

## DSS/OFA/PUBLIC HEALTH/COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE MEETING

December 20, 2017

**PRESENT:** Legislators Andrea Moroughan, Phil Hathway and Greg Kulzer, County Manager Ryan Piche, DSS Commissioner Jenny Jones, OFA Director Kelly Hecker, Public Health Director Penny Ingham, Director of Community Services Patricia Fralick, Treasurer Patty O'Brien and HR Director Chris Boulio

The meeting was called at 2:30 p.m.

Dockets were approved for 2018 renewal agreements between DSS and the following:

- Rubenzhal, Knudsen & Associates for psychological services: Local share-36%; Federal-50%; State-14%
  - Community Action Planning Council of Jefferson County for family day care registrations and inspections - \$33,600 No Local Share
  - Lewis County Opportunities for non-residential domestic violence services-\$25,000 No Local Share
  - Transitional Living Services for psychiatric/psychological evaluations - \$158 for those without insurance
  - Center of Lifelong Education of SUNY Potsdam for employee training seminars-\$7,200
  - NYS Office of Children & Family Services for compliance of registration and inspection of child care providers - \$8,400
- Also authorized MOU between Public Health and DSS for placing Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program recipients in work experience sites
- Approved Cost of Living fund appropriations in Public Health Program accounts-\$19,874

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**Director of Community Services Pat Fralick** reported asking the Treasurer to transfer funds to the professional services line due to unanticipated court ordered evaluation expenses that remain outstanding for 2016, as well as a transfer to cover vehicle repairs.

Information was provided on crisis services in Lewis County, and the Neighborhood Center of Jefferson County receives annual Delivery Systems Reform Incentive Payments (DSRIP). According to the Office of Mental Health (OMH) there is \$402,000 available for staffing for two counties. However, Pat does not want to start an office and hire personnel when she does not believe it could be sustained, although there could be a seamless transition through the Neighborhood Center. OMH sets crisis services goals for each County. There is ongoing discussion with OMH and Lewis County General Hospital administration and Neighborhood Center of Jefferson County to determine long-term solutions.

Pat has interviewed several candidates to fill the vacant Keyboard Specialist position and hopes to fill the position soon.

She reported the Committee had conducted some interviews earlier today, but were not prepared to put forth Community Services Board appointments to fill the three vacancies.

Ongoing transportation issues for persons seeking treatment continues to be discussed by the Priorities Council. A January meeting is planned to coordinate with Planning Department and Workforce Development staff to assist with solutions.

Pat is working with Gale Grunert and Hospital social worker staff to standardize procedures related to Mental Hygiene laws and regulations. The Hospital has assigned a South Lewis Clinic physician as the primary contact for DSRIP.

Pat is assisting Mountain View Prevention Services with hiring staff for Drug free communities grant program.

CREDO executive director Jim Scordo is rotating staff from their Watertown office to address the local caseload and assure timely client treatment.

Pat is working to standardize all OMH reporting for all contract agencies so that annual comparisons may be accomplished for number of persons treated, as well as funding and expenditures. The data will be used to develop strategies for program sustainability into the future. The turnover of staff for all contractors will be tracked, which is recognized as a primary impacting factor for units of service. The numbers are regularly reviewed at monthly meetings. County reimbursements, she said, are all based on collected and reported data, so she wants to assure the County is optimizing available revenue.

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**OFA Director Kelly Hecker** reported that the department's principle account clerk would be transferring to Public Health to train for the Fiscal Manager position. Penny Ingham has assured flexible scheduling so that the primary fiscal employee may complete a required comprehensive OFA report that is due in January, as well as provide some training for her replacement. Posting for the position would not occur until 12/22/17.

Legislator Moroughan made a motion to authorize refilling the OFA Principle Account Clerk position, seconded by Legislator Kulzer and carried.

Kelly suggests that the cost of meals be increased, noting the decrease in the DCW grant and NY Connects funding creating a \$68,000 State revenue deficit. Also, there has been an increase in client legal services.

HIICAP program assisted 219 persons from 10/15 – 12/7/17, with resulting savings of \$227,398, the most ever. Volunteers gave 60 hours of time assisting individuals with insurance deliberations. Former Hospital employee Don Arthur was most notably recognized for volunteering.

Kelly feels there is a disconnect between the NY Connects program staff and the accounting personnel that has resulted in a loss of units of service reimbursements. There are a lot of State guidelines and personnel must stay abreast of constant changes. There were 75 contacts/referrals between 11/15 – 12/15, but she is confident these numbers could be higher.

EISEP/Respite/Alzheimers programs served 45, 6 and 6 clients respectively, and had an overall increase of \$1,000.

There are 11 persons each on waiting lists for personal services and health care programs. Two employees have assisted DSS personnel to process 260 HEAP applications.

Kelly reported attending her first local senior meal site on 12/14, being less than impressed with the quality of food and plans to talk to the contractor.

The Christmas movie and popcorn event held at the Lowville Theater was attended by 94 seniors. There were 250 holiday food bags delivered in cooperation with Santa For Seniors.

Kelly feels that the agency needs to attain more of a foot-hold to promote community events.

Kelly reported mailing 300 Christmas cards as self-introductory.

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**Public Health Director Penny Ingham** reported her budget was on track.

Penny awaits a response from an interested person to serve on the Health Services Advisory Board.

Public Health has administered 380 flu vaccines, with the flu now considered geographically widespread in New York, and 2 laboratory confirmed cases in Lewis County. However, it is too early to tell which flu virus it is. Some persons who have been vaccinated have experienced a milder case of the flu.

There is a vaccine shortage for Yellow Fever and Hepatitis B expected to be available by mid 2018. These vaccines are mostly for travelers needing passports. Tetanus vaccine is primarily manufactured by companies located in Puerto Rico that are temporarily only 20% operational.

The first part of a cost analysis has been completed for the Immunization and Rabies Programs. The information will be used to improve program quality, as well as adjustments to program delivery to enhance efficiencies. There may be a need to raise fees.

Penny Ingham said she and Fiscal Manager Paula Kauffman have interviewed candidates for the Principal Account Clerk position and will make a formal offer next week after the required job posting has been done.

Public Health received another State Performance Improvement Incentive Award in the amount of \$5,000 that will be added to the 2018 State Aid reimbursement amount. The award was for the area of chronic disease and preparation for accreditation.

Penny stated that she and Public Health Planner Ashley Waite are scheduled to present the Public Health Strategic Plan to the Board of Legislators prior to their regular meeting on 2/6/2018.

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**DSS Commissioner Jenny Jones distributed her monthly report (attached)**

Jenny reported completion of 2 adoptions of foster care children yesterday. There are currently only 5 children in foster care, which includes a set of infant twins. The average number of foster care children is 10 – 12 so we are well below our average and plan that there will be admissions to care.

There were two employees whose status became permanent, following their probationary periods.

The One-Stop Workplace Office received a NYS Department of Labor award for providing the “Best Veteran Services” in the State.

Certain employees of the ReEnergy plant that is due to close on 12/29/17 are receiving partial employment benefits through the NYSDOL. Rapid response by NYS DOL is 12/28/17.

The NYS Dept. of Health is scheduled to assume administration of more Medicaid cases. This will start with recertifications in May 2018. We expect approximately 32 cases per month to move to the New York State of Health. More difficult cases will continue to be reviewed by the local department. Jenny expressed concern for unknown 2018 Medicaid administration allocations.

Jenny reports that a United Healthcare representative screens local jail inmates for Medicaid enrollment prior to being released on probation. In-patient services are covered. However, a recent inmate was discharged from the hospital intensive care unit. He was on Medicaid through United Health Care. LCGH did not get Prior Authorization for the inpatient stay as they were not informed the patient had coverage so the estimated \$28,000 charges were not covered and become a County expense. DSS has filed an appeal with United Health Care to cover the cost. Jenny has followed up with both the Sheriff’s personnel and LCGH to minimize the risk of this happening in the future.

Jenny reported that \$950,000 HEAP funds have been released thus far. Emergency HEAP applications will be accepted effective 1/2/2018 from persons having a shut-off notice, or have less than a quarter tank of fuel and had received regular HEAP benefits.

She was pleased to report donations of \$1,300 in cash and various items for the Homeless Christmas Tree, specifically thanking St. Peter’s Church for blankets and quilts, and Ridgeview Inn for 40 lamps. Jenny stated that several items are maintained in a closet at DSS for emergency purposes. NYS DSS Commissioner Samuel Roberts was impressed with local initiatives.

The State has implemented a new policy that requires fingerprinting and background checks for all new DSS employees in the Child Support Unit. DSS is implementing background checks through the State Central Registry and Justice Center for employees assigned to the Services Division.

In order for Able Bodied Adults Without Dependents (ABAWD) to receive Federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits they will be required to participate in an



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Jennifer Jones, Commissioner

**December 20, 2017  
Committee Meeting**

**Resolution to Renew Existing Agreements**

**Center of Lifelong Education and Recreation of SUNY Potsdam:** The purpose of this renewal agreement is for the Center of Lifelong Education and Recreation at SUNY Potsdam, to provide LCDSS employees with training projects including Spring and Fall Leadership Institute and Professional Development Workshops in 2018. There is No Local Share Cost (80% Federal and 20% State). The agreement is for the period January 1, 2018 through December 31, 2018.

**Transitional Living Services of Northern New York, Inc:** For the purchase of Psychiatric evaluations, and Medical Exams for employability Assessments of individuals receiving services from Lewis County DSS. The local share cost remains at up to 36% dependent on the eligibility of the consumer. The agreement is for the period January 1, 2018 through December 31, 2018.

**NYS Office of Children and Family Services:** This agreement is between the County of Lewis, by and through the Lewis County Department of Social Services and **New York State Office of Children and Family Services** for registration and inspection of child day care providers. The amount of the agreement is \$33,600.00. There is no local share cost as 100% is reimbursed by New York State. The agreement is for the period January 1, 2018 through December 31, 2018.

**Community Action Planning Council of Jefferson County, Inc.:** This agreement is to conduct registration and inspection of family day care and school aged child providers in Lewis County. The renewal is not to exceed \$31,920.00 (100% Federally funded). The agreement is for the period January 1, 2018 through December 31, 2018.

**Lewis County Opportunities, Inc:** This agreement is for services for TANF, Non-Residential Domestic Violence Services, Response and Prevention. The agreement is not to exceed \$25,000. There is no local share cost – (100% Federally Funded). The agreement is for the period October 1, 2017 through June 30, 2018.

**Rubenzahl, Knudsen & Associates Psychological Services, P.C:** This agreement is for the purchase of psychological therapy, evaluations; expert court testimony, monthly clinical treatment team meetings if applicable, group therapy; adult sex offender assessments; specialized attachment based services for in-home attachment parenting therapy; in office attachment parenting therapy, and mileage costs. The Local Share Cost is approximately 36%; approximately 50% federal and 14% state. This agreement is for the period January 1, 2018 through December 31, 2018.