

**Herkimer County Legislature
Committee on Human Resources and Ways & Means
Committee Meeting
Friday, March 5, 2021
Via Zoom
Follows Natural Resources and Ways & Means**

Persons Attending:

Frederick J. Shaw, Jr. (Chairman, Human Resources/W&M committee member)
Raymond Smith (committee member, both)
Peter F. Manno (Human Resources committee member)
Gregory Malta, Sr. (Human Resources committee member)
Mark Gaworecki (Human Resources committee member)
Robert J. Schrader (Human Resources committee member)
Patrick E. Russell (Chairman, Ways & Means)
Kurt J. Ackerman (Ways & Means committee member)
Raymond Johnson (Ways & Means committee member)
Vincent J. Bono (Chairman of the Legislature)
Steve Billings, Personnel Officer
Brandy Serow, Secretary to Co. Administrator
Lorraine Lewandrowski, County Attorney
Sheri Ferdula, Budget Officer
Kathy Fox, Director of Office for the Aging
Christina Cain, Director of Public Health

(Non Committee Members Signed In)

Legislator Bob D. Hollum
Legislator William E. Keeler, Sr.
Legislator John L. Brezinski
Legislator Ray Donley
Legislator Peter J. Campione
Legislator William Weakley

Absent:

John P. Stephens (Ways & Means committee member)

Mr. Shaw called the meeting to order at 10:58 a.m.

Items discussed:

HUMAN RESOURCES:

1. Approve Annual Report of Office for the Aging
2. Other

HUMAN RESOURCES AND WAYS & MEANS:

3. Approve renewal of HIICAP contract with Catholic Charities in Office for the Aging
4. Approve renewal of EISEP Contracts with multiple providers in Office for the Aging
5. Approve renewal of contract with DSS for NY Connects Expansion and Enhancement in Office for the Aging
6. Approve contract renewal for MIPPA/ADRC funding in Office for the Aging
7. Approve renewal of contract for Meals on Wheels in West Winfield
8. Approve renewal of contract for the Unmet Needs Program in Office for the Aging
9. Approve request for reimbursement of meals to County employees working at COVID 19 clinics

10. Amend Res. No. 6 of 2021 in connection with System of Care Grant in Public Health
11. Authorize contracts with ICAN and Catholic Charities in connection with System of Care Grant in Public Health
12. Accept EI Grant and authorize Chairman to e-sign in Public Health
13. Part time vaccinator
14. Other

Committee Vote Record:

HUMAN RESOURCES:

Mr. Shaw: “Number one on the agenda is to approve the Annual Report of Office for the Aging. Are you on Kathy? “

Kathy Fox: “I am.”

Mr. Shaw: “Anything you would like to highlight on the report?”

Kathy Fox: “Just that it is about \$20,000 less than last year so revenues were definitely down. I think part of it was due to our congregate sites not being open and our homemaker services did not run for part of the year due to the COVID situation so I think that is definitely part of it.”

Mr. Shaw: “I will make a motion to approve, can I get a second?”

Item #1 – On motion of Mr. Shaw, seconded by Mr. Manno for Human Resources, Item #1 was voted on, approved and moved for Resolution. Unanimous.

Item #2 –N/A

HUMAN RESOURCES AND WAYS & MEANS:

Mr. Shaw: “Number three approve renewal of HIICAP contract with Catholic Charities in Office for the Aging. Kathy, is there anything to highlight on this?”

Kathy Fox: “No. This is just our annual contract with our Health Insurance Information Assistance Program that we contract with Catholic Charities. They continue to do a great job. This is something we don’t go out to bid for. They are highly trained jobs that they have to do with the health insurance counseling so it is in the amount of \$36,000.”

Item #3 – On motion of Mr. Bono, seconded by Mr. Smith for Human Resources and on motion of Mr. Shaw, seconded by Mr. Bono for Ways & Means, Item #3 was voted on, approved and moved for Resolution. Unanimous. Absent: 1.

Mr. Shaw: “Approve renewal of EISEP Contracts with multiple providers in Office for the Aging. Anything on that one Kathy?”

Kathy Fox: “This is our Expanded In-Home Services for the Elderly Program. This helps out with personal care shopping for individuals who can’t do it for themselves. This program allows older adults to be able to stay in their homes. We are contracting with At Home Care. All of the rates from this year have gone up but that’s to be expected. So, At Home Care, we are contracting with DSS, we contract with them for case management which they have done for many years for us. HASCA, Home Aide Service of the Central Adirondacks, Resource Center for Independent Living where the adult gets to pick who comes in their home. Our US Care System and also a new one this year, Home-Health Care Partners.”

Item #4 – On motion of Mr. Smith, seconded by Mr. Schrader for Human Resources and on motion of Mr. Smith, seconded by Mr. Shaw for Ways & Means, Item #4 was voted on, approved and moved for Resolution. Unanimous. Absent: 1.

Mr. Shaw: “Next one is approve renewal of contract with DSS for NY Connects Expansion and Enhancement in Office for the Aging. Anything we should know about Kathy?”

Kathy Fox: “This is just an annual contract with DSS to help us with obtaining in-home services.”

Item #5 – On motion of Mr. Schrader, seconded by Mr. Gaworecki for Human Resources and on motion of Mr. Smith, seconded by Mr. Johnson for Ways & Means, Item #5 was voted on, approved and moved for Resolution. Unanimous. Absent: 1.

Mr. Shaw: “Next one is approve contract renewal for MIPPA/ADRC funding in Office for the Aging.”

Kathy Fox: “This is just an annual contract with Catholic Charities.”

Item #6 – On motion of Mr. Bono, seconded by Mr. Smith for Human Resources and on motion of Mr. Bono, seconded by Mr. Smith for Ways & Means, Item #6 was voted on, approved and moved for Resolution. Unanimous. Absent: 1.

Mr. Shaw: “Next one approve renewal of contract for Meals on Wheels in West Winfield.”

Kathy Fox: “This went up by \$0.10 per meal so it is \$6.94 per meal plus the additional \$6.25 per day for packing because at this point we are not having any of our congregate sites open so they actually package the meals for us which is an additional cost for them but the \$6.25 per day is pretty cheap for the packaging. It will be about \$103,000 annually but that’s with a total of 60 meals per day which we are not serving that many people in that area. We like to have the amount of meals up there just in case we reach that point, we don’t have to come back to the Legislature for approval.”

Mr. Schrader: “Kathy, are they worried about the escalating gas prices? Did we put in the escalation cost on there for them or no?”

Kathy Fox: “They do delivery if our meal site is open. They deliver the food to the meal site so it’s \$4.00 per day. I don’t know if they did look into that but it’s basically included here in the contract.”

Mr. Schrader: “Okay. The only reason I say that, we all see the gas prices are flying up there and I’m sure they are going to continue for the next four years at least.”

Item #7 – On motion of Mr. Schrader, seconded by Mr. Gaworecki for Human Resources and on motion of Mr. Smith, seconded by Mr. Shaw for Ways & Means, Item #7 was voted on, approved and moved for Resolution. Unanimous. Absent: 1.

Mr. Shaw: “Next one is approve renewal of contract for the Unmet Needs Program in Office for the Aging.”

Kathy Fox: “This contract is just with Plan It Staffing. They are a consumer directed program so they basically allow the older adult to pick their own worker and then they pay them their salary infringe. They take care of that. It’s in the amount of \$10,000.”

Item #8 – On motion of Mr. Shaw, seconded by Mr. Schrader for Human Resources and on motion of Mr. Smith, seconded by Mr. Bono for Ways & Means, Item #8 was voted on, approved and moved for Resolution. Unanimous. Absent: 1.

Mr. Shaw: “Approve request for reimbursement of meals to County employees working at COVID-19 clinics.”

Mr. Manno: “They did a great job at the College, Herkimer County College. I got my shots there and it was very efficient and very quick. They should be commended for the great job the Office for the Aging did.”

Mr. Bono: “I just want to commend Kathy and her staff for stepping up and helping our senior citizens throughout COVID. If you don’t know, Kathy and her staff took about 1,000 calls, actually more than that. They accommodated 1,000 of our senior citizens in getting vaccinated or helping them with paperwork. That was a big concern we had early on but she helped them. I think there were close to 400 left on the list and we are going to get those ones taken care of in conjunction with Kinney Drugs. She has been working hand in hand with Christina Cain and her staff in Public Health who have also done a great job so we are going to get those people vaccinated. We are also working on vaccines for the home bound so there is a plan coming about. We are looking at a few agencies, getting logistics taken care of and maybe Christina can touch on that later. So that’s coming down the pipe but kudos to Kathy and her staff. We really appreciate what you have done for our elderly population. Thank you.”

Mr. Schrader: “I want to say thank you Kathy. I have had a lot of people come up to me and say ‘I’m not really sure who I spoke with in Office of the Aging but those people are wonderful’ and I commend you very much. Thank you very much for being our person in that department.”

Kathy Fox: “You are very welcome. My staff, they have done a great job. They worked on the weekends if any appointments were available, they are doing whatever they need to do. We actually had 1,800 people on a waiting list and we are under 300 now. They have done a phenomenal job.”

Item #9 – On motion of Mr. Bono, seconded by Mr. Smith for Human Resources and on motion of Mr. Bono, seconded by Mr. Smith for Ways & Means, Item #9 was voted on, approved and moved for Resolution. Unanimous. Absent: 1.

Mr. Shaw: “Next on the agenda is amend Resolution number 6 of 2021 in connection with System of Care Grant in Public Health. Do you have anything on this Resolution Christina?”

Christina Cain: “No. This is just upping an amount that was put forward prior that needs to be corrected.”

Item #10 – On motion of Mr. Shaw, seconded by Mr. Schrader for Human Resources and on motion of Mr. Smith, seconded by Mr. Russell for Ways & Means, Item #10 was voted on, approved and moved for Resolution. Unanimous. Absent: 1.

Mr. Shaw: “Next one is authorize contracts with ICAN and Catholic Charities in connection with System of Care Grant in Public Health.”

Item #11 – On motion of Mr. Smith, seconded by Mr. Bono for Human Resources and on motion of Mr. Smith, seconded by Mr. Bono for Ways & Means, Item #11 was voted on, approved and moved for Resolution. Unanimous. Absent: 1.

Mr. Shaw: "Accept EI Grant and authorize Chairman to e-sign in Public Health. Do you want to explain this one Christina?"

Christina Cain: "Sure. This is just our annual EI grant for the Early Intervention Administration Program which most of you know is the program that helps manage kids with developmental delays or issues."

Item #12 – On motion of Mr. Shaw, seconded by Mr. Manno for Human Resources and on motion of Mr. Shaw, seconded by Mr. Smith for Ways & Means, Item #12 was voted on, approved and moved for Resolution. Unanimous. Absent: 1.

Mr. Shaw: "Last one on the agenda is they are looking for another nurse in Public Health to go house to house to give shots to the elderly. Do you want to explain a little more on that Christina?"

Christina Cain: "We recently were made aware that we would have an opportunity, unknown whether it is a one-time opportunity or a continuing opportunity, the State has changed its restrictions to give local health departments a chance to vaccinate the home bound population in our County. Given the fact that we have been going forward with vaccination clinics already, this is obviously a very large logistical challenge so that being said the only way that we could possibly do this is to go out during evening hours, weekends and potentially find some staff to relieve the nurses who are currently running PODs. Backfill those vaccinators because I cannot send volunteers or part-time folks into the homes. That falls under a different license for Public Health and it also comes with a whole group of other issues that need to be watched carefully and handled appropriately. With that being said it was put forward that we create a part-time vaccinator position that endcaps all of the eligible vaccinators. If we can go ahead and hire some of those folks and then put them in our PODs that will free up the nurses and then the nurses can go and vaccinate the home bound. On top of that, given that we are running PODs every day whether you are talking about first doses, second doses or some combination therein there is work piling up every day that my nurses would be handling on a normal day but because they are consistently and every day at the PODs, definitely those vaccinator positions at the PODS with allow my nurses to come back to the office at some frequency to keep everything else from spiraling out of control while we still continue to try and attack this pandemic."

Mr. Johnson: "I just have one question. This is more than one, right? We are going to hire more than one person part-time."

Christina Cain: "Yes Mr. Johnson. Ideally we would be hiring probably I would say at least eight to ten."

Mr. Johnson: "Oh good."

Christina Cain: "Because availability seems to be a big issue, the problem we run into with some of the volunteers, because we are utilizing volunteers at the PODs which I am comfortable with, but having that availability during the week and things can be kind of a barrier sometimes."

Mr. Bono: "Just for the record here and I'm sure you all know this, we just have our POD in our County available for vaccinations but you are certainly allowed to use any other PODs in the State whether it be a State run POD or Oneida County PODs that are set up. I know Oneida County got 5,300 doses the other day. They are setting up PODs. You can go on their website, you can go to Fulton or Montgomery County, so utilize all of those tools. It's not just our PODs, go where ever you can that is convenient for you. The vaccines are getting out there. We are finding more and more people have gotten the vaccine. I'm not saying there is no need for it but certainly the numbers are creeping up on us as far as people getting vaccinated. So utilize all of those tools and resources and we will be out of this quicker that you know it. Thank you."

Mr. Shaw: “Christina, the money to pay these people we are looking to hire, does that come out of COVID money or is that in your budget?”

Christina Cain: “It’s definitely not in my budget. Obviously we will utilize whatever COVID funding is available but we got a two year grant that can support expansion of staff for COVID activities. I would have to get back to you on exactly how much we have already utilized from that and how much is remaining.”

Mr. Shaw: “Okay. Can I get a motion?”

Item #13 – On motion of Mr. Manno, seconded by Mr. Gaworecki for Human Resources and on motion of Mr. Johnson, seconded by Mr. Shaw for Ways & Means, Item #13 was voted on, approved and moved for Resolution. Unanimous. Absent: 1.

Item #14 –N/A

At 11:22 a.m., on motion of Mr. Malta, seconded by Mr. Schrader, the Human Resources Committee adjourned.

The Ways & Means Committee continued.