

**ONEIDA COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES COMMITTEE  
MINUTES OF AUGUST 17, 2023**

Members present: Mr. Jim Winkler, Mr. Ted Cushing, Mr. Robb Jensen, Ms. Linnaea Newman

Approved absence: Mr. Anthony Rio

Staff: Ms. Mary Rideout, Mr. Joel Gottsacker, Ms. Heidi Chavez, Ms. Tammy Javenkoski, Ms. Jeri Driscoll

Other: Ms. Tamara Feest, Ms. Tracy Bellman, Mr. Steven Schreier, Two others via Zoom

**1. Call to Order. Approval of Agenda:**

The regular meeting of the Oneida County Social Services Committee was brought to order at 1:00 p.m. by Mr. Jim Winkler, Chairperson. The Chairperson noted that the meeting had been properly posted and mailed in accordance with the Wisconsin Open Meeting Laws. Motion by Ms. Linnaea Newman, seconded by Mr. Ted Cushing to approve the agenda as posted. All ayes; motion carried.

**2. Minutes of Social Services Committee – July 20, 2023:**

Motion made by Mr. Ted Cushing, seconded by Mr. Robb Jensen to approve the Minutes of July 20, 2023 as presented. All ayes; motion carried.

**3. Public Comment:**

None

**Veterans Services:**

**1. 2024 Veterans Service Office Budget Proposal:**

No increase in their non-personnel budget proposal was requested. Motion by Mr. Ted Cushing, seconded by Ms. Linnaea Newman to forward to the Admin. Committee. All ayes, motion carried.

**2. 2024 CVSO Grant:**

The annual CVSO Grant we receive from the Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs will be increasing by 25% in 2024. The grant will increase \$11,000 to \$13,750. Informational only, no action needed.

**3. Travel out of County for CVSO and ACVSO:**

The CVSO requested travel to Kenosha, WI, for her and the ACVSO for the CVSOA fall conference from October 8, 2023 – October 13, 2023. It is in the budget and the LTE will be covering the office. Motion by Mr. Robb Jensen,

seconded by Mr. Ted Cushing to approve the travel to the fall conference. All ayes, motion carried.

**4. Northwoods Veterans Homestead Update:**

A husband and wife, who live near the property NVH purchased, attended the last meeting to get more information about the project and to voice their concern about it being built so close to their property.

The focus now is on fundraising. Informational only, no action needed.

**5. 2023 Financial & Statistical Report, Department Head Expense Voucher and Vendor Payment Report:**

Ms. Tammy Javenkoski reported that they are currently within budget and reviewed the current charges with the committee. Also reviewed the Monthly Report. The committee acknowledged receipt and acceptance of the financial reports. She also provided a travel voucher for herself when she went to Minocqua to do a home visit with a veteran's widow. Motion to receive by Mr. Robb Jensen, seconded by Mr. Ted Cushing to approve the vouchers. All ayes; motion carried.

**6. Public Comment:** None

**7. Agenda Items for Future Meetings:**

- Northwoods Veterans Homestead
- Normal Agenda Items.

**Social Services:**

**1. Positive Youth Development Programs – Sharon Krause, Community Youth Development:**

Ms. Sharon Krause, Oneida County Community Youth Development Educator, presented to the committee. She works with Oneida County Teen Court. Teen court is for kids who get their first citation. Last year they worked with 33 kids and 97% of the cases were dismissed due to completion of the program. So far this year only 54% of the cases have been dismissed (completed the program) and there have been more respondents. The biggest months of not completing tasks is May and June which may be due to non-structure.

Ms. Krause also works with the Raise Your Voice Clubs which is a club that empowers teens to create a new conversation about mental health through education, leadership development and civic advocacy. This is an opportunity for students to lead the way in reducing stigma and informing community leaders about youth needs.

Rideout explained that these are prevention programs that may result in fewer referrals to Social Services, but like many prevention programs, the effectiveness is hard to measure as you are trying to identify something that didn't happen due to the intervention.

**2. 2024 Budget Approval:**

Social Services was awarded a TAD grant in 2023 that will likely be awarded again for 2024. The revenues and expenses associated with this grant have been added to our budget.

Salary and fringe benefits for the agency increased \$468,577 from the 2023 budget. This amount includes the addition of one new position in Economic Support in the amount of \$75,420. This position costs are paid with additional State and Federal funds. A rough estimate indicates that about \$296,000 of the increase will not be covered by state and federal funds.

In community services expenses are increased by \$83,143 in 2024. \$51,696 of that increased amount are covered by state and federal funding. The remaining \$36,447 would be additional county tax levy.

We reduced our Supportive Home Care program budget by \$5,000 and our Protective Placement budget by \$20,000.

One FTE was added in 2023 for an Economic Support Position that is funded 100% through state and federal funds. No other personnel has changed since 2023 budget.

We are requesting to purchase a vehicle for the ADRC staff through CIP funds.

The committee reviewed data from Out of Home Care costs (1999-2023), In Home Services (2017-2023), Social Services Surplus (2001-2023) and County Levy (2001-2023).

The total increase over 2023 County Tax Levy is \$156,085. Social Services has been able to maintain the County Tax Levy for the last 20 plus years. Motion by Mr. Ted Cushing to accept the budget and forward on, seconded by Ms. Linnaea Newman. All ayes; motion carried.

**3. Energy Assistance Program Administration:**

The Wisconsin Home Energy Assistance Program (WHEAP) administers the federally funded Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) and Public Benefits Energy Assistance Program. The program is administered through the Economic Support unit within the Department of Social Services for Oneida County residents. The program year begins in October.

The Economic Support (ES) unit is experiencing a sharp increase in their workload due to the “unwinding” of pandemic era protocols for Medical Assistance and FoodShare. Additional staff are needed to cover the call-center and to process applications and documents.

To address this issue we are looking for a Limited Term Employee to manage the Energy Assistance Program beginning in October. This will allow the two Economic Support workers that manage this program to spend more of their time on the regular ES workload. We discussed this with our consortium partners, and additional funding for the un-winding will be used to cover any additional costs.

**4. Structure of Human Services in Oneida County update - Mediator:**

Ms. Mary Rideout reached out to other counties and have only received four responses. Those responses stated they would participate if their county said they had to but most thought it was a waste of money and time.

The committee recommended to wait and see what other responses are received and update at the next meeting.

**5. Agency Update: Staffing/Vacancies, Title IV-E Legal Services Grants, Foster Parent Grant, Capital Improvement requests – Facilities:**

**Staffing:**

- Retired Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) Coordinator: Lori Ring has been hired to fill the RSVP position. Lori was our Rhinelander Dining Site Manager. She began as the RSVP Coordinator on August 14, 2023 and will be training with Dawn until Dawn retires on September 1, 2023.
- Economic Support: We hired two experienced Economic Support Workers to fill our vacancies. Bride Curtis began on August 7, 2023 and Hanna Wichmann will start on August 21, 2023.
- Social Services Aide: Jeri Driscoll has accepted the position of Social Services Aide. This creates a vacancy in the administrative support unit. Applications for this position are due this week.

**Economic Support Unwinding Issues:**

- Economic Support has seen a significant increase in their workload. July was a difficult month for our call center, with participants experiencing an unacceptable wait time. The IM Central Consortium Manager and Supervisors continue to monitor the situation and make suggestions to improve customer service.

**Benefit Recovery Stats:**

- Economic Support is responsible to verify information received from participants and refer to investigation if they believe someone is not being truthful. Once it is determined that someone provided inaccurate information, either accidentally or intentionally, the participant is required to re-pay the benefits they received. This is referred to as Benefit Recovery.

Foster Care Recruitment Efforts:

- Our Foster Home licensing staff have been working on recruitment efforts. They have come up with the logo “Foster our Future” and are providing goody bags at area events such as the music event at Hodag Park and the Boys and Girls Club celebration. The goal is to increase the number of available foster homes in Oneida County.

**6. 2023 Financial & Statistical Reports and Vendor Payment Report:**

The committee acknowledges receipt and acceptance of the Financial and Statistical Report and Vendor Payment Report.

**7. Public Comment:**

No Public Comment.

**8. Agenda Items for future Meetings:**

Budget Update  
Usual Agenda Items

**8. Adjourn:**

There being no further business to be brought before the Committee, it was moved by Mr. Jim Winkler to adjourn the meeting at 2:25 p.m. The next meeting of the Social Services Committee will be September 25, 2023 at 1:00 p.m.

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Mr. Jim Winkler, Chair

Date: August 17, 2023