

Social Programs Committee Minutes

September 9, 2008 – 3:30 p.m.

Present: Chairman Wormuth; Supervisors Daly, Jenkins, Richardson, Veitch and Wright; Spencer Hellwig, Mgmt. Analyst; Dan Butler, Animal Shelter, Wes Carr, Youth Bureau, League of Women Voters; Press.

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

On a motion made by Mr. Veitch, seconded by Mr. Jenkins the minutes of the July 8, 2008 meeting were approved.

Mr. Carr requested a resolution authorizing a contract with Saratoga County Transportation of Scotia to provide transportation for the pre-school handicapped children's program and Early Intervention for the period of 9/2008 – 8/2011. The average cost per day/per child would be \$42.

A motion was made by Mr. Richardson, seconded by Mr. Veitch to approve a resolution authorizing a contract with Saratoga County Transportation of Scotia to provide transportation for the pre-school handicapped children's program and Early Intervention for the period 9/2008 through 8/2011. Unanimous.

Mr. Carr said there were two proposals received, with the lowest bidder A&H Transportation in Ballston Spa, however, they declined to follow through. Their rate was \$32/day.

Mr. Carr said the Youth Bureau is looking to sell some equipment to the Mechanicville City School District. There was a closed circuit television that was purchased for the child in the pre-school program who was visually impaired in 2007. The child has since out of the program and attending the Kindergarten program in Mechanicville. The Mechanicville School is interested in purchasing the equipment as it is only a year old. This equipment is designed specifically for the child. The county paid \$3,011 for the equipment, and the state reimbursed the county their share, which was 59.5%, which amounted to \$1,791.55 leaving the County's share at \$1,219.45. The Mechanicville School District has agreed to purchase the equipment from the County for that price.

A motion was made by Mr. Veitch, seconded by Mr. Richardson to approve authorizing the sale of pre-school equipment to the Mechanicville City School District in the amount of \$1,219.45. Unanimous. (Committee Approval Only)

Mr. Christopher gave a brief overview of the anticipated changes to the 2008 Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP) as follows:

1. Increasing the regular HEAP benefits to \$800/mo. for eligible households using oil, kerosene, and or propane.
2. Raising the non utility, oil kerosene, propane, wood and coal emergency HEAP benefit from \$700 to \$800 to ensure that the benefit amount is sufficient to purchase a minimum delivery of fuel in all instances.
3. Streamline the eligibility of the determination process to assist local districts in managing the anticipated increased demand by waiving the face to face interviewing requirements off all HEAP emergency applications other than furnace repair or replacement.
4. Establishing that a household can qualify for a HEAP emergency benefit if it does not have available liquid resources in an amount greater than the amount of the HEAP emergency benefit.
5. The regular benefit amount of all households heating with commodities other than oil, kerosene, propane continues to be based on a point system. The point value is set at \$65 per point. This provides a maximum benefit of \$585 for these households, which is an increase from the 2007/2008 maximum benefit of \$540.
6. The definition of an energy emergency for oil, kerosene and propane customers from having a fuel supply last less than 10 calendar days to having a heating fuel supply that is equal to less than $\frac{1}{4}$ of the households fuel tank. This is based on using a 175-gallon fuel tank as a baseline.
7. Raising the amount over which local districts need to obtain Office of Disability and Temporary Assistance at the state office approval for furnace replacements from \$2,500 to \$3,000.
8. The implementation of the \$1 heat benefit to subsidized housing tenants with heat included in their rent and residents of specific congregate care living situations in order to minimize food stamp benefits.

Mr. Christopher said in the past if residents were living in an apartment where their heat was included, they didn't receive any benefit. This year if they are eligible financially they would get \$1, and then qualify for the maximum food stamp benefit.

Mr. Christopher said the income standards have changed this year, being more lenient. A family of four is now eligible if they have zero income up to \$2,297/mo. compared to last years \$2,237/mo. They would be eligible for a tier one benefit.

A tier two benefit is a lesser amount for a family of four starts at \$2,298/mo. compared to last years \$2,238/mo. On an annual income that would total \$45,308/yr.

The HEAP program will begin on November 3, 2008.

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

Respectfully submitted,
Chris Sansom