

WARREN COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

COMMITTEE: HUMAN SERVICES

DATE: MAY 22, 2015

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

SUPERVISORS FRASIER
GIRARD
SOKOL
WOOD
BROCK
SEEBER

COMMITTEE MEMBER ABSENT:

SUPERVISOR VANSELOW

OTHERS PRESENT:

REPRESENTING THE EMPLOYMENT & TRAINING ADMINISTRATION:

CHRIS HUNSINGER, DIRECTOR
SHARON SANO, SENIOR COUNSELOR
DENISE DiRESTA, DIRECTOR OF VETERANS' SERVICES
COURTNEY SLADE, VETERANS' ADMINISTRATION JUSTICE OUTREACH
COORDINATOR
KEVIN B. GERAGHTY, CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD
PAUL DUSEK, COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR
MARTIN AUFFREDOU, COUNTY ATTORNEY
AMANDA ALLEN, CLERK OF THE BOARD
FRANK E. THOMAS, BUDGET OFFICER
SUPERVISORS CONOVER
TAYLOR
LLOYD COTE, ADMINISTRATOR, WESTMOUNT HEALTH FACILITY
DAVID STRAINER, TOWN OF QUEENSBURY RESIDENT
SAMANTHA HOGAN, SECRETARY TO THE CLERK OF THE BOARD

Mrs. Frasier called the meeting of the Human Services Committee to order at 9:30 a.m.

Motion was made by Ms. Wood, seconded by Mr. Sokol and carried unanimously to approve the minutes of the last Human Services Committee meeting, subject to correction by the Clerk of the Board.

Privilege of the floor was extended to Chris Hunsinger, Director of Employment & Training Administration (ETA), who distributed copies of the agenda to the Committee members; *a copy of the agenda is on file with the minutes.*

Commencing the agenda review, Mr. Hunsinger requested to amend the 2015 County Budget in the amount of \$82,916 to add State TANF (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families) grant funds for the Summer Youth Employment Program. He explained that the amount had been increased for 2015 to offset minimum wage increases.

Motion was made by Mr. Girard, seconded by Ms. Wood and carried unanimously to approve the request as outlined above and refer same to the Finance Committee. *A copy of the request is on file with the minutes.*

Mr. Hunsinger noted that the next request was to authorize agreements/contracts with Saratoga County Employment and Training and/or Washington County Economic Opportunity Council (EOC)/ETA for Warren County ETA to operate the Workforce Investment Act Youth Program.

Motion was made by Ms. Wood, seconded by Mr. Girard and carried unanimously to approve the request as presented and the necessary resolution was authorized for the June 19th Board meeting; *a copy of the resolution request form is on file with the minutes.*

Mr. Hunsinger stated that the next two agenda items pertained to requests for authorization to host meetings or conferences. He explained that the first request was for the Summer Youth Employment Program Orientation in

June; he added the total cost of the event would be \$400, to be funded using grant monies. He continued to the second request which was for the 2015 Summer Youth Awards Ceremony/Picnic to be held on August 13th at Crandall Park, for an estimated cost of \$500.

Motion was made by Mr. Girard, seconded by Ms. Wood and carried unanimously to approve both the aforementioned requests. *Copies of the Request to Host Meeting or Conference forms are on file with the minutes.*

Mr. Hunsinger explained the next request was for the approval of the Workforce Development Board Budget f/k/a the Workforce Investment Board for the term 7/1/15 - 6/30/16. He further explained that a memorandum of understanding for the Saratoga-Warren-Washington Workforce Development Board covered the budgeting terms. Mr. Hunsinger added that the cost to Warren County ETA for Coordinated Assessment Programs were paid from Federal Funds provided for such purposes and would not exceed the amount identified in the cost allocation plan.

Motion was made by Mr. Sokol, seconded by Ms. Wood and carried unanimously to approve the request as outlined above and the necessary resolution was authorized for the June 19th Board meeting. *A copy of the resolution request is on file with the minutes.*

Next, Mr. Hunsinger presented a request to authorize temporary positions of employment to establish training slots and related expenses for Federal Employment and Training programs for the term 7/1/15 - 6/30/16.

Motion was made by Mr. Girard, seconded by Mr. Brock and carried unanimously to approve the request as outlined above and the necessary resolution was authorized for the June 19th Board meeting; *a copy of the resolution request form is on file with the minutes.*

Proceeding to the Topics for Discussion section of the agenda, Mr. Hunsinger noted he had received an email from the New York State Office of General Services in regards to ETA office space negotiations, advising that the lease discussions had concluded and an agreement had been reached. Mr. Hunsinger stated the agreement would be prepared in June for submission to the landlord following final approval by the State in July/August.

Mr. Hunsinger stated typically at this meeting he would be seeking approval of the new ETA Budget for July 1; however, he noted, the official allocation had not yet been received.

Continuing, Mr. Hunsinger advised they were trying to cut down the size of the Workforce Development Board; he explained there were currently 38 members and they were trying to reduce the size of the Board to 29 or 30 members. He indicated that Mike Irish, from the Fort William Henry, would not be returning and they intended to try and fill the position with someone who represented the travel and tourism industry.

Sharon Sano, Senior Counselor ETA, noted the Summer Youth program had started and that they had visited all the schools within Warren County. She advised less than 100 kids had signed up to participate in the program this year, but noted there was no time limit on the application process. Ms. Sano informed the new Counselor was doing a great job and she reminded the committee that the annual Summer Youth Program Picnic would be held on August 13th at Crandall Park.

This concluded the review of the ETA agenda; privilege of the floor was extended to Denise DiResta, Director of Veterans' Services, who distributed copies of the agenda to the Committee members; *a copy of the agenda is on file with the minutes.*

Commencing the agenda review Ms. DiResta presented a request to accept and approve the Telehealth Service agreement and a memorandum of agreement (MOA) between the Albany Veterans Administration Medical Center (VAMC) and Warren County Veterans Services. She explained this program included use of a closed circuit video conference system for Veterans who were either incarcerated or unable to easily access the VAMC.

Ms. DiResta introduced Courtney Slade, Veterans Administration Justice Outreach Coordinator. Ms. Slade explained the purpose of the Veterans' Justice Outreach (VJO) program was to reach out to Veterans at risk for, or experiencing, legal problems in order to establish them with care and services to reduce recidivism rates and enhance engagement in care. She noted the purpose of the Telehealth program was to assist Veterans who were not able to easily access the VAMC. Ms. Slade explained the Telehealth program incorporated technology similar to Skype, but was encrypted by the Federal Government. She stated that through this program, as well as through other agencies with similar service agreements, Veterans would be able coordinate Telehealth sessions for a variety of treatment options. Ms. DiResta interjected there was no cost to the County for this service and she explained the equipment was being repurposed.

Mrs. Frasier asked how long the program had been in existence and Ms. Slade replied that the Outreach program had been in effect since 2010; she noted that Warren County was one of the first counties to become involved.

Ms. Seeber stated she believed this would be an excellent program, but wondered how many Veterans were incarcerated in the Warren County Jail. Ms. DiResta noted there were currently five Veterans in the County Jail and she said her Office was receiving more referrals from Probation in regards to Veterans.

Mr. Girard asked if this was something the County Attorney should review. Martin Auffredou, County Attorney, stated that he had reviewed the agreement in both its initial draft and the revised copy; he explained it was based upon his advisement that Ms. DiResta was bringing this matter before the Committee. Mr. Auffredou stated the TeleHealth program was a two-year pilot program that could be extended and/or cancelled with thirty-days notice from either party. He explained the program would offer Veterans Skype-style access to the Albany VAMC, but could also be used to access benefits such as Social Services programs, housing, etc. that they may be entitled to but were not able to access. He noted the emphasis was placed on informed consent and privacy and he apprised that by authorizing the agreement and MOA, Warren County was confirming that they would provide a private setting, clinical support, including appropriate support for local emergency services needed, and that they would meet local TeleMentalHealth industry practice standards, provide basic trouble shooting and other assistance. He noted that Warren County was responsible for any other capability requirements established by the chief medical officer. Mr. Auffredou stated this agreement would need to be signed by the Chairman of the Board and he commented that although there were a few minor changes to the agreement he would like to see made, he did not believe they were crucial, should the Albany VAMC disagree with them.

Mr. Brock asked if this was a service Veterans could access from their homes and Ms. DiResta replied in the negative, explaining that it would be done in her office. Ms. DiResta continued that a few years ago a State Veterans' Counselor would come to her office three days a week and she had been required to supply them with office space; she added that since the State Veterans' Counselor was now located at SUNY Adirondack, the office space was vacant and would be the perfect location for Veterans to utilize the Telehealth unit.

Ms. Seeber requested clarification that this service would only be offered in the Veterans' Services Office and would not be done at the Jail, and Ms. DiResta confirmed this was the case. She added that this would be made available

to all Veterans in Warren County not just the incarcerated Veterans. Ms. Seeber inquired as to whether or not the Sheriff was aware of this program and was in agreement with it. Mr. Auffredou stated he had sent a copy of the agreement to the Sheriff, but noted that he did not feel this service would be a burden to the Sheriff's Office. He said that Ms. DiResta and Sheriff York would coordinate arrangements in the event that an incarcerated Veteran needed to use the service.

A discussion ensued, following which a motion was made by Ms. Seeber, seconded by Mr. Brock and carried unanimously to approve the request as presented and the necessary resolution was authorized for the June 19th Board meeting. *A copy of the resolution request forms is on file with the minutes.*

Next, Ms. DiResta presented the following requests for herself to Attend Meeting or Convention:

1. County Veterans' Service Officers Association of New York State Annual Conference at the American Legion Post #230 in Sherill, NY on August 14th, 2015; and
2. Advanced Training for Accredited Representatives at Genesee Grande, Syracuse, NY on September 13-18, 2015.

Ms. DiResta pointed out that the Advanced Training for Accredited Representatives was offered every other year and allowed her to obtain power of attorney status with the Veterans' Administration (VA) to submit claims through the American Legion and Veterans of Foreign War (VFW).

Motion was made by Mr. Sokol, seconded by Mr. Girard and carried unanimously to approve the aforementioned travel requests. *Copies of the Authorization to Attend Meeting or Convention forms are on file with the minutes.*

As an update on the services provided by her Office, Ms. DiResta indicated she had prepared a document entitled "Veteran's Benefits Overview" which she proceeded to review; *a copy of the "Overview" document can be found on file with the minutes.*

Ms. DiResta advised the Veterans' Services portion of the County website was updated daily with new items and changes in VA Laws and Federal regulations. She added that she prepared a monthly newsletter which she distributed to Veterans, Commanders and VFW Commanders in Warren County via email; Ms. DiResta pointed out that she had included a copy of the May newsletter in the Overview packet.

Finally, Ms. DiResta apprised she had been selected to serve as part of a task force checking on the type of care that was being given at the local VAMC Hospital. She advised she began by targeting Veterans that she knew were using the transportation provided for the trip to the Albany VAMC, sending out a survey polling how users felt the Warren County Veterans' Services Office was performing, asking for feedback and opinions on the vehicles and drivers used to transport them, and finally, inquiring about the care provided at the Albany VAMC. She noted that the survey results were positive, most with responses of "good and great"; she added a few concerns had been expressed, all relative to impromptu appointment changes and long wait times.

Mr. Girard asked if the staffing issue had been resolved in the Veterans' Services Office and how things were going. Ms. DiResta stated the Keyboard Specialist in her Office was still undergoing the learning process which took a long time. Ms. DiResta noted that she had been working with this employee to make the transition from part to full-time.

Mrs. Frasier pointed out the fall schedule for the Leatherstocking Honor Flight, and asked if this was the event at the

Albany International Airport where visitors could watch Veterans board planes to see the WWII Memorial. Ms. DiResta replied that in the past, a few Supervisors had gone on the trip as a Guardian; she noted there was a fee of \$350 for Guardians, but the Veterans' trip was free. She noted she and a few volunteers transported the Veterans, who were all WWII and Korean War Veterans, to the Albany International Airport in the morning and picked them up in the evening using a County Vehicle; she added that the transport included escorts by the Patriot Guard Riders and the New York State Police. Ms. DiResta stated this was the 11th year Warren County had been involved in the Leatherstocking Honor Flight program and they were looking for more volunteers as well as Veterans to attend. She stated that she would send out emails with more information.

As there was no further business to come before the Human Services Committee, on motion made by Ms. Wood and seconded by Mr. Brock, Mrs. Frasier adjourned the meeting at 10:08 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Samantha Hogan, Secretary to the Clerk of the Board