

COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE  
of the ULSTER COUNTY LEGISLATURE

DATE: June 20, 2001

TIME: 6:00pm

LEGISLATORS PRESENT: Chairman Alice Tipp, David Donaldson, Vincent Dunn, Brian Hathaway  
Peter Loughran, Barbara Santoro and Robert Wilkins

OTHERS PRESENT: Terry Breitenstein, Veterans' Agency  
Kathryn Puglisi, Office for the Aging  
MaryJo DeForest, Office for the Aging  
Ellen Greczynski, Office for the Aging  
Margaret Eifler, Beth Lane, Kent Katz, Alleda Ellsworth, Mescal  
Hornbeck and several other senior citizens  
James Gordon - Woodstock Times

The meeting was called to order at 6:00pm.

KATHRYN PUGLISI - Office for the Aging

Kathy first presented a Resolution to accept \$1,500 regarding Osteoporosis. Bob made the 1st motion to accept, seconded by Dave. All were in favor.

Kathy announced that the Nutrition Sites picnic schedule is ready. All are welcome but please call the site for a reservation.

A NACO award was presented to Ulster County for the Live, Laugh and Learn program, Kathy said.

Senior Games was a success, Kathy added, with over 260 in attendance. There were many prizes donated by area businesses.

Kathy told the committee that she is on the TFAC board and will be teaching a "Fresh Start" workshop with money from a \$5,000 grant they received. Also with the grant money, more Yoga and exercise classes can be done in the different Nutrition sites. They want to expand this program.

Legal Day will be held in September at the Hudson Valley Senior Residence, Kathy stated. This is part of the care giver grant. They will also be doing Alzheimer and Grandparent support groups as well. A respite program will also be done. Part of it will be sub-contracted out.

A grant called Medications Management will also be coming in for \$10,500, Kathy told the committee.

Kathy then announced that HEAP is closing this Friday.

Kathy told the committee that the transportation program has gone up.

MaryJo announced that there is money available through the care giver grant to be used for household repairs for seniors. Kathy then talked about the new Care-A-Van. She talked to Todd Martin. The Office for the Aging now has an RN contracted through Kingston Hospital. She said this was recommended by Bill Darwak. She, along with Kingston Hospital, interviewed 3 Nurses and agreed on the one they hired Kathy added. Peter asked about the contract. Alice said Bill Darwak said they could hire a nurse this way. Dave wanted to know why a nurse wasn't hired from the Health Department. We could not get one, there were none available, Alice responded. Kathy agreed. She said she talked to Dean. Dave talked about advertising the position. Kathy said she went to Tom Costello and Bill Darwak and this is what they recommended they do. Peter asked if Tom Costello and Bill Darwak recommended they could go ahead with the contract without the committee involved. Yes, Kathy responded. Peter said he has a problem with that, as they are the committee who oversees the Office for the Aging.

Discussion followed. Alice said they were told to hire an RN and they did just that. Kathy advised that the committee could contact Tom Costello and Bill Darwak themselves. Barbara asked if the contract was signed. It was just signed and it was reviewed by the Legal Department and the Insurance Department, Kathy replied. Barbara asked what the contract is for. Kathy said it is for Dr. oversight, the nurse and they will be under the hospital's CLIA license. Barbara asked who signed the contract. Tony Marmo from Kingston Hospital, Arlen Kerans from Purchasing, herself and she wasn't sure about the other signature. Barbara asked Alice if she saw the contract. Yes, Alice replied. Barbara said she felt it would have been appropriate for the committee to see the contract before it was signed. Alice agreed. Discussion followed regarding the CLIA license. Brian asked about the budget for the RN. It will be in their own budget as of December 31, 2001. Brian asked why a Resolution was not brought to them to determine where the money is coming from. Kathy stated that there will be a late Resolution. Brian asked what the cost of the nurse was. She is paid by Kingston Hospital's rate of \$3: per hr. for a maximum of 20 hours per week, with benefits. Dave asked Kathy if she had a copy of the contract with her. No, she replied. Dave asked when the contract was signed. Last week, Kathy said. Dave said he wanted to add that he did not think anyone demanded an RN, they wanted the services restored. He also said the committee should have been provided a copy of the contract given the problems involved. Dave asked when the services would be restored. Monday, Kathy replied. Only a few tests still need to be reviewed before they can be done. Barbara then asked when the contract expires. December 31st, Kathy said. Discussion followed regarding the services.

Kathy was dismissed at 6:40pm.

#### TERRY BRIETENSTEIN - Veterans' Agency

Alice began by telling the committee how she had received a call advising her that people were being ticketed for illegal parking near the Albany VA Hospital. Terry advised that there are 1,200 employees plus people visiting patients and after 9:30am the parking lot is full. There used to be a shuttle bus to a free parking lot but there no longer is. People wind up parking in illegal parking places and Security is giving them tickets, Terry added. The lot is too small and perhaps security should back off.

Terry then discussed the homeless Veterans situation. He has sought funding and they now have someone directly involved with Ulster County working on an outreach program. This is not a shelter, but a shelter will be the next step. Dave asked how many homeless Vets there are in Ulster County. Terry said the number would be impossible to come up with. However, he and the new outreach worker will be working through Family, Veteran organizations, Town Clerks and Social Services. This project is being financed by the Albany VA hospital, Terry said, and the outreach person will be working on locating housing for these Vets along with Residential programs. She'll (the outreach worker) will handle case management, medical problems and benefits counseling. Dave asked if this could be costly to the towns. It could fall back on the towns, Terry advised, however, there is some funding now for the program. This will be based on a demand/response situation. Terry also said he is concerned with transients coming into the county. Alice asked Terry how many people come into his office per day. As many as 20 on a busy day, Terry responded. However, the phones are the busiest. They are also transporting approximately 5,000 Vets a year to Albany. The contract for the Ambulate is doing well, Terry added. He then asked the committee to please refer any case they may see, to him.

Alice then handed out copies of the letter sent by Senator Larkin in regard to the Purple Heart stamp. Terry was dismissed at 7:00pm.

Brian then made the 1st motion to dismiss, seconded by Barbara. Before the committee could concur, Vinny said he would like to hear from the seniors who were present, as they came to talk. Alice approved this.

Mescal Hornbeck spoke first. She is a professional nurse. She wanted to discuss the new Care-A-Van and the services involved. She said the van did not require a category of a nurse, just an intelligent nurse. She said it

was run very well. She wanted to know what happened. She said the screenings on the van were done by a nurse who could be performing these tests. She wanted to know why the Commissioner of Health could not get involved.

Alleda Ellsworth then spoke. She said she just wanted to state "we didn't say you needed an RN, you did".

Peggy Eifler spoke. She advised the committee that the van is outside in 96 degree weather, sitting out in the sun. She said the roof leaks, there is 4 inches of water in the van and the door is squeaking. She went on to say the plastic skylights will not weather well outside.

She then distributed, to each legislator, copies of letters from other nurses she has worked with.

Alice asked Peggy if she determines where the van goes. Yes, she replied but after the schedule was done, she had to move a date because she was instructed to go to Access training, which when she got there, there wasn't a program for her. Another date change was then done following the first one and a special notice was sent for the van to be at the Mill and then it was cancelled because she can't go out more than 3 days per week, she added. She told the committee that she does not understand why they can't do these tests. "You are letting Kingston Hospital dictate what the county is doing", she stated.

Claire Collins asked if they would be able to see the contract. Yes, Alice replied.

Peggy then told the committee that UCRT is now dictating how the van will go out and the time she will start and finish. She wants to know why they are dictating the times for her. She said she has to punch in and out at UCRT. Peter said they still do not have clear answer why it isn't stored in the garage. Peggy said there was no reason. Bob and Peter both said the van needs to be garaged. Brian suggested Alice ask the Public Works Committee if they could put it back in the garage. Alice said she would look into it.

Peter made the 1st motion to adjourn, seconded by Brian. All were in favor.

Meeting adjourned 7:30pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Alice Tipp, Chairman  
Community Services Committee