

HEALTH SERVICES COMMITTEE OF THE ULSTER COUNTY LEGISLATURE
MINUTES
February 21, 2008

Present:

R. Parete
P. Terpening
T. Briggs
J. Roberti
K. Ronk

UCMHD: M. Beckman, E. Brown

Excused: J. Stoeckeler, L. Petit

Public: Richard Engnath, Lee Cane

Chairman Parete called the meeting to order at 6:30 PM.

1. The Committee approved a resolution to appoint members to the Community Services Board and subcommittees. The resolution was moved K. Ronk by, seconded by P. Terpening and passed unanimously.
2. The Committee approved a resolution to create a part time Fiscal Officer position in the Mental Health Department through the end of 2008. This position is needed to ensure an orderly transfer of highly technical information and processes from the current Fiscal Officer, who is retiring in April, to the new one. The resolution was moved K. Ronk by, seconded by P. Terpening and passed unanimously.
3. The Committee approved a resolution to transfer funds from the Mental Health Department budget to the DSS budget. The funds will support a Federal housing grant application for the homeless. The resolution was moved by T. Briggs, seconded by K. Ronk and passed unanimously.
4. M. Beckman reported that he was still in negotiations with OMH for deficit funding for the Benedictine Partial Hospital Program for Adolescents for 2007. He reminded the Committee that if OMH does not agree to provide the funding, the plan agreed to last year was to use Federal Revenue Salary Sharing funds.
5. M. Beckman updated the Committee on efforts to forge a close relationship with the Institute for Family Health. The aim of this initiative is to provide better access to physical health care for mental health consumers. He reported that a proposal has been submitted to NYS OMH for funding for this initiative (copies were previously distributed to Committee members).
6. M. Beckman advised the Committee that the Mental Health Department is experiencing a very difficult time recruiting applicants for clinical and support positions within the department. This problem is apparently widespread among county departments. This will become an increasingly important issue in the next few years as a significant portion of the agency staff is approaching retirement age. He urged the Committee to advance this issue for further consideration as a government-wide problem.
7. M. Beckman updated the Committee on the Department's engagement project. He indicated that the department expects to contract with an outside firm to conduct a mock audit in April or May of the department's actual application of recently adopted treatment practice standards and Corporate Compliance regulations.
8. M. Beckman advised the Committee that we were seeking to convene a meeting of the Golden Hill Building Renovation Steering Committee to revitalize efforts to move the renovations forward.
9. M. Beckman informed the Committee that the Department will need to find a new vendor for our billing and medical records software. The current vendor's upgraded product has been tested by other providers and rejected. The search for a new vendor will be discussed with Purchasing and IS.

The Mental Health portion of the meeting was adjourned at 7:15 P. M.

Respectfully submitted,
Edward J. Brown, Ph. D.
Deputy Director, Ulster County Mental Health Department

GHCC:

Sheree Cross, Director, Cynthia Beisel, Deputy Director

The meeting was held in the Conference Room at the Golden Hill Health Care Center.

Chairman Robert Parete called the GHCC portion of the meeting to order at 7:24PM.

1. Chairman Parete thanked Richard Engnath, Founder of the HTLV Registry, for his time and patience. Chairman Parete stated Mr. Engnath has been gracious enough to attend meetings since August of 2007 and to update the committee each month. Furthermore, Chairman Parete apologized for the delay and expressed frustration and disappointment with Public Health Director, Dean Palen, for not responding to Mr. Engnath's concerns. Chairman Parete asked Mr. Engnath for his telephone number and promised to have Dean Palen call him as soon as possible. Chairman Parete once again thanked him on behalf of the Committee and apologized for being unresponsive.
2. 2008 Budget Review & Governor Spitzer's Proposal: Director Cross gave a synopsis of how the facility is reimbursed through Medicare, Medicaid, private pay and private insurance. A summary of some anticipated expenses & revenue for 2008 was provided to all committee members. Governor Spitzer's budget proposal has two approaches, one of which is the new rebasing program and the trend factor. He wants to decrease the trend factor by 35% for 2008 but since the facility's conservative budgeting did not include revenue from the trend factor there will be no impact to GHCC's budget with regard to the trend factor. The rebasing budget cut may or may not affect the facility depending on the federal government's (CMS) interpretation of the Upper Payment Limit. If CMS accepts the state plan amendment for the new way to interpret the Upper Payment Limits then the facility will benefit from transitional rebasing. (In March 2009, it is expected that the full rebasing change will be in effect.) If Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) does not approve the state plan amendment, the facility will be impacted by a decrease in revenue that could reach \$1.1 million dollars for 2008 and a decrease in the 2007 budget by \$600,000 or a decrease in monies owed for 2007. It is best for the County if CMS approves the state plan amendment and Governor Spitzer restores the cuts.
3. Legislator Terpening suggested that the Public Health Committee send a letter to Governor Spitzer and the state legislators to restore the funds for nursing homes. Legislator Briggs made a motion to move forward with the letter. Legislator Ronk seconded the motion. All were in favor.
4. Member Item Donation: The facility was contacted by Assemblyman Kevin Cahill's office to accept a \$5,000 member item that would be used for something that would provide comfort to visiting family members. The facility will consider the purchase of chairs for resident rooms. Legislator Briggs made a motion to move forward with a resolution to accept the donation. Legislator Roberti seconded the motion. All were in favor.
5. Equipment: A list of equipment needs such as a kitchen oven, resident dining trays, resident chairs and patient lifters was discussed. Chairman Parete will review and respond back to Director Cross.
6. Cooling Tower Project: An update was given on the progress of the cooling tower. An engineer was hired and the specs were done for the bid. There was a delay in Contract Management office but now the contract is complete and the bid process will begin through the Purchasing Dept. There is a lead time of six to eight weeks for equipment which will be close in timing for a deadline of mid-April installation. This could push the project back to October 2008.
7. Abuse Prohibition Protocol: Legislators were educated on the facility's Abuse Prohibition Protocol which included abuse prevention, reporting, investigating and responding.

8. Compliance: Education was provided on the Deficit Reduction Act and the False Claims Act. Legislators were informed of the existence of the compliance hotline and that Director Cross is the Compliance Officer. The GHHCC 2008 Workplan Focus was distributed.
9. GHHCC Overview: Legislators were provided with a copy of Budget Attachment A which describes the facility's operations in detail. This included the facility's organizational chart.
10. Automated Phone System: Legislators were informed of the facility's conversion to an automated phone system from the hours of 9PM to 6AM. This will be initiated on February 25, 2008. A switchboard operator will continue to receive and distribute calls between the hours of 6AM and 9PM.
11. Legislators Briggs and Ronk updated the Committee on their progress with the smoke-free local law. They met with Deputy County Attorney Bea Havranek. Legislators Briggs and Ronk have discussed a few alternatives; getting an inventory of county buildings and have to meet with the Unions.

Motion to adjourn by Legislator Roberti – Second by Legislator Briggs – Unanimous

The GHHCC portion of the meeting was adjourned at 8:20PM.