

Social Programs Committee Minutes

March 8, 2011 – 3:30 p.m.

Present: Chairman Lucia; Supervisors Collyer, Grattidge, Jenkins, Richardson, Sausville, Southworth, and Wood; Spencer Hellwig, Administrator; Ryan Moore, Mgmt. Analyst; Sandi Cross, Office for the Aging; Wes Carr, Youth Bureau; Lisa Scaccia, Employment and Training; Margot Ammon, Helen Cranshaw, League of Women Voters; Bree Pisacane, Physical Therapist; Lisa Adams, Speech Pathologist; Lauren Herbs, Speech Therapist; Lisa Zadoorian, Speech Pathologist; Press.

Chairman Lucia called the meeting to order and welcomed all in attendance.

On a motion made by Mr. Collyer, seconded by Mr. Sausville the minutes of the February 1, 2011 meeting were approved unanimously.

Mrs. Cross requested a resolution proclaiming May as Senior Citizens month.

A motion was made by Mr. Grattidge, seconded by Mr. Richardson to approve a resolution proclaiming May as Senior Citizens month. Unanimous.

Mrs. Cross said the five town Senior Transportation went out to an RFP as the last contract was finished. There were five bids received, with A&H Services as the low bidder of \$130/day. The previous contract was for \$180/day, representing a \$50/day decrease.

Mrs. Cross requested approval of a resolution and contract with A&H Services to provide Senior Transportation in the five towns that include Galway, Charlton, Providence, Edinburg and Saratoga.

A motion was made by Mr. Jenkins, seconded by Mr. Richardson to approve a resolution to enter into a contract with A&H Services to provide Senior Transportation in the towns of Galway, Charlton, Providence, Edinburg and Saratoga at a cost of \$130/day. Unanimous.

Mr. Carr said the county Pre-school Special Education rate is \$35 per ½ hr. This rate was established when the Pre-School Special Education program was moved out of Family Court in the 1980's. The Pre-School Education Program is mandated by the NYS Case Management Department and its related services rates are set by the county. One of the comparisons that was made was the pre-school special education rates and the early intervention program rates. Early intervention is mandated through the state department of health, and the state of NY sets those rates, which is why those rates are considerably higher.

Mr. Carr said there was concern that the county does not allow or very rarely allows a 45 minute rate, which would be \$52.50; however, the committees on Pre-School Special Education who determine services, can and will consider a 45 min. rate on a case by case basis. The 45-min. rate may make more sense if a provider has to go out to some of the rural portions of the county, he said.

Mr. Carr said the county currently has 140 itinerate providers under contract. If a child is not referred to the pre-school program by their third birthday all itinerate services will terminate. The normal sequence is as follows:

The child is referred to the pre-school program where they are evaluated. A CPSE meeting is scheduled to classify the child and determine the type and level of service the child will receive. At that point the parents will then choose a service provider. Parents must also sign a consent form prior to the commencement of services. Some parents are slow to follow through and another reason for the lapse or delay in service is that providers sometimes don't return phone calls from the parents. The NYS Education Department of Regulations determines the school calendar, which allows children in the pre-school program to receive services only when school is in session.

Mr. Grattidge asked if the children are seen in the summertime? Mr. Carr said there is a six week summer session where if it is determined that a child is going to regress without continued services over the summer, summer services are approved and the child will receive the summer services. This is on a case by case basis.

Mr. Grattidge asked if children would receive services during the school year breaks, such as winter break? Mr. Carr said children in the center-based programs would not receive services during those breaks, they follow the school calendar.

Mr. Jenkins asked if there were statistics on the number of students that were served and the number of visits for 2010? Mr. Carr said he could provide the committee with as detailed statistics as they would like. At this point we are looking at about 600 children in the program, however, they don't all receive related services, he said. Mr. Richardson asked what age group the children were? Mr. Carr said ages three to five.

Mr. Jenkins said to look at this issue we need to look at the budgetary issue of how many students, the number of services that are provided, and what the annual cost would be.

Mr. Carr said he has over \$1.4m budgeted for 2011 for related services.

Mr. Lucia suggested that the committee take some time to study this issue. He appointed a subcommittee consisting of Mr. Collier, Mr. Grattidge, and Mr. Jenkins to work on this and bring information back to next month's committee meeting.

Mr. Richardson prefaced his comments by stating that his daughter is a Speech Pathologist who handles children in Saratoga County. He said back in the 1980's when the county was paying people \$35 for ½ hr. of service you could buy a house for

\$100,000 and a gallon of gas for approximately 50 cents. These are professional people. When they go to get their masters degree, it is not a thirty hour commitment as most masters degrees are, it is sixty hours, along with 400 hours while they are working on their masters of in-kind services where they are in hospitals or working with small children. He said he would like to see a recommendation made at the next meeting as to where we should go with this.

Mr. Hellwig said they would be reaching out to the providers and contact some representatives that are speaking for the group to come and participate in the process. We are not going to come back and ask for a decision without making sure that everyone has a voice. We are talking about a State mandate, so it is not a question about whether or not these children need the services, it is having more control over how they are provided. To a large extent, not only the providers, but also the counties hands are tied by what is being dictated in Albany.

Mr. Richardson said, the fact of the matter is, the county is the one who sets the rates, and the rates should be fair. He said he didn't think that \$35 for ½ hr. is a fair rate.

Mr. Jenkins said the subcommittee is going to need a projection or idea of how many students are being bypassed as a result of not being on schedule. Mr. Carr said when a child reaches his or her third birthday and if they are still eligible for services in the pre-school program they will move into the program.

Mr. Richardson said some of the problems are that parents aren't always ready to accept the thought that their child has a problem, so the child is ready to get into school and they haven't had any service up to that point. If there is a child that is 0-3 and they have already been in the system they keep that child through age five. The problem is that sometimes when the parents don't want to recognize the problem with their own child, what happens is no one sees the problem until they are school age and then it is difficult to get the child in the system.

Mr. Jenkins asked if the county paid for this service? Mr. Carr said the county pays up front and then is reimbursed by the State 59 ½%. Normally, the lag time in getting paid can run into the years. The overall budget for the program, including transportation for 2011 is \$11,386,000 and the Medicaid reimbursement is budgeted at \$40,000.

On a motion made by Mr. Richardson, seconded by Mr. Jenkins the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,
Chris Sansom