

HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES  
FEBRUARY 2, 2009

HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT: LaPointe, Trinkle, Rymph, N. Hall

HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT: Henke, Brown, Banks

SUPERVISORS: Wilbur, G. Hall

Kevin Hayes, County Administrator

Roger Wickes, County Attorney

Al Nolette, Deputy County Treasurer

AGENDA AS PRESENTED IN NOTICE:

1. Call to Order
2. Discuss Proposed Funding Reductions for Unified Services Program
3. Other Business
4. Adjournment

The Human Services Committee meeting was called to order at 9:30 A.M. jointly with the Warren County Mental Health Committee at the Warren County Municipal Center, Lake George.

Rob York, Executive Director Mental Health, addressed the joint committees. He presented a slide presentation giving an overview of the Office of Community Services for Warren and Washington Counties, copy of slide presentation on file. In the 1970's, Warren and Washington Counties combined to form one local government unit for Mental Hygiene Services. Both Warren and Washington Counties have a Community Services Board. "In the 1980's all NYS Counties were invited to apply to become 'Unified Services' Counties. Warren and Washington Counties are among only 5 counties approved to be Unified Services Counties: Rensselaer, Rockland, Warren, Washington and Westchester. Being part of unified services means that the county's share of Local Assistance-Regular funding is reduced. For Warren County, the local share associated with this funding stream is 12.9%. For Washington County, the local share associated with this funding stream is 3.01%. All other Counties pay 50% of this funding stream."

Mental Health contracts with nine contract agencies as follows: Association for Mental Health, Behavioral Health Services, Community Workshop, Council for Prevention, Hudson Headwaters Health Network, Liberty House, United Cerebral Palsy, Voice of the Heart and 820 River St., Inc.

Mr. York addressed the Governor's proposal to eliminate the unified services enhanced funding which is detailed in the attached handout entitled, "Proposed Elimination of Unified Services Enhanced Funding: Impact to Warren and Washington Counties". Washington County currently pays \$13,521 (3.01%) and would pay under the proposed change to 50/50, \$224,605.00. This would result in a shift to local burden of \$211,083.00. This change if adopted would be retro active to February 1, 2009.

Pam Kaiser, Fiscal Manager Office of Community Services, stated the Office of Community Services currently receives 3.01% funding from Washington County in the amount of \$3,329, which will increase to \$55,296 under the 50/50 funding change.

Mr. York stated that the counties have saved a significant amount of monies since the 70's by being funded as unified services counties.

Chairman LaPointe asked for data on other counties mental health/community services budgets that have not been receiving this unified services funding. This system is designed to keep people out of the hospital but provide an environment where services can be provided.

Programs funded by Unified Services local assistance Warren and Washington Counties are listed on the attached handout.

The Director of Liberty House addressed the committee and distributed a handout on that agency that provides psychiatric and vocational rehabilitation. They would have to dramatically reduce the number of consumers served and the areas covered if their funding was reduced. The goal of their program is to move clients off social services and social security to jobs. They have very few other sources of funding.

A representative from the Prospect School stated they serve about 1200 people per year with staff of about 240. Most of the services are short term. The funding received is essential for referral and linkage to other services. They provide support for under insured and uninsured with services. His agency is looking at every position and how can they provide the needs. The major emphasis is to serve those with the most severe disabilities. The amount of funding through health insurance does not cover the initial services.

Tim Place, CWI, discussed the proposed cuts. They provide a full range of services: operating 12 residences, 20 day program sites, day services and community based services for those in the home. They employ approximately 400 and serve approximately 1000 disabled adults. The individuals served have very limited ability to work outside of a CWI environment. This division is working at a \$300,000 loss plus this proposed deficit would be doubtful if they could continue the workshop. If the workshop was not available these clients would draw on other benefits. They also provide other services and support. He invited Supervisors to stop by their facility.

Warren Washington Association of Mental Health provides case management and day programs for the severely mentally ill with this unified services funding.

Mr. York stated the purpose of today's meeting was to inform everyone on what these agencies do.

In terms of the Community Services Board and the effect of the funding change, they have also cut back on the Assistant Director Fiscal position from full time to part time resulting in an approximate savings of \$35,000.00.

It was stated that the decisions on this change in funding are happening right now and this proposed change would be retroactive to February 1, 2009 and the counties already have their budgets in place and it did not include funding this program at 50/50.

Mr. York stated the state has some responsibility and if the Counties cannot fund the full 50/50 they are considering some mitigating factors.

CWI noted that the meals on wheel program could be affected by other funding changes.

Kevin asked if the agencies could review their contracts and detail what the cuts in funding would mean to their agencies. He feels we will see this funding change very soon.

Highly probable the enhanced unified services funding will be eliminated and the cost shift of 50% to the County will be retro active to February 1, 2009. The County has not budgeted for this unanticipated expense. Mr. York was asked to gather information on budget amounts for counties currently paying 50/50 and also to work with the providers on identifying reductions in their budgets.

The meeting adjourned at 10:55 A.M.

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