

Date: September 9, 2013

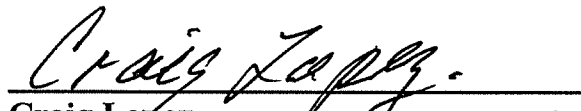
SOCIAL SERVICES COMMITTEE:



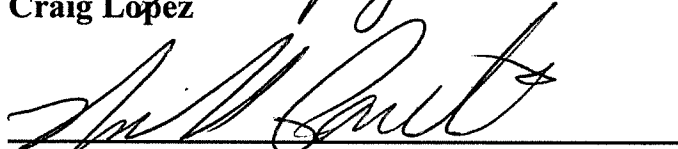
Mary Wawro, Chairman



Hector Rodriguez, Deputy Chairman



Craig Lopez



Richard Parete

Kenneth Ronk

Today's Date: October 7, 2013

Social Services Committee

Meeting Minutes

DATE & TIME: September 9, 2013, 6:00 PM
LOCATION: Karen L. Binder Library, 6th Floor, COB, Kingston, NY
PRESIDING OFFICERS: Chairmen Mary Wawro
LEGISLATIVE STAFF: Clerk Victoria Fabella
PRESENT: Legislators Richard Parete, and Kenneth Ronk
ABSENT: Legislators Craig Lopez and Hector Rodriguez
QUORUM PRESENT: Yes
OTHER ATTENDEES: Deputy County Executive Ken Crannell

Chairmen Wawro called the meeting to order at 6:10 PM.

Motion No. 1 RESOLVED To Approve the Minutes of the Social Services Committee meeting held August 5, 2013

Discussion:

Legislator Ronk noted he was not at the August 5th meeting. Chair Wawro noted the approval of the minutes would be held over until the October meeting of the Social Services Committee.

Motion No. 2 Resolution No. 220 – September 24, 2013

Text of Motion: Resolve to Approve Resolution No. 220 - Approving The Execution Of A Contract Amendment In Excess Of \$50,000.00 Entered Into By The County – Department Of Social Services (Rondout Services Amendment)

Motion Made By: Legislator Parete

Motion Seconded By: Legislator Ronk

Resolution No. 220 Summary: This Resolution reports the Ulster County Legislature has examined the stated contract amendment with Rondout Services and approves the contract amendment in the form as filed with the Clerk of the Ulster County Legislature or as modified with the approval of the County Attorney and Legislative Counsel.

Discussion:

Deputy County Executive Crannell noted this was a contract that began in September 2011 and was extended in the past year. He provided details of the services provided and the County Executive's recommendation that the County pick them up for another year's contract.

Legislator Ronk requested to view the scoring from the bids that were done in 2011. Deputy County Executive Crannell stated he would provide this information.

Deputy County Executive Crannell, in response to a clarifying question from Legislator Parete, noted the contract was for the serving of legal notices on behalf of the Department of Social Services.

Legislator Ronk inquired as to services provided outside of the county boundaries. Deputy County Executive Crannell stated he was not sure of the details as he did not have the contract at hand.

Legislators discussed the impact of putting the contract out to bid. Chair Wawro inquired the cost of putting the contract out to bid if the County already had an option with Rondout Legal Services. Deputy County Executive Crannell replied he could not quantify the staff expenses to put the bid out and assemble the review committee. Chair Wawro queried if it was put to bid earlier, would there be less expense. Deputy County Executive Crannell indicated it would have been the same cost.

Legislator Parete noted the County expense is 17% which equates to approximately \$12-13,000. He felt the State or Federal Government would not pay the cost if they felt it inappropriate.

Legislator Ronk noted he was an advocate for putting the contract out to bid and had been contacted by a potential bidder who felt they would do it for less than Rondout Legal Services. He indicated in a communication with the County Executive that the County Executive expressed the importance that this contract not go out to RFP for this year but agreed to ensure it would go out to RFP next year.

Roll Call Vote:	No
Voting In Favor:	Legislators Parete and Ronk
Voting Against:	Legislator Wawro
No. of Votes in Favor:	2

No. of Votes Against: 1
Disposition of Motion: Defeated

Follow-Up Discussion: Legislator Ronk indicated there was a good possibility that there would be a petition to discharge for this Resolution. Clerk Fabella clarified the sponsor could file a petition to discharge and noted as the Social Services Committee is the primary committee, it would not be put on the Ways and Means agenda.

Legislator Parete inquired as to who would do the work if the contract does not move forward. Legislator Ronk replied the contract would hold over. Deputy County Executive Crannell noted the contract would continue on a month to month basis. Legislative Counsel Guerin noted it was up to the vendor and they could chose not to continue to provide the service without a contract.

In response to Legislator Parete's question of if the Committee can review the Resolution next month, Legislative Counsel Guerin noted the 120 day rule was still available.

Clerk Fabella clarified the sponsors of the Resolutions before the Committee.

Motion No. 3 Resolution No. 242 – September 24, 2013

Text of Motion: Resolve to Approve Resolution No. 242 - Approving The Execution Of A Contract Amendment In Excess Of \$50,000.00 Entered Into By The County – Department Of Social Services (Gateway Community Industries, Inc.)

Motion Made By: Legislator Parete

Motion Seconded By: Legislator Ronk

Resolution No. 242 Summary: This Resolution reports the Ulster County Legislature has examined the stated contract amendment with Gateway Community Industries, Inc. and approves the contract amendment in the form as filed with the Clerk of the Ulster County Legislature or as modified with the approval of the County Attorney and Legislative Counsel.

Discussion:

Deputy County Executive Crannell noted this contract was for the food stamp employment and training program.

Chair Wawro inquired as to the success rate of the program. Deputy County Executive Crannell stated he did not have this information at hand and indicated he would provide this information to the Chair.

Legislator Ronk indicated the County utilized Gateway to clean buildings and noted the superior quality of the organization.

Roll Call Vote:	No
Voting In Favor:	Legislators Parete, Ronk and Wawro
Voting Against:	None
No. of Votes in Favor:	3
No. of Votes Against:	0
Disposition:	Carried

Motion No. 4 Resolution No. 243 – September 24, 2013

Text of Motion: Resolve to Approve Resolution No. 243 - Approving The Execution Of A Contract In Excess Of \$50,000.00 Entered Into By The County – Department Of Social Services (Family of Woodstock, Inc.)

Motion Made By: Legislator Parete

Motion Seconded By: Legislator Ronk

Resolution No. 243 Summary: This Resolution reports the Ulster County Legislature has examined the stated contract with Family of Woodstock, Inc. and approves the contract amendment in the form as filed with the Clerk of the Ulster County Legislature or as modified with the approval of the County Attorney and Legislative Counsel.

Discussion:

Legislator Ronk noted this contract was retroactive to April 2013.

Chair Wawro asked Deputy County Executive Crannell if he had any statistics on this program. He indicated the service was a case management service for persons in need of supervision (pins), and noted he did not have statistics on hand. He noted the reason the contract was back dated was because the State allocation was not received until recently.

Legislative Counsel Guerin noted there appeared to be a \$28,000 reduction in the State allocation from last year.

Roll Call Vote: No
Voting In Favor: Legislators Parete, Ronk and Wawro
Voting Against: None
No. of Votes in Favor: 3
No. of Votes Against: 0
Disposition: Carried

Motion No. 5 Resolution No. 244 – September 24, 2013

Text of Motion: Resolve to Approve Resolution No. 244 - Approving The Execution Of A Contract In Excess Of \$50,000.00 Entered Into By The County – Department Of Social Services (Jewish Child Care Association of New York)

Motion Made By: Legislator Parete

Motion Seconded By: Legislator Ronk

Resolution No. 244 Summary: This Resolution reports the Ulster County Legislature has examined the stated contract with Jewish Child Care Association of New York and approves the contract amendment in the form as filed with the Clerk of the Ulster County Legislature or as modified with the approval of the County Attorney and Legislative Counsel.

Discussion:

Chair Wawro indicated her interest in seeing statistics on this program. Deputy County Executive Crannell noted this was the placement for one child. He noted it was an expensive placement for a severely mentally ill child that has spent quite a bit of time in a psychiatric hospital. He noted the child was in the custody of the Commission of Social Services and needed significant inpatient psychiatric hospitalization and the hospital was prepared to release the child and it became a challenge for the County to locate an appropriate foster care placement. He noted this was the facility identified that could provide the necessary services that this child needs. Legislator Ronk noted the cost was \$550,000. Legislator Parete noted the contract was for three years. Legislative Counsel Guerin noted the contract was until 2016 but that the contract must be evaluated every year and determines if the program should continue. She noted this was “an option to renew”.

Chair Wawro noted this placement was for a minor and asked what would happen when they were no longer a minor. Deputy County Executive Crannell replied they would no longer be the responsibility of the Commissioner of Social Services. Legislative Counsel Guerin indicated they would move to the mental health system.

Deputy County Executive Crannell confirmed they would be the responsibility of the New York State Office of Mental Health.

Legislator Parete queried the location of the facility. Deputy County Executive Crannell indicated it was located in Brooklyn. Legislative Counsel Guerin indicated the organization also had several campuses in Westchester County. She also noted they could receive services up until the age of 21.

Roll Call Vote:	No
Voting In Favor:	Legislators Parete, Ronk and Wawro
Voting Against:	None
No. of Votes in Favor:	3
No. of Votes Against:	0
Disposition:	Carried

Follow-Up Discussion: Legislative Counsel Guerin noted the total amount was a not to exceed amount for the three years of the contract and noted in the contract, it included per diem rates for the various services being provided.

New Business (Status of Safety Net):

Deputy County Executive Crannell indicated he prepared a longer report but with the limited number of Committee members in attendance, he suggested reviewing two specific graphs. He distributed the documents which are attached to the minutes. He noted the changes of the Safety Net caseload occurs when the temporary assistance (TANF) maximum lifetime benefit (60 months or 5 years) is reached and they move to the New York State Safety Net program and the economic slump resulting in those ending their unemployment benefits moving onto the Safety Net program. He indicated on the “dollars” change it shows the change from 2006 to 2010, the Safety Net program’s local share was split equally between the State and the County. He noted New York State law indicates Towns and Cities pay the local share of Safety Net unless the County Legislature passes a Resolution assuming all or a portion of those costs. He noted the County began doing this in January 2013. He noted changes occurred radically in 2011 and 2012. He stated in 2011, the New York State Legislature voted to increase the local share of Safety Net from 50% to 71% and thereby lowered their share from 50% to 29%. He stated this was a piece of the big jump that occurred. He noted this offered a one time savings to the County as the State had increased the Federal money that went into the TANF program. He stated in 2012, the local share number jumped as the caseload increased, the poor economy had also impacted the cost increase of

Safety Net and the ending, on April 1, 2012, of a State offset to address the State Legislature's vote in 2009 to increase the welfare benefits by 30% with a gradual increase of 10% in 2009, 2010, and 2011. He clarified communications that were being shared to the public by Assemblyman Kevin Cahill. He noted all recipients of Safety Net benefits are required to participate in work activities unless they are exempt based on one of the particular criteria laid out by the State Legislature. He noted those criteria exempt 61% of the caseload from work activities. He noted they have no control over this decision. He stated the Department manages the program aggressively. He noted the Commissioner's emphasis on the work requirements to the extent that they can. He indicated they did force some culture change on the recipient population.

Chair Wawro queried if there was a way to get information out to the public as there was a lot of misinformation and assumptions. She noted a constituent recently reported on a Greene County welfare fraud arrest and indicated Ulster County did not have such activity. Deputy County Executive Crannell noted the Department makes fraud arrests all the time. Legislator Ronk noted the County had a \$250,000 Food Stamp fraud case. Chair Wawro indicated the Ulster County fraud arrests did not seem to be published as much as they could. Deputy County Executive Crannell indicated the public perception regarding the State determined rate for shelter allowance and that the rates are set by the State of New York. Legislator Ronk discussed the family housing allowance in Safety Net mandates each child must have their own room. Deputy County Executive Crannell indicated he would ensure the myths of Safety Net were debunked in an upcoming news feature.

Legislator Parete reiterated his long-term position that the County should be taking over Safety Net. Legislator Ronk indicated his disagreement with this position. Deputy County Executive Crannell felt it is ridiculous that Ulster County has Towns involved in the administration of social services.

Legislator Parete requested the numbers of individual on Safety Net and indicated a perception that Ulster County has the highest number of people on Safety Net compared to counties in the State with more poverty. Deputy County Executive Crannell replied this was incorrect and indicated he would provide the statistics that demonstrate this. He highlighted the County's RISE program which is a partnership with SUNY Ulster to bring individuals on welfare to self sufficiency and career opportunities. He indicated there were very few counties providing this level of programming. He felt these were good investments.

Chair Wawro noted the temporary nature of Safety Net. Deputy County Executive Crannell noted New York State was one of only a handful of States that provide benefits to able bodied single people after Federal benefits are exhausted. He

believed people traveled to New York State after their Federal benefits in other States are exhausted. He noted a research they had been doing on this topic at his previous employer on Long Island.

Deputy County Executive Crannell reiterated everyone is required to work unless exempted. Legislator Ronk noted the requirement could not be in excess of the State requirement. Deputy County Executive Crannell reminded 68% of the Safety Net population is exempt for various reasons. He noted all are required to report to the Department on a weekly basis of their job search progress and document that they spent 20 hours making at least ten contacts. He noted the County has contracts with Towns and other not-for-profits to put welfare recipients to work. He stated the Department values all work opportunities and noted the need to be careful of the County's union contract.

Legislator Ronk suggested having staff from the Safety Net Office to explain the nuances that make Ulster County's program more costly that is governed by New York State decisions.

Adjournment

Motion Made By: Legislator Ronk

Motion Seconded By: Legislator Parete

No. of Votes in Favor: 3

No. of Votes Against: 0

TIME: 6:52 PM

Dated the 12th day of September, 2013

Krista Barringer, Deputy Clerk

Minutes Approved on: