifically, no children receiving services through this program have been placed in foster care. On a motion by Roger and seconded by Alex, the resolution passed unanimously.

Mike also made the committee aware that recently the New York Times had submitted a FOIL request to the state for all reports of fatalities OCFS had completed in 2011. Mike had assumed since our OCFS Regional Office had not let DSS know about any Madison County cases, we were not included in the FOIL request. Last week, the Regional Office notified Mike that, in

fact, we would have one fatality included in the data request. The child died in 2009, but the OCFS report was never issued until 2011. Mike explained that the Legislature passed a law a few years ago that would make public access to these reports more available. However, in situations where the local DSS makes a determination that it would not be in the “best interests” to release the fatality report, OCFS will follow that determination. Due to the circumstances of the child’s death, Mike is recommending to not release the report. He wanted the committee to be aware since the New York Times might report that Madison County did not release the report. Mike will have the County Attorney’s Office weigh in on the decision.

Finally, Mike wanted the committee to be aware that as part of the passage of the 2012-13 state budget, there is a requirement that each county submit to the state a “statement of interest” in regards to Medicaid. The way the budget language is written, the State Health Department will assume responsibility for the administration of the Medicaid program by 2018 unless a county expresses a desire to continue. There is widespread belief that this language was specific to New York City since the Health Department has been noncommittal about assuming their caseload. However, the statement of interest must be completed 120 days after the budget passed, putting the timeline at or near the Supreme Court decision on the Affordable Care Act. Based on that ruling, Mike expressed concerns about what he would recommend for Madison County to decide. Mike feels like there will be a big decision to make, with very little time and likely not much information (or conflicting information). Mike did express some relief since he applied for and has received a Colgate Seminar intern through the Upstate Institute to look specifically at the ACA implications. The intern’s name is Augusta Gillespie and she has an interest in health care policy. She begins the first week of June and will immediately dig into the questions of ACA and what it means for New York State and Madison County. With her assistance (which could last for the next two years through support of the Upstate Institute), Madison County should be prepared to make informed decisions based on her research.

There being no further topics to discuss, the Mental Health Department began its presentation.

Respectfully submitted,

Michael A. Fitzgerald
Commissioner

Approved by Committee Chairman: _____ Date: _____