

**ONEIDA COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES COMMITTEE
MINUTES OF APRIL 22, 2024**

Members present: Mr. Robb Jensen, Chairperson, Mr. Ted Cushing, Mr. Dan Hess, Ms. Debbie Condado and Mr. Steven Schreier

Staff: Ms. Mary Rideout, Ms. Stephanie Keckeisen, Mr. Joel Gottsacker, Ms. Lori Garber and Ms. Heidi Chavez

Other: Ms. Tamara Feest (Human Service Director via Zoom), Ms. Linnaea Newman

1. Call to Order. Approval of Agenda:

The regular meeting of the Oneida County Social Services Committee was brought to order at 9:30 a.m. by Mr. Robb Jensen, Chairperson; starting with the Pledge of Allegiance. The Chairperson noted that the meeting had been properly posted and mailed in accordance with the Wisconsin Open Meeting Laws. Motion by Mr. Steven Schreier, seconded by Mr. Dan Hess to approve the agenda as posted. All ayes; motion carried.

2. Minutes of Social Services Committee – March 21, 2024:

Motion made by Mr. Steven Schreier, seconded by Mr. Ted Cushing to approve the Minutes of March 21, 2024 as presented. All ayes; motion carried.

3. Minutes of JOINT Social Service & Public Safety Committee – March 14, 2024:

Motion made by Mr. Robb Jensen, seconded by Mr. Steven Schreier to approve the Minutes of March 14, 2024 as presented. All ayes; motion carried.

4. Public Comment: None

Social Services:

1. Election of Vice Chair: Mr. Robb Jensen nominated Mr. Ted Cushing as Vice Chair of the Social Service Committee, which was seconded by Mr. Steven Schreier. No other nominations were made. Motion made by Mr. Robb Jensen to close nominations and elect Ted Cushing Vice-Chair by unanimous consent, seconded by Mr. Dan Hess. All ayes; motion carried.

2. Orientation Materials for New Members:

All new members received an Orientation packet. It was discussed to have the packet available electronically. That will be something that can and will be worked on.

- 3. 2023 Social Services Annual Report:** As of now, the Department of Social Services has a surplus of about \$256,421 at the end of the 2023. This money will rollover to a special fund that can help with out-of-home costs if the need arises. In 2023, two adult APS workers were moved to the ADRC building to help better manage and coordinate care for our clients. In 2023, we have maintained two recovery coaches through AmeriCorps. These recovery coaches must have “lived experience”. The Agency received a Relative Caregiver Grant that ran from October 2022 – September 2023 that helped support relative caregivers who agreed to take custody of children in time of need. In the last two years, Oneida County has experienced a decrease in the number of children and youth in out-of-home care. The Kindship Care Program assists with costs associated to caring for the child; in 2023 it was \$300 and has now since increased to \$350 per month. The Agency received the Youth Justice Innovation Grant for 2023, which allowed Botvin Life skills to be integrated into elementary schools. The (CJCC) Criminal Justice Coordinating Committee implemented the TAD Grant that began taking referrals in July 2023. 16 referrals were received, eight males and eight females that started enrollment in early 2024. Economic Support hired one additional staff member to help with the increase in demands. Internally the Agency has implemented some changes like the remodel of the Agency to make it feel more warm and welcoming. Quarterly stress recess meetings are offered to the entire Agency to talk about different topics related to stress and how to manage that stress. The Agency’s Volunteer Committee created “Jean Friday” where every Friday staff members get to wear jeans and donate \$2 every week. The committee then picks different organizations within the community to donate the money too.
- 4. Human Service Department Planning Update:**
Work groups have been created to help implement the creation of Human Service in Oneida County. The Agency’s number one focus is Staffing. The staffing work group has been meeting and going over pay, benefits package and such. Once this group has its recommendation it will need to be presented to the County Board for approval before any positions can be created. The Financial/IT work group was created to integrate financial information. The buildings and grounds group has been busy currently focusing on the repairs for the Koinonia building. The Board development group is responsible for determining the structure for the Oneida County Human Service Board. Come December 2024 the Social Service Committee will end and a Human Service Board will be created. The Chair of the Social Service and the Chair of the ADRC Board will meet with Ms. Mary Rideout and Mr. Joel Gottsacker to discuss recommendations on Board members. The Certifications group is responsible for making sure the Agency has the applications for Certifications needed. The Crisis Services group, which is still under development, will be responsible for the development of the preferred crisis response system for the three counties. The Legal group is responsible for legal matters regarding establishment of Department of Human Services in the three Counties. Currently each organization has its own policies and that is something

that will be reviewed, as we will need to bring them together as one. Mr. Patrick Cork is bringing a consumer stakeholders group together to get feedback on the transition and to also to get their input on what they would like to see.

5. Energy Assistance Program Administration :

The Energy Assistance Program is a yearlong program run from October 1 – September 30. This program helps low-income individuals with heating associated costs, winter is usually the busy time and this program has help about 1,500 households in 2023. Oneida County is currently one of the few Counties that still run the program. The State Department of Administration contracts with an organization, ESI, to provide services state wide. Funding for this program has been decreasing over the years. Oneida County has the option to continue to run the program or release it to the State. The funding is currently covering the direct cost but not the indirect cost of the program. The Agency estimates a deficit of \$4,112.64 for 2024. The Agency would have to ask the County for more money or make it up with in the budget. Motion by Ms. Debbie Condado, seconded by Mr. Dan Hess to include and continue the Energy Assistant Program within the County.

6. Resolution to Amend the 1984 Joint County Human Services Center Agreement:

One of the Human Services employees reached out to notify the Agency that some of the language was outdated. There is also a change regarding the return of county funds. Mr. Robb Jensen noted this is a consent agenda item. Motion by Mr. Ted Cushing, seconded by Mr. Robb Jensen to forward the updated agreement and resolution to the County Board. All ayes; motion carried.

7. Date/Time of monthly Meeting:

The Social Service Committee meetings will be held on the third Monday of the month at 1:00 PM. Next meeting will be Monday, May 20 at 1:00 PM.

8. Agency Update: Staffing Update, Family Night at the Dome:

The Agency will be making a job offer to a candidate for the open Economic Support Vacancy this week. Laura Javenkoski from the ADRC announced her retirement. Her last day will be June 7, 2024. April is Strengthening Families month and our Trauma Informed Care Committee put blue ribbons downtown Rhinelander, created a “wear blue” day and is sponsoring Family Night at the Dome in Rhinelander on May 3, 2024 from 5:00 – 7:00 p.m. as a few ways to create awareness.

9. 2024 Financial & Statistical Reports, Department Head Expense Voucher and Vender Payment Report:

Fiscally for the beginning of the year, the Agency is projecting a half a million deficit. The Agency is hoping this will come down. Currently Out-of-Home costs are expensive. Placement numbers are decreasing however, cost of care are increasing. It was noted by Mr. Robb Jensen that the reports were received.

10. **Public Comment:** Ms. Linnaea Newman provided some positive feedback regarding the transition.
11. **Agenda Items for future Meetings:** Usual agenda Items.
12. **Adjourn:**
There being no further business to be brought before the Committee, it was moved by Mr. Robb Jensen to adjourn the meeting at 10:41 a.m. The next meeting of the Social Services Committee will be May 20, 2024 at 1:00 p.m.

Mr. Robb Jensen, Chair

Date: April 22, 2024