

COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY SERVICES MINUTES: January 26, 2010

COMMUNITY SERVICES

COMMITTEE: Alfreda Williams, Chair, Judy Myers, William Burton, John Testa, Ken Jenkins

In Attendance: CE: Katy Delgado DCMH: Dr. Grant Mitchell BOL: Mary Jackson, Betsy DeSoye, Melanie Montalto Guests: Shonny Capodilupo, Lindsay Farrell

MINUTES:

Chairwoman Williams called the meeting to order at 3:05 p.m.

The Committee agreed to an opening quorum of 2 members and a voting quorum of 3 members. The Committee will meet on Tuesdays at 3:15.

Dr. Grant Mitchell, Commissioner of the Department of Community Mental Health, provided the Committee with an overview of the Department and an update on their programs. A copy of the presentation is on file and available for review.

Commissioner Mitchell discussed the announcement today of St. Vincent's filing bankruptcy and what how the closing of their clinics will affect the County. He stated that it would take about a year to relocate all of those receiving services in the beds at St. Vincent's.

Commissioner Mitchell discussed consolidating some of the County clinics with the existing not for profit clinics in the same cities. He stated that Mount Vernon has three other clinics in addition to the County clinic. He said a transition would take place and they would work closely with the other clinics to ensure that they are able to expand and are contracted through the County. However several employees would be displaced.

Commissioner Mitchell and the Committee discussed mental health programs in the County prison. The unit in the county jail is a licensed mental health unit, but the state has recently revoked the license, stating that the unit is the only licensed unit of its type in the state and they don't feel it needs a license. The Medical Center has also stated it no longer wants to provide the services with the jail. The state has given us until the end of June to find a different way to provide those services. The Department has visited the correctional facility in Fishkill which provides these services as well and they have agreed to give us two secure beds in their mental health unit in the case that we need to transfer prisoners who do not improve within ten days in our facility. The license would be through the Department of Corrections, so the services would fall under correctional services. Chairman Jenkins stated that we may want to look into this further and possibly include this program in our state legislative package because there is no reason to pull this program from our award winning facility.

It was brought to the Committee's attention that the Board's assigned position on the Community Services Board is currently vacant. Chairwoman Williams stated that she would inquire about being appointed to the Board.

The Committee discussed the possibility of the Health & Mental Health Departments merging this year. Commissioner Mitchell stated that he is unsure what will be happening at this point in time but a complete merger will require an extensive transition period.

Commissioner Mitchell stated that the Department will begin implementing some of the suggestions of the Autism Task Force Report this year.

Legislator Myers asked how Early Step Forward is doing. Commissioner Mitchell stated that it is doing very well and he would like to work with the Health Department on collaborating Early Step Forward with Early Intervention.

With a motion by Legislator Myers seconded by Legislator Burton the Committee on Community Services adjourned with a vote of 4-0 at 4:17 p.m.

AUDIO RECORDING ON FILE FOR REVIEW UPON REQUEST