

HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE

April 19, 2022

Present: Lisa Virkler, Chair; Richard Chartrand, and Jeffrey Nellenback. Vice-Chair, Andrea Moroughan and Legislator Ron Burns had been excused.

Others: Legislators Larry Dolhof, Tom Osborne, Josh Leviker, Phil Hathway, and Ian Gilbert; County Manager Ryan Piche; County Attorney Joan McNichol; Treasurer Eric Virkler; Human Resource Director Caitlyn Smith; and Information Technology Director Conner Biolsi.

Committee Chair Legislator Virkler called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m.

Legislator Virkler made a motion to accept the minutes from March 17, 2022 as recorded, seconded by Legislator Chartrand and carried.

Mr. Cayer, Lewis County Health System CEO gave a brief report on the hospital. President Bidens American Rescue Plan included Emergency Rural Health Care grants, which was a total of \$43 million that was awarded through 93 individual grants. The hospital applied last October for one these grants and was awarded \$1,000,000.00 which covers revenue short falls.

The fundraising efforts through the Friends of Lewis County Hospice gave the Hospital Foundation a check for \$150,000.00 which brings the current total to just shy of \$500,000.00 for the Capital Project Campaign. The Friends of Hospice will be having their annual Epicurean Delight fund raiser on May 1st at the Lowville Elks Lodge for those that are interested.

The hospital is also applying for the 4.5-million-dollar Congressional Earmark grant to cover the equipment of the new operating room which will reduce the amount they have to borrow if successful.

Child Protective Services (CPS) Program and CPS Audit – Deanna Edick, DSS Director of Services

Deanna Edick introduced Cherie Farr, CPS Supervisor and Santi Zehr, CPS Case Worker. Child Protective Services always starts with a phone call to the hotline, 1-800-342-3720 for the general public or 1-800-635-1522 for mandated reporters. This hotline is staffed by many state workers who take calls 24/7 and is located in Albany, New York. The hotline workers determine if the case needs to be investigated and creates a report. This service requires case workers to be on call due to the fact that local districts receive reports 24/7 as well.

The criteria to accept a report is that the allegations, if true, must constitute child abuse or child neglect according to Family Law and Social Services Law; alleged subject must be the child's parent, guardian, or any other person legally responsible; and the jurisdiction is in New York, more specifically for us, Lewis County. In January, the state changed some standards; prior to January all a caseworker needed was credible evidence of abuse or neglect but now they need to show a fair preponderance of the evidence; casual connection; and a negative impact.

A CPS Investigation begins within 24 hours of receiving a report and includes an evaluation of the safety of all children in household. A case worker must contact the source of the report to get any additional information, review prior reports including those out of state. Then they have a face-to-face interview with everyone. They gather information from collaterals, complete a 7-day safety plan assessment and document a safety plan if needed. They need to complete a home visit to assess safety of all households, determine if court involvement is necessary, determine case or indicate unfound and implement services with 60 days. They must always document everything, which is critical for each case.

A typical CPS Unit in Lewis County is made up of one Supervisor, five Case Workers, and as a rule of thumb each Case Worker can complete approximately 100 reports each year, which is getting harder and harder as things have become more complex with cases. In 2017, there were 469 reports completed; 2018 had 499; 2019 had 518; 2020 had 526; and 2021 had 474. The state prefers to see no more than 15 open investigations at one time.

The Program Quality Review by Office of Child and Family Services for Lewis County in 2021 showed that no investigations were referred back with safety concerns or with significant gaps in casework activity. The identified strengths were assessment for risk, services and safety; addressing concerns with the family; documentation was detailed and thorough; and there were many documented supervisory consultations. A few areas where improvement was needed was documenting CPS history checks within one business day of an oral report, safety factors at Determination, and collateral contacts. Some factors that support good casework are low caseloads; consistent case practices; weekly case conferences; record checks; collaboration with CAC/MDT/law enforcement investigators; collaboration with Syracuse Regional Office, quarterly site visits and OMA reviews.

Overall, Lewis County CPS is doing a great job, despite how difficult the job can be at times. County Attorney, Joan McNichol commented that the CPS Unit is passionate about what they do and fight very hard on behalf of the children. The most difficult thing is that the cases are not black and white, there is a lot of gray area. Due to the changes in January, there are more cases that are unfound and issues with having less fair hearings.

Post-Graduation Fellowship Program – Lisa Hetzner, Workforce Development Coordinator

Lisa Hetzner began by stating that her office has done a summer work program for the last twenty years. The point of these programs are to get kids working early to help establish a good work ethic and teach some good basic skills. The state works with department like workforce development to create youth and young adult employment & internship opportunities like Summer Youth Employment Program and the WIOA Out of School Youth Program.

The Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP) has been in existence in some form for over 20 years. This program typically employs between 25 to 35 participants in full or part time positions each summer. The participants must meet TANF requirements or 200% of poverty guidelines; they must be between the ages of 14 and 20 at the time of application; and they may begin work as early as June and work as late as the end of September.

The WIOA Out of School Youth Program is for participants between the ages of 16 and 24 at the time of enrollment and must meet at least one barrier. Examples of barriers include pregnant or parenting, subject to juvenile or adult justice system, no GED or HSE, substance abuse or addiction issues, a foster child on behalf of the state, or an individual with a disability. The participants can be placed in a Work Experience Program to begin creating a work history. The entire cost of the youth's placement in employment is at no cost to the employer because it is covered by WIOA funds. Youth may also be placed in an On The Job Training or Classroom Training.

Careers Here through Pratt Northam is a student driven program directed at BOCES students and students entering college in the fall, both undergrad and graduate. Students are required to apply by sending their resume and cover letter to Lisa Hetzner. The cover letter should include if they are a Lewis County, Boonville or Carthage resident; area of study at college or BOCES; an explanation of how an internship will help further their career goals; and potential internship locations. Students are required to contact businesses to inquire if an intern would be accepted there, and interviews between the student and businesses are required. Any placement must meet the students career goals and be beneficial to both the business and student. Businesses are required to bring the student onto their payroll and seek reimbursement from the county for wages paid out. Each student is eligible for 350 hours of internship time at minimum wage plus FICA.

The Post-Graduation Fellowship Goals are to create workforce retention of skilled Lewis County young adults; create economic development through hand internship pipeline; and to create continued growth of paid internships by Lewis County Businesses. The Program expectations are to have a student driven program where employers are encouraged to recruit potential college graduate employees. Participants would need to be Lewis County residents or working for a Lewis County Business. The focus would be on in-demand occupations which allows this program to be fluid as workforce needs change. Candidates will be chosen based on the recommendations of the Workforce Development Coordinator and Economic Development Staff. There will be a requirement of a performance evaluation at the end of employment.

The following dockets were reviewed:

1. Authorizing agreement between Lewis County Office For the Aging and Lewis County Opportunities, Inc. to serve as administrator of the Aging in Place Home Modification Program allocation.
AYE 3 NAY 0
2. Authorizing modification to agreements between Office For the Aging and Frederick J. McManus, dba McManus Hotel and Osceola Outpost, LLC.
AYE 3 NAY 0
3. Appropriating funds in the Office For the Aging accounts to reflect additional New York State aid for Unmet Needs in the amount of \$85,000.00.
AYE 3 NAY 0
4. Authorizing agreement between Lewis County Public Health Agency and Countryside Veterinary Clinic for Rabies Control Coordinator and Clinics.

AYE 3

NAY 0

5. Appointing Dr. Sarah Zeger to the Lewis County Health Services Advisory Board from April 1, 2022 through December 31, 2025.

AYE 3

NAY 0

6. Authorizing renewal agreement between Lewis County Department of Social Services and Cornell Cooperative Extension of Lewis County for parent education services.

AYE 3

NAY 0

7. Authorizing videographer services between Lewis County Community Services and Tyler Kellogg and Jordan Mancuso for mental health media marketing in the amount of \$6,500.00

AYE 3

NAY 0

There being no other business to come before the committee, Legislator Chartrand made a motion to adjourn at 1:51 p.m., seconded by Legislator Virkler and carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Cassandra Moser, Clerk of the Board