

Health & Human Services Committee
January 29, 2013
Minutes

Members Present: Committee Chair James Nabywaniec, Legislators Michael Docteur, Robert Thomas, Michael Montigelli, Michael Astafan, John Peck, Anthony Doldo, and Chairwoman of the Board Carolyn Fitzpatrick

Others Present: Legislators Philip Reed, Allen Drake, Michael Behling and Jennie Adsit, County Administrator Robert Hagemann, Deputy Administrator Michael Kaskan, County Attorney David Paulsen, Community Services Director Roger Ambrose, Public Health Director Jean Bilow, Watertown Daily Times Reporter Daniel Flatley, Confidential Secretary Jill Jones

Chairman Nabywaniec called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

Greda Randall, Fort Drum, Doris VonShrock - 99110 Forest Drive, Fort Drum, and Mary Pants - 6631 Falcon Drive, Fort Drum, all parents affected by the possible closure of the Memorial Child Development Center on Fort Drum addressed the Committee. They asked for the Board's assistance regarding possible federal budget cuts that affect the Center as it provides much more than just full day, day care and preschool services, it also provides hourly care that allows parents to schedule appointments, attend college courses and to also volunteer on post to support the soldiers and families. They said only a portion of the hourly spots that will be picked up by the other CDC on post, which already has a waiting list for the hourly care, and will create a great strain on parents who rely on this service when their spouse is deployed. They learned just before coming to the meeting tonight that there is a possibility that federal funds will be reallocated and the closure may be avoided but appreciated whatever the Committee could do on their behalf. Chairman Nabywaniec appreciated the issue being brought to the Committee's attention and encouraged the group to contact Congressman Owens and US Senator Gillibrand in this regard.

Chairman Nabywaniec declared the minutes of the December meeting approved as written in the absence of objection or correction.

Chairman Nabywaniec introduced a resolution Amending the 2012 County Budget Relative to Mental Hygiene Programs and entertained a motion for consideration. A motion was duly made by Legislator Astafan seconded by Legislator Thomas and there being no discussion, the Committee agreed to sponsor the resolution as presented.

Chairman Nabywaniec introduced a resolution amending the 2012 County Budget relative to mental hygiene programs and entertained a motion for consideration. A motion was duly made by Legislator Astafan seconded by Legislator Peck and there being no discussion, the Committee agreed to sponsor the resolution as presented.

Chairman Nabywaniec introduced a resolution authorizing an agreement for the provision of mental hygiene services and amending the 2013 County Budget in relation thereto and entertained a motion for consideration. A motion was duly made by Legislator Docteur seconded

by Legislator Peck and there being no discussion, the Committee agreed to sponsor the resolution as presented.

Chairman Nabywaniec introduced a resolution authorizing an agreement for provision of occupational therapy services to clients of the Public Health Service and entertained a motion for consideration. A motion was duly made by Legislator Doldo seconded by Legislator Peck and there being no discussion, the Committee agreed to sponsor the resolution as presented.

Chairman Nabywaniec introduced a resolution authorizing agreement with John Snow, Inc. for a U.S. Department of Health & Human Services Office on Women Health Safety and Health for Older Women Program Award and amending the 2013 County Budget. A motion was duly made by Legislator Thomas and seconded by Legislator Astafan. In response to questions Ms. Bilow advised that Watertown Housing Authority was used in this initial application due to their size and as they needed to target where the work was to be done; future applications could be made stronger if it is extended to other areas of the County, however the program would still be limited in terms of the dollars awarded and staff time needed. She said Public Health is always applying for grants and may reapply for this one and there is always a possibility of starting up a program through their Municipal Health Services Plan even if no grants were available. There being no further discussion, the Committee agreed to sponsor the resolution as presented.

Chairman Nabywaniec introduced a resolution amending the 2013 County Budget relative to an increase in funding for the Rural Minority Health Program Grant and entertained a motion for consideration. A motion was duly made by Legislator Docteur and seconded by Legislator Astafan. In response to questions Ms. Bilow advised that the advertising funds would be used for doing public service type notices in the media, or developing, preparing and providing other types of educational materials that will help minorities have better access to health care services with an emphasis on better communication with their physician. She advised that the focus of the grant for the first year is that minorities don't seek health care as soon or as frequently as other populations so when they do seek care it tends to be more costly because there is an exacerbation of the problem. The accent of the additional dollars will work on how to communicate with your physician, the types of information that should be asked during a health care encounter, the type of information a person would want when leaving a provider and while it may benefit one group, it will ultimately benefit everyone. There being no further discussion, the Committee agreed to sponsor the resolution as presented.

Chairman Nabywaniec introduced a resolution authorizing an agreement with JBS International for support of an evidence-based adult immunization grant program and amending the 2013 County Budget, and entertained a motion for consideration. A motion was duly made by Legislator Peck seconded by Legislator Docteur and there being no discussion, the Committee agreed to sponsor the resolution as presented.

Chairman Nabywaniec introduced a resolution authorizing an amended agreement with Language Line for interpreter services and entertained a motion for consideration. A motion was duly made by Legislator Peck seconded by Legislator Astafan and there being no discussion, the Committee agreed to sponsor the resolution as presented.

Legislator Peck questioned the local impact of the mental health portion of the NY SAFE Act legislation that was passed on gun control. Community Services Director Roger Ambrose advised that they are still doing an interpretation and additional clarifications are needed from the State but it will result in additional calls to the office, additional investigations being conducted and additional assisted outpatient treatment (AOT) (Kendra's Law) relative to anyone who is considered a risk to themselves or others. He said Tim Ruetten, Community Services AOT Coordinator will oversee the AOT portion. Mr. Ambrose said the procedure is that individuals who are a danger will be reported to his office and following investigation he will make a determination to make a report (or not) to the State (Division of Criminal Justice Services) so they can determine if there is a registered weapon to that individual or whether they have a license to carry a firearm, which would immediately be suspended under those circumstances. He said whether it is necessary to then secure those or any other weapons in the home would be the judgement of law enforcement, as it is currently.

Specifically with regard to Assisted Outpatient Treatment (AOT) which is court ordered, it will be used more than it has been in the past. He said the investigations are time consuming and comprehensive and involve having a psychiatrist available for examinations and to testify in court. There is a shortage of psychiatric services available in the County and it may put more pressure on Mr. Ruetten and the Community Services Office to accommodate the additional investigations. While difficult to predict, he did not anticipate needing additional staff to undertake the work required for this initiative, responsibilities would be shifted to accommodate the work. Mr. Ambrose understood that if a person is deemed a danger to themselves or others their pistol permit could be suspended and weapons secured, and at a later time there is a process to return the license and weapons. He said the process will be much more cumbersome on larger communities and it is not substantially much more of an unfunded mandate than they already handle as the work was already there in one form or another. He advised that he is working with other county directors to see how they will implement the provisions of the SAFE Act as there are a wide range of possibilities.

Chairman Nabywaniec reported that Chairwoman Fitzpatrick has chosen an interview committee relative to the Public Health Director position due to Jean Bilow's retirement at the end of February. Members are he and Legislators Docteur, Adsit and Behling, and Chairwoman Fitzpatrick. He said the next director will have big shoes to fill and he appreciated Ms. Bilow's service to the County and everything she has done in her tenure. She has worked well with legislators and makes their job easy.

There being no further business of the Committee, on a motion by Legislator Peck seconded by Legislator Montigelli and unanimously carried, the meeting was adjourned at 7:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Robert F. Hagemann, III
Clerk of the Board