

**COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY SERVICES
JOINTLY WITH THE COMMITTEES ON LEGISLATION & GOVERNMENT
OPERATIONS, EFFICIENCY & SAVINGS
MINUTES: MAY 18, 2010**

**COMMUNITY
SERVICES**

COMMITTEE: Alfreda Williams, Chair; Judy Myers, William Burton, John Testa

GOES

COMMITTEE: Michael Kaplowitz, Chair; Judy Myers, Alfreda Williams, William Burton

LEGISLATION

COMMITTEE: Bill Burton, chair; Alfreda Williams, Judy Myers, Peter Harckham, John Nonna (via phone)

In Attendance:

CE: Katy Delgado, George Oros **Health:** Cheryl Archbald **DCMH:** Grant Mitchell, Melissa Staats **Law:** Robert Meehan, Marty Gleeson **BOL:** Susan Kirkpatrick, Mary Jackson, Larry Goldstein, Steve Bass, Betsy DeSoye, Sally Schecter, Christina Giliberti, Tara Bernard, and Melanie Montalto **Guests:** Lindsay Farrell, Susan Wayne, Doug Aspros, William Nazario, Sean O'Neil

MINUTES:

Chairwoman Williams called the meeting to order at 3:10 p.m.

The Committee discussed the proposed resolution requesting that the Veterans Affairs Department not reduce services or lease part of the land at the Franklin Delano Roosevelt hospital in Montrose, NY. Mr. William Nazario of the Military Order of the Purple Heart spoke to the Committee about the growing need for Veteran's Services and how the land at the VA hospital will be needed for many purposes for veteran's use. The Committee agreed that the resolution should also be sent to Senator Inuoye from Hawaii.

Moved by Legislator Burton seconded by Legislator Testa the resolution as amended was approved with a vote of 4-0.

Chairman Kaplowitz called the Committee on Government Operations, Efficiency & Savings to order at 3:29.

Chairman Burton called the Committee on Legislation to order at 3:31.

The Committees discussed the creation of a Business Advisory Committee. The makeup of the Committee mirrors that of the Citizens Advisory Committee. it will provide advice and recommendations to the Committee on Government Operations Efficiency and Savings. The Advisory Committee will have 13 members, chosen by the GOES Committee from the County

Association and the Westchester Business Council; the term will run to the end of this legislative term. The Committee agreed to amend the legislation to remove “estimated at \$1 billion dollars statewide;” in the 6th paragraph; and section A. now reads”....that will include members from the private sector, Westchester County Association, the Business Council and others to share best practices. The Chairperson...”

Moved by Legislator Burton and seconded by Legislator A. Williams the Committee on Government Operations approved the item with a vote of 4-0.

Moved by Legislator Harckham and seconded by Legislator Myers the Committee on Legislation approved the item with a vote of 4-0.

The Committees on Community Services and Legislation discussed the current status of the calorie labeling law since the passage of the federal healthcare bill which includes calorie labeling legislation with Robert Meehan, the County Attorney and Marty Gleeson of the County Attorney’s office.

The County Attorney stated that as soon as the President signed the federal law the County’s calorie labeling law became null and void. Mr. Gleeson stated that there is language that could be included that would mirror the federal legislation but be slightly different in order to allow us to still enforce the law and issue fines to individual establishments.

Legislator Myers and Chairman Burton requested that the Law Department draft legislation that will coincide with the federal law and allow the County to still enforce its own calorie labeling law.

Moved by Legislator Myers and seconded by Legislator Harckham the Committee on Legislation adjourned with a vote of 4-0 at 4:13 p.m.

The Community Services and Government Operations, Efficiency & Savings discussed the possibility of merging the Health and Community Mental Health Departments with Commissioner of Health Dr. Cheryl Archbald, Commissioner of Community Mental Health Dr. Grant Mitchell, President of the Board of Health Dr. Doug Aspros, President & CEO of Open Door Medical Centers Lindsay Farrell, and President & CEO of Family Services of Westchester Susan Wayne.

Commissioner Archbald stated that the two Departments are looking to see if there are any services that they are duplicating but they are realizing that they have been doing this for years and many services, i.e. the dental clinics, have been phased out, because they are provided by other entities.

Chairman Kaplowitz asked if they come to any conclusions about combining the Departments. Dr. Archbald stated that they have just begun those conversations and will need at least three months to have a response and they also have to wait to see how many people on staff leave the Departments in the sick leave buyout and the voluntary separation.

Steve Bass stated that the Chairman of the Board has noticed that some services between the Department of Social Services and Community Mental Health may overlap as well and asks that the Committee look into that.

Chairman Kaplowitz and Legislator Myers asked that staff reach out to the New York City Department of Health & Mental Hygiene to have them come in and discuss their experience when their departments merged.

George Oros, Chief of Staff to the County Executive reiterated that we have to wait to analyze how many people leave the County with the voluntary separation to then assess the situation regarding combining departments. He further stated that the County Executive plans to release the 2011 budget to the Legislature earlier this year so the Board has more time to review it. Mr. Oros stated that he does not think any changes will be made to departments to impact the 2010 budget. He thinks it will be a process that will help us in 2011.

Dr. Mitchell stated that we have saved \$1.2 million dollars by implementing the Care Coordinator Program.

Susan Wayne agreed with the idea of combining services, stating that providing primary care with mental health services is most effective for patients. She stated that because her organization provides mental health services it would almost make sense for her to merge with Open Door Medical Services, and they do collaborate often. Lindsay Farrell agreed, stating that many people who are treated for depression are depressed because they physically sick and so the services go hand in hand.

Dr. Archbald stated that the Department of Health has about 350 employees and the tax levy budget is about \$77 million.

Dr. Mitchell stated that the Department of Community Mental Health has about 150 employees with an operating budget of \$18 million and with the grants it is \$70 million.

Chairman Kaplowitz stated that we have to see if there is a demonstrative change after July 1. The Committees agreed to meet again on this subject in a month.

Moved by Legislator Myers and seconded by Legislator Burton the minutes of the April 14, 2010 Community Services Committee meetings were approved with a vote of 4-0.

With a Motion by Legislator Myers seconded by Legislator A. Williams the Committee on Government Operations, Efficiency & Savings adjourned with a vote of 3-0 at 5:35 p.m.

With a motion by Legislator Myers seconded by Legislator Testa the Committee on Community Services adjourned with a vote of 3-0 at 5:35 p.m.

AUDIO RECORDING ON FILE FOR REVIEW UPON REQUEST