

WARREN COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

COMMITTEE: WESTMOUNT HEALTH FACILITY & COUNTRYSIDE ADULT HOME

DATE: JUNE 22, 2007

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

SUPERVISORS HASKELL
TESSIER
CHAMPAGNE
O'CONNOR
MASON
GERAGHTY
SOKOL

OTHERS PRESENT:

REPRESENTING WESTMOUNT HEALTH FACILITY:
BETSY HENKEL, COMPTROLLER
REPRESENTING COUNTRYSIDE ADULT HOME:
BRENDA HAYES, DIRECTOR
WILLIAM THOMAS, CHAIRMAN
HAL PAYNE, COMMISSIONER OF ADMINISTRATIVE AND
FISCAL SERVICES
JOAN SADY, CLERK OF THE BOARD
TODD LUNT, DIRECTOR OF HUMAN RESOURCES
CHARLENE DiRESTA, LEGISLATIVE OFFICE SPECIALIST

Please note: Prior to the meeting commencing, the Committee toured the Countyside Adult Home.

Mr. Haskell called the meeting of the Westmount Health Facility & Countryside Adult Home Committee to order at 10:45 a.m.

Motion was made by Mr. Mason, seconded by Mr. O'Connor and carried unanimously to approve the minutes of the May 25, 2007 Committee meeting, subject to correction by the Clerk of the Board.

Privilege of the floor was extended to Betsy Henkel, Comptroller for Westmount Health Facility, who distributed copies of the agenda to the Committee members; *a copy of the agenda is on file with the minutes.*

Ms. Henkel expounded Item No. 1 on the Agenda was a request to amend the 2007 County budget to increase estimated revenues and appropriations in the amount of \$325 to reflect the receipt of HCRA (Health Care Reform Act) Recruitment and Retention Grant funds, to be used for advertising to fill two vacant full-time nursing positions.

Motion was made by Mr. Champagne, seconded by Mr. Sokol and carried unanimously to approve the request to amend the 2007 County budget as presented above and to refer same to the Finance Committee. *A copy of the resolution request form is on file with the minutes.*

Ms. Henkel reported that Item No. 2 on the Agenda was a request for a Transfer of Funds in the amount of \$90 from supplies (EF.83500.5906 410) to office equipment (EF.83500.5830 220), to purchase extra lettering for the Department Head board.

Motion was made by Mr. Champagne, seconded by Mr. Tessier and carried unanimously to approve the request for a Transfer of Funds in the amount of \$90 from supplies (EF.83500.5906 410) to office equipment (EF.83500.5830 220), and to refer same to the Finance Committee. *A copy of the request for Transfer of Funds is on file with the minutes.*

Ms. Henkel advised that Item No. 3 on the Agenda was to inform the Committee that Dr. Fiorillo, Podiatrist, would be retiring and that Barbara Clements, Administrator of Westmount Health Facility, would be looking for a replacement to provide Podiatry service for Westmount. Hal Payne, Commissioner of Administrative and Fiscal Services, added that this position was of no cost to the County, as the doctor would bill the patients or Medicare directly.

Ms. Henkel expounded that Item No. 4 on the Agenda was to inform the Committee that following the last Committee meeting, Ms. Clements had submitted a resolution request to accept the lowest responsible bid regarding the replacement of two air-handling units at Westmount. She added that the resolution had been authorized and approved at the June 15, 2007 Board meeting. Mr. Payne stated that this would be reviewed by Rist-Frost to ensure that the lowest bidder met all bid specifications.

Ms. Henkel stated that Item No. 5 on the Agenda was to report on staffing levels and overtime usage. She added that Westmount was down two RN (Registered Nurse) positions; one full-time position on the 3:00 p.m. to 11:00 p.m. shift and one full-time position that rotates between the 3:00 p.m. to 11:00 p.m. and 11:00 p.m. to 7:00 a.m. shifts. She further added that Westmount Health Facility was currently advertising to fill both of those vacant positions. She stated that a report on the overtime usage was included in the Agenda packet for the Supervisors to review.

Ms. Henkel expounded that the employment brochure that Todd Lunt, Director of Human Services, had created for Westmount Health Facility was included in the Agenda packet. Mr. Lunt stated that the brochure was not currently on the website; however, the brochure had been forwarded to Adirondack Community College to be distributed to nursing graduates. Mr. Haskell stated that he felt the employment brochure was a good recruitment tool and he added that Mr. Lunt

had done a good job creating the brochure.

Brenda Hayes, Director of Countryside Adult Home, questioned if there were grants available to assist in furthering the education of County employees. She said that Countryside's per-diem aide on the 11:00 p.m. to 7:00 a.m. shift had one year of nursing school left and was interested in finding out if the County offered this benefit. Mr. Payne stated that County employees could receive tuition and book reimbursement, if they achieved a grade C or above; however, they had to be employed with the County for at least one year to qualify for this benefit. Mr. Haskell added that he was unsure if a per-diem position would qualify for this benefit. Mr. Champagne stated that they could look into whether or not she qualified.

Mr. Champagne expounded that he had a conversation with employees in the Public Health Department and it was determined that although nursing salaries had recently been increased, the County was still paying well below salaries in the private sector. He added that nursing salaries needed to be looked at again if the County was going to stay competitive for graduating nurses. Mr. Haskell stated that he agreed that the County still was not up to competition as far as nursing salaries. He added that contracts were currently being negotiated and if a change was going to be made, it would have to be done soon.

Mr. Lunt advised that part of the employment flyer stated that although the County could not compete in salary, they offered an outstanding benefit package. He added that unfortunately, young nursing graduates do not necessarily understand the value of a great benefit package, which made working for the County a hard sell. Mr. Haskell said that a student just out of college was not thinking about retirement benefits as much as they were thinking about their ability to pay back their student loans.

Discussion ensued.

Mr. Haskell expounded that when Ms. Clements had been offered the position as Administrator of Westmount Health Facility, the residency requirements had been waived allowing her six months to relocate into Warren County, (see Local Law No. 5 of 2007). He added that due to the current decline in the housing market, Ms. Clements was experiencing difficulties in the sale of her Saratoga County home. Mr. Haskell questioned the Committee if they would be willing to grant Ms. Clements an additional six month extension to relocate to Warren County.

Motion was made by Mr. Mason, seconded by Mr. Tessier and carried

unanimously authorizing an amendment to Local Law No. 5 of 2007 to allow a six month extension for the Administrator of Westmount Health Facility to become a resident of Warren County. *The necessary resolution was authorized for the July 20, 2007 Board meeting.*

Privilege of the floor was extended to Brenda Hayes, Director of Countryside Adult Home, who distributed copies of the agenda to the Committee members; *a copy of the agenda is on file with the minutes.*

Ms. Hayes expounded that Item No. 1 on the Agenda was regarding the hot water tanks and the generator that needed to be replaced and included in the 2008 County budget. She added that the boiler also needed repair involving the replacement of a part.

Ms. Hayes noted that Item No. 2 on the Agenda was the replacement of the closets in each of the resident's rooms. She said that the replacement of the closets had been removed from the 2007 County budget and she was hoping that it would be included in the 2008 County budget. She further added that the cost to replace all of the closets in the facility would be approximately \$20,000. She stated that she had ordered twelve dressers and two night stands that should be arriving shortly.

Ms. Hayes apprised that Item No. 3 on the Agenda was to inform the Committee that the back office, which used to be an apartment, had no air conditioning. She added that the motor in the air conditioner in the front office had already burned out once and she was concerned that the air conditioner was forced to work harder in an attempt to cool the air coming from the back office. Mr. Haskell stated that he would have the person in charge of air conditioning for the County come look at the issue. Ms. Hayes stated that she had obtained an estimate of \$8,250 for an air-conditioning unit. Mr. O'Connor questioned if the air-conditioning unit would be placed in the wall and Ms. Hayes replied that it was a ceiling model. Mr. O'Connor asked how many rooms the unit would be able to cool and Ms. Hayes responded that it would take care of two office spaces and the conference room. Mr. Sokol apprised that the estimate of \$8,250 sounded rather steep.

Ms. Hayes displayed a sample of toilet paper that was thin and full of holes. She stated that Purchasing had accepted the low bidder for the supply of toilet paper and this was what they were receiving. Mr. Champagne suggested that the sample be saved to show why the lowest bid should not always be accepted. Mr. Haskell suggested that the sample be shown to Julie Pacyna, Purchasing Agent, and

asked Mr. Payne if he would make sure she received it.

Ms. Hayes expounded that Item No. 4 on the Agenda pertained to her meeting with the DSS (Department of Social Services), regarding the procedure for filing Medicare/Medicaid forms for new patients. She added that subsequent to that meeting it was decided that the patients would fill out the application, which would be submitted to DSS and then DSS would advise Countryside when approval was received. She noted that Countryside would distribute and review the application with the patients and DSS would set the appointment with the patient, followed by notification to Countryside regarding the status. She further added that this would significantly delay admittance to the facility. She stated that one of the concerns was that the process would cause a problem with the hospital admission. She added that generally when the hospital wanted to discharge a patient to Countryside, they wanted it done immediately. She further added that hospital admissions accounted for about 30% of all admissions.

Mr. Haskell questioned how long the process would take and Ms. Hayes replied that it would take up to thirty days. Mr. Payne stated that Countryside applications should be given immediate attention. Mr. Tessier stated that the problem with admitting patients before determining the status of eligibility was that if they were not eligible, the family would be responsible for the payments. Ms. Hayes stated that because the patients would be meeting face-to-face with DSS, she hoped that they would be treated as more than just paperwork.

Discussion ensued.

Ms. Hayes stated that Countryside would be helping the patients fill out the application; however, she added, the data collection performed by DSS was the cause of the time delay. Mr. Tessier said that the researching of family resources and assets was a time consuming process, as well. Chairman Thomas questioned if the patient was allowed to have assets and Ms. Hayes replied that their assets needed to be less than \$3,000 to qualify. She added that if the patient had \$4,000 in assets they would be advised to expend the extra \$1,000; however, she noted, if the patient had \$6,000 or \$7,000, they should be considered private pay until their assets fell below \$3,000.

Chairman Thomas asked where the referrals came from and Ms. Hayes replied that the majority of referrals came from the hospital. Chairman Thomas questioned how many of the residents were from this area and Mr. Payne responded that 70% of the patients were from the City of Glens Falls or the Town of Queensbury. Ms. Hayes stated that very few of the patients were from up north

and that there was none from the Town of Thurman.

Chairman Thomas questioned if residents from up north were aware of the facility. Ms. Hayes replied that they had placed brochures in the Town Halls. Mr. Geraghty asked if Countryside collaborated with Hudson Headwaters Health Network and Ms. Hayes replied affirmatively and added that brochures were placed there as well. Mr. Haskell suggested that the County Public Nurses should carry brochures to pass on to their patients and Ms. Hayes said that Countryside received referrals from the Department of Public Health.

Mr. Haskell suggested sending brochures to senior clubs in the area. Ms. Hayes questioned how the Committee felt about advertising. Mr. Haskell replied that advertising was done for Westmount Health Facility. Mr. Payne recommended working with the Office for the Aging and added that a brochure could be sent once every six months with the meals that they delivered. Chairman Thomas stated that elderly residents who have very few assets and needed to move into affordable housing, probably did not realize that Countryside Adult Home was an available option.

Ms. Hayes advised that brochures and letters were sent to local clergy and doctors, as well. Chairman Thomas asked if anything was given to the North Country Outreach Center and Mr. Payne replied that he had dropped off brochures with them less than a year ago.

Discussion ensued.

Mr. Tessier questioned how often applications were sent to DSS for Countryside patients and Ms. Hayes replied there were thirty-six last year. Mr. Tessier stated that the next time Ms. Hayes had an application, she should notify him and he would ensure that the application was given top priority.

Mr. Haskell questioned if there were funds available for advertising within the 2007 County budget and Ms. Hayes replied in the negative. Mr. Payne said that they could make more brochures and Ms. Hayes replied that she did that herself. Ms. Hayes added that she hoped to have funds for advertising included in the 2008 County budget. Mr. Haskell asked if a letter could be sent to senior citizen groups to inquire as to what radio stations they listened to the most and Ms. Hayes replied affirmatively. Mr. O'Connor stated that he felt that newspaper advertising was preferable to radio advertising. Mr. Haskell stated that seniors on a fixed income were not always able to afford a newspaper. Ms. Hayes suggested advertising in the *Adirondack Journal*, which was a free publication. Mr.

Champagne suggested contacting *The Chronicle* about the possibility of a feature story on Countryside Adult Home.

Mr. Haskell noted that Item No. 5 on the Agenda would require an executive session and therefore suggested that they proceed with Item No. 6.

Ms. Hayes apprised that Item No. 6 on the Agenda was a request for Brenda Hayes and Deanna Park to attend the seminar entitled "The Basics of Converting Referrals into Admissions" in Albany, New York on July 12, 2007, using their own vehicle. She added that the cost of the seminar was \$149 per person and the funds were available within the budget.

Motion was made by Mr. Champagne, seconded by Mr. O'Connor and carried unanimously to authorize Brenda Hayes and Deanna Park to attend the seminar as outlined above. *Authorizations to Attend Meeting or Convention are on file with the minutes.*

Ms. Hayes expounded that as an addendum to the Agenda, she was requesting to apply for a grant, in the amount of \$85,000, from the New York State Office for the Aging, to fund a Social Adult Day Care program. Mr. Haskell questioned what the cost to the County would be and Ms. Hayes replied that it was a matching grant.

Motion was made by Mr. Tessier and seconded by Mr. Sokol to authorize the application of a grant from the New York State Office for the Aging, in the amount of \$85,000, with the County providing matching funds, for the purpose of a Social Adult Day Care Service.

Mr. Champagne questioned what age group this program would be for and Ms. Hayes replied 60 years of age or older. Mr. Champagne asked if the County's share of \$85,000 was available in the budget and Mr. Haskell responded that the source of funding would have to be determined if the County received the grant. Mr. Payne stated that this would be a program in which the participants would watch television, play games and have a meal before going home. Mr. Champagne questioned the time period of the grant and Ms. Hayes replied that the funds were for one year and then they would request a renewal. Mr. Haskell apprised that there was no guarantee that the County would receive the grant. Mr. Champagne said that if the grant was awarded, then the County would need to find \$85,000 in the budget to run the program. Mr. Haskell stated that the program would be a good way to increase revenue for the Countryside Adult Home.

After a brief discussion, Mr. Haskell called the question and the motion was

carried unanimously to authorize the application to the New York State Office for the Aging, for grant funding in the amount of \$85,000, with the County matching that amount, for the purpose of a Social Adult Day Care Service. *A copy of the resolution request form is on file with the minutes and the necessary resolution was authorized for the July 20, 2007 Board meeting.*

Ms. Hayes apprised that Countryside's contract with Amerigas would end on June 30, 2007 and she was requesting an extension of that contract.

Motion was made by Mr. Mason, seconded by Mr. O'Connor and carried unanimously to authorize the extension of the existing contract with Amerigas, commencing July 1, 2007 and terminating June 30, 2008. *A copy of the resolution request form is on file with the minutes and the necessary resolution was authorized for the July 20, 2007 Board meeting.*

In answer to a question concerning the number of residents currently residing at Countryside Adult Home, Ms. Hayes replied that there were forty-five.

Mr. Haskell requested an executive session to discuss collective negotiations.

Motion was made by Mr. O'Connor, seconded by Mr. Geraghty and carried unanimously, that executive session be declared pursuant to Section 105 (e) of the Public Officers Law.

Executive session was declared from 11:25 a.m. to 11:53 a.m.

The Committee reconvened.

Mr. Haskell advised that no action was necessary subsequent to the executive session.

As there was no further business to come before the Westmount Health Facility & Countryside Adult Home Committee, on motion made by Mr. Mason and seconded by Mr. Geraghty, Mr. Haskell adjourned the meeting at 11:55 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Charlene DiResta, Legislative Office Specialist