

**ULSTER COUNTY LEGISLATURE
COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES**

NAME OF COMMITTEE: Health and Human Services Committee

DATE: July 7, 2011

TIME: 6:00 P.M.

PLACE: Legislative Chambers, 6th Floor

LEGISLATORS PRESENT: Chairman Frey, Legislator's, Parete, Harris, Maio, Petit, Ronk, Loughran

LEGISLATOR EXCUSED: Leg. Briggs, Stoeckeler

OTHERS ATTENDING: Legislator's Belfiglio, Hayes, Marshall Beckman, Bea Havranek, Roberto Rodriguez, Dr. LaMar Hasbrouck, Mental Health & Public Health Merger Task Force, Lee Cane LWV, Ken Hyatt, Mental Health Dept. Employees, Concerned Citizens, Nettie Tomshaw UC Legislature Staff

- The meeting was called to order by Chairman Walter Frey at 6:05 PM.
- Attendance; Legislator Harris & Maio excused 7pm.
- A motion by Legislator Loughran was made to accept the June 2, 2011 Committee Meeting Minutes, Seconded by Legislator Ronk, all were in favor, Carried.
- A motion by Legislator Loughran was made to accept the June 16, 2011 Committee Meeting Minutes, Seconded by Legislator Ronk, all were in favor, Carried.
- Both Leg. Ronk's and Leg. Briggs Group committees have decided to reunite as one committee to further tackle the Golden Hill Health Care Options. Up until this point options 5, 6 & 9 have been removed from discussion.

Resolution:

- 1.) Resolution Draft No. 0708, July 7, 2011: Creating A Safety Net Task Force To Evaluate The Viability And Financial Impact Of The Safety Net Program To The Taxpayers Of Ulster County

Legislator Loughran thanked the Health & Human Services Committee, Chairman Wadnola and County Executive Hein for taking this first important step - noting this should have been done years ago. Ulster County is the only county in NYS that continues to charge back towns, villages and city because people happen to collect public assistance. Chairman Frey noted last month the Legislature reached out to help the towns and villages by approving \$1.3 million to defer the cost. Leg. Ronk noted NYS is the only state in the nation that hands this cost down to the county level.

Motion offered to move Resolution forward by Legislator Loughran, Seconded by Legislator Harris, Unanimously in Favor, Carried.

Bea Havranek County Attorney, Golden Hill Health Care Center Q & A:

Chairman Frey stated the county attorney will take questions, research and get back to committee via Legislative Counsel.

Q - Legislator Harris asked about the cherry picking aspect of nursing homes overall and is there anything the county can do to assist the state in trying to assure this doesn't happen in the private nursing homes in our county. Back in the spring state rep Mark Kissinger met with the Legislature and explained the state is not able to adequately monitor this.

A - Bea Havranek stated a charter county such as ours has authority to do more than a non-charter county. She will research and communicate her thoughts and findings with Legislative Counsel noting they meet on a regular basis.

Marshall Beckman expressed the practice of cherry picking is real and illegal - one can not discriminate based on method of payment, ability to pay, level of service required or patients residence. Cherry picking denies people the full range of services. M. Beckman feels there are definitely things the county can do and will be talking to Mr. Kissinger further.

Q - Chairman Frey asked what the procurement process would involve in regards to the possible sale of Golden Hill to a non profit agency - if even possible by law.

Q - Leg. Petit asked what powers the legislative body has in regard to the sale of real property surrounding the Golden Hill facility - example the old jail - how detailed can we get as Legislators. Also can the Legislature put in a detailed business plan directing the sale of land around Golden Hill to develop senior housing? A - Under the Charter you have some authority under state law to be responsible for real property when it comes to the sale of real property. But under state law there are a lot of restrictions - will research.

Q - Leg. Loughran asked can we and for how long lease property for revenue. A - Yes 5 years through a local law, or lease property to the IDA for a 25 year lease. (ref. section 215 of county law). The IDA is a mechanism for the county to lease longer than 5 yrs. If not done through a local law then competitive bidding comes into play. It really depends on what you want to do.

Q - Leg. Harris asked about the Golden Hill RFP responses being withheld from the legislative body. At what point can we view the RFP so we can evaluate what we are doing. A - To summarize, until the county makes a decision on how to proceed it will not be disclosed - it will make it tough for the county to negotiate. The Legislative Counsel will need to provide other proof - case or statute to Bea H. to get beyond her research believed to be the law. The legislature did receive a summation of the RFP results. There is no expiration date on the RFP - bidders can pull out or renegotiate. Leg. Parete expressed if some legislators have seen the results of the RFP then all legislators should be privy to the information.

Q - Leg. Belfiglio asked a question through Deputy Leg. Parete - Because of the 2% tax cap imposed, can the Legislature's 60% vote override the cap and fund the operations of Golden Hill as a county entity.

A - Details are still in the works with the state. Will not have an answer right away until this gets flushed out by the state - everyone has questions.

Q - Leg. Belfiglio asked how can the county develop a budget for GH without a bed reimbursement rate?

A - Chairman Frey - the budget is an estimate which is done the same way every year - a guide line.

Amy Russell, Concerned Parents of Mental Health:

Ms. Russell is a resident of Hurley. Thanked the committee for allowing her to speak before the committee. Spoke before the full Legislature at last session and previous health and human service meetings. Talked about her personal family struggles and success dealing with mental health issues. Has concern about inconsistent support - privatizing if services are cut or altered. If privatized, can the same positive team work be modeled? Headed for Congressman Maurice Hinchey and NYS Senator John Bonacic's office next.

Sharon Harding, Harbor Program: Also spoke at last month Session - public comment. Same concerns as Ms. Russell and also noted private psychiatrists can deny service for violent patients. UC Mental Health never has refused services.

Cindy Decker: Spoke about family plight - drugs, alcohol etc. Same concerns as Amy Russell. Raising grand daughter for the 4th year. Nexus program was good - however g daughter aged out of program. If services are lost kids end up in the streets and next step is prison - thus costing the county even more.

Legislator Frey conveyed changes need to come from the state level.

Mental Health & Public Health Department Porposed Merger Update, Dr. LaMar Hasbrouck:

- Submitted to committee his proposal to integrate the Ulster County Health and Mental Health Departments.
- Studied NYC merger in 2002, Putnam County merged Mental Health & SS, Schyler and Yates counties merged MH & Health across county boundaries and expect other counties to do the same.
- Task force was not charged with any matters in regards to privatization.
- 17 page report will be complete tomorrow - will forward to committee members.
- Report and Recommendations from 12 member Taskforce - most members present
- The purpose of task force was to explore integrating departments as model for providing essential health services in challenging fiscal environment
- The study method was an interactive process of due diligence, met for 7 mtgs. over 4 months starting on March 7, 2011 - ending June 21, 2011.
- Consultation w/ state agencies, DOH, OMH, OPWDD and OASAS
- Key Consideration - Impact on residents health "do no harm", sustainability and potential savings to county
- Conceptual Benefits - Improved coordination in health education/promotion, disease prevention and recovery. Reduced stigma associated with Mental Health, holistic approach to health and potential savings
- Findings: No Negative Findings - Several advantages such as improved coordination, improved public education, reduced stigma/enhanced utilization, possible savings, grant funding
- Efficiencies TBD - under one roof, time frame? Administrative/Fiscal, payroll, contract management, corporate compliance, quality assurance and resolutions
- One location - Approx. 50 staff will need to relocate to Golden Hill complex from Flatbush Ave.
- Potential Concerns - Associated costs, temporary service disruptions, delayed ROI
- Fiscal Considerations - Buildings & Grounds - relocate staff from Flatbush Ave. to Golden Hill estimated cost \$6500 - \$8500. Insurance - Relocate approx. 10 staff from Golden Hill to an

alternate site cost \$1500. Information Services - Moving telecommunications devices for DOH, DMH, (limited), and Insurance \$3500-\$5000. DOH & DMH intergrated electronic systems (and related licenses) for tracking accounting and personnel time \$3000 - \$5000.

- Total Fiscal Consideration Dollars approx. \$20K
- Recommendations - Integrate DMH within DOH. Assumes current DOH and DMH programmatic services. Potential savings can be better determined following period of co-location. Several benefits for health/welfare of clients.

Marshall Beckman noted from experience they know to be cautious when making changes as not to do anything they won't be able to recover from - look before you leap!

Chairman Frey thanked the task force for all their vital work along with the dedication and passion shown by the staff at both the Dept. of Health and Dept. of Mental Health.

Medicaid Transportation Update, Commissioner Rodriguez: (attachment)

- As of July 1, 2011 the Dept. of Social Services Medicaid Transportation is taken over by the state per new legislation. The county now has a supported - reduced role (more like a contract manager).
- The model previously used wasn't an efficient program.
- The vendor that won the state contract is the same vendor we currently work with - MAS.
- Reimburse state transportation manager for consumer trips and report/claim.
- Evaluate performance of transportation manager.
- Participate in scheduled telephone conferences
- Convey state transportation policy and provide guidance on local issues to Transportation Manager.
- Apply knowledge of local area and travel routes
- Propose cost saving initiatives
- Request state approval of standard trip fees
- Represent state DOH at fair hearings
- Commissioner Rodriguez's dept. will continue to participate in pilot programs to be on the forefront of change.

Discussion ensued about the history of the program and whether the previous operation was profitable. The client's mode of transportation is dictated by a script written by the client's physician - it's not a county's choice or decisio

Chairman Frey provided the committee with a copy of a NYSAC letter dated June 30, 2011 indicating the state will recoup IGT monies - \$1.6 million from the past 2-year payments made to the county. Also, as part of the budget, the long stalled nursing home reimbursement methodology will be implemented on an interm basis until a new statewide pricing model is developed. The rebasing payments will date back to April 1, 2009 and (possibly) run through the end of this calendar year depending upon available state resources and the development of the new statewide pricing model.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:20 PM with a motion offered by Legislator Ronk, Seconded by Legislator Parete, with all in favor, Carried.

Respectfully Submitted,

**Walter Frey, Chairman /nt
Health & Human Services Committee**