

**Herkimer County Legislature
Committee on Human Resources and Ways & Means
Committee Meeting
Friday, March 26, 2021
Via Zoom**

Follows County Properties, Human Resources and Ways & Means

Persons Attending:

Frederick J. Shaw, Jr. (Chairman, Human Resources/W&M committee member)
Raymond Smith (committee member, both)
Peter F. Manno (Human Resources committee member)
Gregory Malta, Sr. (Human Resources committee member)
Mark Gaworecki (Human Resources committee member)
Robert J. Schrader (Human Resources committee member)
Patrick E. Russell (Chairman, Ways & Means)
Kurt J. Ackerman (Ways & Means committee member)
Raymond Johnson (Ways & Means committee member)
John P. Stephens (Ways & Means committee member)
Vincent J. Bono (Chairman of the Legislature)
James W. Wallace, Jr., County Administrator
Lorraine Lewandrowski, County Attorney
Sheri Ferdula, Budget Officer
Steve Billings, Personnel Officer
Kristen Snyder-Branner, Director of Community Services
Christina Cain, Director of Public Health
Timothy Seymour, Commissioner of DSS

(Non Committee Members Signed In)

Legislator Bob D. Hollum
Legislator William E. Keeler, Sr.
Legislator Ray Donley
Legislator Peter J. Campione
Legislator William Weakley

Absent:

N/A

Mr. Shaw called the meeting to order at 10:28 a.m.

Items discussed:

HUMAN RESOURCES:

1. Approve Annual Report of Mental Health
2. Other

HUMAN RESOURCES AND WAYS & MEANS:

3. Approve reimbursement for malpractice liability insurance in Mental Health
4. Approval to renew contract with NYS Department of Health for Immunization Action Plan, authorize Chairman to E-sign, and amend 2021 budget in Public Health
5. Approve purchase of laptops and transfer of funds in DSS
6. Accept funding and renew agreement with Catholic Charities in DSS
7. Discussion of Rental Assistance Program
8. Other

Committee Vote Record:

HUMAN RESOURCES:

Mr. Shaw: “Number one is approve Annual Report of Mental Health. Kristen, do you have anything you would like to say?”

Kristen Snyder-Branner: “Good morning. This is the yearly report that we provide and as far as money coming into the clinic. It is just about the same as last year. No big changes.”

Item #1 – On motion of Mr. Schrader, seconded by Mr. Gaworecki for Human Resources, Item #1 was voted on, approved and moved for Resolution. Unanimous.

Item #2 –N/A

HUMAN RESOURCES AND WAYS & MEANS:

Mr. Shaw: “Number three is approve reimbursement for malpractice liability insurance in Mental Health and I think that figure is \$1,500, right?”

Kristen Snyder-Branner: “It is a portion of Dr. Patil’s Liability Insurance in consideration of his services to the correctional inmates.”

Item #3 – On motion of Mr. Smith, seconded by Mr. Gaworecki for Human Resources and on motion of Mr. Johnson, seconded by Mr. Bono for Ways & Means, Item #3 was voted on, approved and moved for Resolution. Unanimous.

Mr. Shaw: “Number four approval to renew contract with NYS Department of Health for Immunization Action Plan. This is something we do every year in Public Health. Do you have anything to say on that Christina?”

Christina Cain: “Nope. You’ve got it. Annual grant for Immunization Program.”

Item #4 – On motion of Mr. Shaw, seconded by Mr. Schrader for Human Resources and on motion of Mr. Smith, seconded by Mr. Shaw for Ways & Means, Item #4 was voted on, approved and moved for Resolution. Unanimous.

Mr. Shaw: “Number five approve purchase of laptops and transfer of funds in DSS. Do you have anything to add to this one Tim?”

Tim Seymour: “Yes. A little background on this. If you guys recall you authorized us to purchase the computer equipment at the beginning of the year and we did so. Part of that was a laptop order and part of that was a desktop order. The company that provided the laptops somehow...I don’t know what happened but we got double the order. One shipment of twenty-five and another shipment of twenty-five. It took us about four weeks to get them. Since we have the additional twenty-five, I thought it was a good opportunity to purchase those because we...you know, our computers are all about ten years old over here and the State is not going to provide any. I take that back, I am going to be getting three laptops from the State in the middle of April. So that will bring us up to about seventy-five computers for about one hundred and forty people which we will make due. That’s what it is. It’s my request to you guys for authorization and transfer of the funds.”

Item #5 – On motion of Mr. Malta, seconded by Mr. Gaworecki for Human Resources and on motion of Mr. Johnson, seconded by Mr. Russell for Ways & Means, Item #5 was voted on, approved and moved for Resolution. Unanimous.

Mr. Shaw: “Number six accept funding and renew agreement with Catholic Charities in DSS. Tim, do you have anything to add on that one?”

Tim Seymour: “Sure. That’s our annual State funded Safe Harbour programming. That’s child trafficking. It’s an awareness campaign that we have been doing for about five years now. We are on a belt curve with the State so we are on the downside of the belt curve. Last year it was \$51,000 and now this year it is \$40,000. It’s my request to accept that funding and to move forward with the contract with Catholic Charities to continue our operations.”

Item #6 – On motion of Mr. Bono, seconded by Mr. Smith for Human Resources and on motion of Mr. Bono, seconded by Mr. Smith for Ways & Means, Item #6 was voted on, approved and moved for Resolution. Unanimous.

Mr. Shaw: “Number seven discussion of Rental Assistance Program. Tim, it’s all yours.”

Tim Seymour: “Okay. And that is exactly what this is. Only a discussion because I have limited information on this but am rapidly gaining more. So I just wanted to bring it to everybody’s attention. Over the past couple of weeks, maybe a bunch of you and I know myself and Jim have received several phone calls regarding this press release from Oneida County that there is \$6 million dollars in the US Treasury Department for housing purposes and there is a whole slew of things underneath that. I just want to clarify with everybody that that money is for communities with greater than 200,000 residence. So on this first round of funding from the US Treasury it did not come to us obviously. That said, I think there is \$24 billion dollars in housing money. That’s a lot of money. Anyway, the part of more interest to everybody here and myself is I know in the State budget there is what is called ERAP, Emergency Rental Assistance Program. There is some money in that for the State budget, proposed for that, and it’s going to be funneled through the Office of Temporarily Disability Assistance. I don’t know anything about the allocations. I know a little bit of who is eligible for it and what some of the expenditures can be allowed under there. That could all change if this passes. I will revisit this if it makes it though the next budget process but I just wanted to clarify to everybody more importantly that all of that money that is out there right now was for communities over 200,000 residence and it has gotten a lot of attention from people out there and I have gotten one hundred and fifty phone calls. If anybody asks you, please pass that one to them. You can tell them to call me and I will give them the same answer. I will wait and see what passes in the budget and perhaps we will get some funding for us locally and I can only tell you that there is a lot of housing money coming into this County. Catholic Charities got about a half a million dollars over the last six months and so that is a big focus this year. Any questions I would be glad to answer.”

Mr. Shaw: “If we would do this Tim, would we have to hire help?”

Tim Seymour: “It depends on how they bring it to us. The last money they brought through our community partners, Catholic Charities and they are the lead for housing in the County so they took the lead on our Continued Care so that money went with our housing coalition blessing went right to the lead. If they do it that way, no. If they do it the other way, I would have to see what it looks like and how much money we have.”

Mr. Gaworecki: “If you did need to hire someone would that be covered under the program?”

Tim Seymour: “I don’t believe so. There is very little admin included in this. It is all programming. I will just go through what I have read. It’s housing, back rent, future rent, and I am going to say this and run, internet service which they are tying into home based schooling. I think that is where that comes from. And again, that could change by the time this actually becomes law.”

Mr. Gaworecki: "Thank you."

Mr. Shaw: "Anymore questions? If there is nothing under other I am looking for a motion to go out of session."

Item #7 – Discussion only. No vote taken.

Item #8 –N/A

Mr. Campione: "I know you guys don't want to hear this but I would like to go back to the Daycare. It looks like we are heading down the same road we did with the jail. We can kick the can forever before something happens. I personally think we all need to do our homework after we get our architect information and when it comes back to us we need to take it to vote. Either we do it or we don't. Thank you."

At 10:41 a.m., on motion of Mr. Manno, seconded by Mr. Schrader, the Human Resources Committee adjourned.

The Ways & Means Committee continued.