

COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY SERVICES MINUTES: APRIL 6, 2010

COMMUNITY SERVICES

COMMITTEE: Alfreda Williams, Chair, Judy Myers, William Burton,

In Attendance: CE: Katy Delgado BOL: Susan Kirkpatrick, Mary Jackson, Melanie Montalto
Guests: Emily Tait, Susan Edelstein, Howard Milbert, Kathy Halas, Regina Reily.

MINUTES:

Chairwoman Williams called the meeting to order at 3:12 p.m.

Kathy Halas and Susan Edelstein of the Child Care Council of Westchester gave an update on the Westchester County Scholarship. Ms. Edelstein stated that the average award to families is less than one third of the cost of child care, yet it is very helpful to the families it serves. The total number of awards given in 2009 was 237, each with an average award amount of \$3,842. A copy of the report is on file and available for review.

Ms. Halas explained that at the end of 2009 there was \$292,000 of unspent funds which were then rolled over to 2010, along with the \$500,000 that was budgeted at the end of the year. Ms. Halas stated that she received an email in 2010 that she is only to use the \$292,000 reserve funds, and once it is gone the scholarship is over. She stated she was told that the Child Care Council will not receive the \$500,000 that is in the 2010 budget for the scholarship.

Legislator Burton stated and the Committee agreed that it was not and is not the intention of the Board of Legislators to end the scholarship program this year and the money was budgeted with the purpose of spending it on the scholarship this year.

Ms. Edelstein informed the Committee that they have already received 75 applications for round 1 of 2010 and now need to be notified that there is no funding for this year. They have also had to identify all of the families who are already receiving the scholarship to inform them of the cut.

Howard Milbert, Executive Director of the Ossining Children's Center stated that he has had parents crying on his shoulder and explaining that they cannot afford the day care without the assistance and may need to leave their jobs in order to stay home with their children. He stated that this scholarship has done a wonderful service for working families.

The Committee assured the Child Care Council that they are aware of the problem and are working hard to rectify it, yet no promises can be made at this time. It was stated that we are all in this together in this rough economic climate, and must all work together to make difficult decisions and try to do the best we can. The Committee and the rest of the Board of Legislators are working with the Administration to try to reinstate the scholarships and Title XX funding.

Ms. Halas stated that she is hearing from pre-school programs that they may end their services, and pre-schools seem to be the target risk area at this point.

With a motion by Legislator Burton seconded by Legislator Myers the Committee on Community Services adjourned with a vote of 4-0 at 4:03 p.m.

AUDIO RECORDING ON FILE FOR REVIEW UPON REQUEST