

**COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY SERVICES
MINUTES: March 23, 2010**

**COMMUNITY
SERVICES
COMMITTEE:**

Alfreda Williams, Chair, Judy Myers, William Burton, John Testa

In Attendance:

BOL: Mary Jackson, Melanie Montalto Guests: Cora Greenberg, Allison Lake

MINUTES:

Chairwoman Williams called the meeting to order at 3:15 p.m.

Allison Lake, of the Westchester Children's Association, discussed home visiting, and there is \$1.6 billion in funding in the healthcare bill which was signed that morning which will go to states for home visiting. Ms. Lake stated she is working hard on this issue to try to get as much funding for Westchester as possible.

Cora Greenberg, Executive Director of the Westchester Children's Association, spoke about Pathways to Adulthood, a State contract that went to the Children's Village to help youth who are aging out of the foster care system and will be on their own. This program helps them transition into independent living and provides some guidance and financial assistance.

Ms. Greenberg discussed the proposed cuts to the Social Services contracts by the County Executive last week. She stated that she and Kathy Halas the Executive Director of the Child Care Council met with Commissioner Mahon and the County Executive the prior week to discuss the cuts and it was a cordial meeting. She said that Commissioner Mahon stated that the COPS cuts are not final and may be reinstated.

Ms. Greenberg stated that the Legislators will be hearing from the recipients of the child care subsidy's, the scholarship, and people concerned about the COPS cuts, because they have reached out to the community and asked for their help to fight these cuts. She stated that they plan to speak during public comment at the next full Board of Legislators meeting.

The Committee discussed with Ms. Greenberg the long term affects on the system and the children when you take them out of regulated early care programs when they will only be that age once, and we do not have the opportunity to engage them in their development stages again. Ms. Greenberg expressed concern with making cuts to children's programs first, when so much of it is preventative for later mental health problems, juvenile delinquency, and the judicial system. She stated she understands that cuts have to be made given the economic climate, but why they are being made to children first is confusing.

The Committee expressed their displeasure at the cuts and stated that the Board is working hard to resolve the problem. The Committee is worried about the budget for next year with the economy the way it is and the proposed cuts to the County by the State. The Committee encouraged the Westchester Children's Association to keep advocating and fighting the cuts and promised to help as much as possible on the Board's end.

With a motion by Legislator Burton seconded by Legislator Myers the Committee on Community Services adjourned with a vote of 4-0 at 4:05 p.m.

AUDIO RECORDING ON FILE FOR REVIEW UPON REQUEST