

ULSTER COUNTY LEGISLATURE  
COMMITTEE MEETING

NAME: Community Services Committee  
DATE: February 20, 1997  
TIME: 6:00 PM  
LEGISLATORS PRESENT: Chairman Alice Tipp, Robert Aiello,  
William Calabrese, Susan Cummings,  
Joan Feldmann, Richard Gerentine,  
Alan Lomita, Peter Naccarato  
LEGISLATORS EXCUSED: Frank Dart  
OTHERS PRESENT: Terry Breitenstein, Veterans Service  
Susan McCarthy, Youth Bureau  
Kathryn Puglisi, Office for the Aging  
Juanita Cinclini, Youth Bureau

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

Kathryn Puglisi, Office for the Aging

- Kathy related that the new bus schedule had created problems for some senior citizens. They are not adjusting well to the changes, particularly when they have to change buses going to and from Ellenville. Sue Cummings asked if the original plan to stay on the bus could be reinstated. William Calabrese inquired as to the destination of the bus which comes from Ellenville to UCCC. If it goes back to Ellenville, he asked, why couldn't the bus which comes from Kingston proceed to Ellenville in its place and let the bus from Ellenville continue to Kingston. He will check with Cindy Ruiz.

Kathy said some of the seniors do not like riding with the handicapped. Cindy Ruiz of UCRT is willing to speak to groups to explain the schedule and resolve their problems. Kathy reported there have been considerable savings from using the bus rather than the ambulette. Seniors who have a home health aide may be accompanied by the aide when traveling on the bus. Each may carry two bundles.

- Kathy distributed schedules for the Care-A-Van. The Care-A-Van offers free health screening and tests. It is a model resource program. The University of Kansas is sponsoring her conference membership to participate in a workshop on rural resources in Nashville in March.
- The Office for the Aging has a grant request for Kinship Care which is a program to help people who are taking care of relatives such as grandchildren.

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- In conversation with Joe Lemme, during which Kathy requested four cell phones as suggested by Peter Naccarato, she was told it was almost impossible and needs justification. She will ask staff for their st the next staff meeting. It was agreed that the phones would be programmed for emergency use only.
- The tax preparation program is going well with 17 sites throughout the county. There is no charge for seniors who are over the age of 60.

They got a much needed coat rack for the local office.

- Sue Cummings inquired about the resolution for a tax exemption for the elderly. Alice Tipp has the history of the resolution. William Calabrese asked what are we currently doing, what are the state guidelines? Alan Lomita pointed out that tax exemptions for one group of citizens results in tax increases for another group. Sue Cummings wanted to know how many utilize the tax exemption. Alice will get the information for the next meeting.

Sue McCarthy from the Youth Bureau

- Sue distributed the full proposal for the Youth-In-Action project. MHA had previously sponsored the project until the funding expired. In this program, high school students throughout the county are trained to educate their peers. Thus far, 160 have become trainers and 1600 students have attended the training. The students run the project and workshops with the support of school officials. The American Red Cross provides volunteers to help coordinate the project. A conference is scheduled for Friday, May 2 from 9 AM to 3 PM at SUNY New Paltz. Each school will determine who will attend; generally each school sends a bus. Eight area schools are actively involved.

The students are working on fundraising to continue the project after the current funding runs out in September. William Calabrese suggested that the project make an effort to get SUNY New Paltz to donate space. Sue said other expenses include equipment rental and maintenance charges. Mr. Calabrese also said that perhaps the schools could be asked to donate (through BOCES) to extend the project when the current funding expires. If the project continues to be successful, perhaps drug and alcohol abuse could be included. Alan Lomita suggested adding health care. Sue commented that these were good ideas to keep the project moving.

Sue distributed a resolution with the proposal which would approve receipt of the \$10,000 grant, \$8,000 of which will be used for the Youth-In-Action project, and \$2,000 for the Youth Bureau to offset expenses, all at no cost to the County.

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Bob Aiello made the motion to approve the resolution, William Calabrese seconded, and the motion was voted upon and passed.

Conversation returned to the project and its continuation. Sue explained that in addition to a large auditorium for the group to meet together, they need several breakout rooms for workshops. Alan Lomita pointed out that the Wallkill school has an auditorium which will accommodate 1000 people.

**Terry Breitenstein of the Veterans Service Agency**

- The newest development for the Veterans Agency is the prospect of a clinic for veterans which will be located in Ulster County. The outlook for a local is optimistic. Dutchess has been eliminated as a site. The proposed clinic will serve clients from Dutchess, Sullivan, and Ulster counties on an outpatient basis. It will not be a new structure, but will be situated in a currently-existing building. If Ulster County is selected, the location will have to be determined. There has been no time frame established, but it is anticipated the clinic will be operational within one year. There will be a meeting on March 4 with representatives from the Albany office to discuss the clinic.
- The Department of Veterans Affairs in Albany is cutting their budget, reducing personnel. Castle Point and Montrose are joining together to provide services, with Montrose becoming a nursing home with a limited stay of up to four months.
- All veterans are encouraged to come to Albany to get a new ID card to replace the one currently in use. This is a nationwide program which affects all veterans including those who do not use the hospital facilities. The Veterans Agency will need more vans to transport veterans needing transportation. If the clinic is located in Ulster County, there will be a need to transport veterans living in Dutchess and Sullivan counties to and from the clinic.
- Terry brought up the subject of adult residences (not nursing homes) which operate without any regulatory control other than those covering food preparation. Homes which house recipients of services provided by the Department of Social Service can be brought up to standards, but the Veterans Agency has no control over them. He related an incident in which he found a veteran living in deplorable conditions and was able to have him removed to a hospital that very day. He also contacted the building inspector to inspect the premises.
- Terry said his staff is working satisfactorily with the computer terminals and they will be okay. The office has been busy; he is sending reports to the state agency as resolved at the previous meeting. Alice wants a copy of the reports.

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- Sue Cummings asked if Terry could provide a copy of the real property tax exemptions for veterans, an exemption for general tax, not school tax. Terry wants to change the tax exemption procedure. He will meet with Assemblyman John Guerin who will pursue the proposal. On February 26, Terry will meet with the county assessors to discuss the topic. March 1 is the taxable status date, the date which determines the tax for the following year.
- Alice asked for an update on the cemetery. It was put on the "back burner". There is a lot of work to be done involving annual maintenance and insurance. A feasibility study is in order.

Peter Nacarrato made a motion that the meeting be adjourned. Bob Aiello seconded the motion which then passed. The meeting adjourned at 7:20.

Respectfully submitted,

Alice Tipp, Chairman  
Community Services Committee

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