

Minutes of Meeting

SOCIAL & MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES COMMITTEE MEETING Department of Social Services

July 30, 2012

Present: John Salka, Town of Brookfield
Lewis Carinci, City of Oneida
Roger Bradstreet, Town of Nelson
Michael Fitzgerald, Commissioner
Mark Scimone, Administrative Assistant to the Chairman
Melissa Maine, Deputy Commissioner for Family Services
Augusta Gillespie, Colgate University Upstate Institute Intern

The committee meeting began with a review of the proposal submitted by the Madison County funeral home directors regarding indigent burials. Mike Fitzgerald, Don Smith and Mark Scimone all expressed “disappointment” at their 30 percent request for increase in allowances. The committee members asked about options and Mike offered that a response would be prepared and sent to the funeral homes expressing any increases that could be supported. It will be difficult because there have not been any increases since 2008; however, it was up to them to ask before now. There was no support for granting the increases requested.

Mike reviewed the meeting minutes from the June 25, 2012, committee meeting. On a motion from Roger and seconded by Lewis, the meeting minutes as prepared were passed unanimously.

Mike introduced Augusta Gillespie, a senior-to-be at Colgate University and a summer field school intern through the Upstate Institute. Augusta presented her research, analysis, and recommendations for the Madison County Board of Supervisors’ response to the “Statement of Interest” survey. Augusta reviewed the federal Affordable Care Act (ACA), including the Supreme Court decision; New York’s own amended Medicaid state plan and Medicaid Redesign Team goals; and how all of that impacted Medicaid delivery at the local level. It was her recommendation and that of Mike and the department that the County DSS answer the seven questions on the “Statement of Interest” as such:

- 1) No – the county is not interested in conducting MAGI renewals.
- 2) Yes – the county would want to provide in-person assistance.
- 3) Yes, short-term – the county should process applications and renewals for the aged, blind, and disabled individuals, excluding automated renewals.
- 4) Yes, long-term – the county should process determinations and renewals for chronic care (nursing home) and alternate levels of care.
- 5) Yes, short-term – the county should process applications and renewals for the Medicaid Buy-in for Working Persons with Disabilities program.
- 6) No – the county should not conduct disability determinations.
- 7) Yes, long-term – the county should continue to process SSI cases, including separate determinations when an individual loses receipt of SSI.

Augusta provided detailed research and analysis to support her recommendations, which the committee found to be compelling and of tremendous value. There were questions about “what it all means” and Mike responded that in five years (the time period that the state assumption of Medicaid administration would take), the local Medicaid office will look much smaller. Mike believes that through attrition, the Department of Social Services will get to the staffing levels required. Although layoffs would be avoided, there were no guarantees. Making managing the transition more difficult is the state’s interest in phasing in the administrative takeover by function and phasing in over several years, region by region and county by county. This will help in the ability to actually do the work, but it will be difficult on the local level to determine required staffing needs. The committee applauded Augusta and her efforts and congratulated her. A resolution will be prepared and distributed to committee members to authorize the Chairman of the Board to complete the “Statement of Interest” and return it before the September 10, 2012, deadline. The resolution will be in front of the Board of Supervisors at the August 14, 2012, meeting.

Melissa Maine was on hand to discuss a grant application that DSS was preparing to submit to the Division of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS). The grant notice was put out in late June and is due August 3, 2012, which was an extremely short timeframe and precludes DSS from getting board approval before applying for the funding. Melissa reviewed the application services and expected outcomes should the grant be awarded. The grant application has received wide support from the Sheriff, Probation, Mental Health, Youth Bureau, County Attorney, and Family Court and would be the first program specific to juvenile delinquents and would include a process to include a “victim impact” piece. The committee felt it was a good opportunity, since if it would keep even one child from being placed in detention, that would more than cover the local investment. On a motion by Lewis and seconded by Roger, the resolution passed unanimously. Melissa left the meeting for another obligation after this vote.

Finally, Mike presented a resolution that would allow the Office for the Aging (OFA) to provide in-home assistance to seniors applying for the HEAP program. Mike pointed out that the amount requested (\$9.50 per application) was the same as in past years and that the funding comes from 100 percent non-local funds. On a motion by Roger and seconded by Lewis, the resolution passed unanimously.

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

Respectfully submitted,

Michael A. Fitzgerald
Commissioner

Approved by Committee Chairman: _____ Date: _____