

Cuyahoga County Council
Health Human Services & Aging Committee
February 17, 2011 – Council Chambers
Meeting Minutes

Meeting was called to order at 1:05 p.m.

Members Present: Dan Brady, Chair; Yvonne Conwell, Vice Chair; Mike Gallagher;
Pernel Jones

Members Absent: Sunny Simon

Also Attending: Dale Miller

- I. **Public Comment** – Mr. Tim Walters, retired community activist, addressed concerns about the state budget, noting that ABLE is trying to educate the community about the budget and Cuyahoga County. ABLE stands ready to work with HHSA committee and council. On March 22, busloads of people are going to the statehouse to express their position that the state budget is a moral document and there are moral imperatives to help those in need.

- II. **Announcements** – Mr. Brady stated that HHSA will meet every two weeks on Thursdays at 1:00 pm; times may be adjusted depending on how other committees work. Mr. Brady intends to keep the meetings to two hours.
Joint Meeting – February 24 with Public Safety addressing potential ways Metro might work with the Sheriff’s Dept.
March 3– ADAMHS Board presentation
March 17 - MetroHealth presentation

III. **Presentation on County Health and Human Services**

At the invitation of Mr. Brady, Rick Werner, HHS Director offered background information on (1) the structure of county Human Services; (2) HHS levies and levy partners; and (3) the draft schedule of legislation; i.e. contracts to be brought before Council in the near future. Before his remarks, Mr. Werner acknowledged Mary Louise Madigan of his office and Joe Gauntner, Deputy Chief of Staff for Health and Human Services.

Mr. Werner distributed notebooks to Committee members to be used as reference materials during his presentation and in the future.

Mr. Werner referenced a chart that distinguished between the mandated HHS services and those that have been identified as discretionary, but deemed priority community

needs. The state delegates human service responsibilities to counties; mandated services include the Department of Children and Family Services, (DCFS), the Child Support Enforcement Agency (CSEA), the Department of Senior and Adult Services, (DSAS), Employment and Family Services (EFS), and the Family and Children First Council (FCFC). All except FCFC are relatively large agencies that provide direct services and contract for services. DCFS employs about 850; CSEA – 400; EFS- 700-800; and DSAS 350

Mr. Werner noted the basic operations of each of the major departments **DCFS** is the child protective services agency; **DSAS** – adult protective services; essentially the HHS public safety division; – 1st calls go to them for help when children or seniors are in crisis; i.e., issues of abuse or neglect.

CSEA collects child support and **EFS** provides basic emergency assistance to those in need; Medicaid eligibility, food, etc. Over the years, with lesser resources, staffs are down by hundreds; challenges of decreased staffing mean elevated caseloads

Cuyahoga County has equally important constituent services that are discretionary choices; programs address important issues but they are not mandated

Cuyahoga Tapestry System of Care (Tapestry)– works to bridge the gap between important neighborhood services with those provided by children’s mental health agencies. Tapestry began with a large federal grant; rationale – get to families at risk for going deeper into child welfare or juvenile court and get to them more quickly. Tapestry tries to engage children and families before they get too deep into the public systems.

Tapestry serves about 1000 children per year. Children are referred by Juvenile Court or DCFS; we have funded Tapestry with HHS levy money and state and federal Medicaid; outcomes have been encouraging for Tapestry; trying to weave prevention and early intervention into the systems. We can’t afford to do this with everyone but trying to do it with those most in need. Credit should be given the DCFS Family to Family Neighborhood Collaboratives; Tapestry was built on that model.

Office of Early Childhood – branded as Invest in Children (IIC) – about 10-12 years ago, area foundations supported with initial funding; county used savings from the SAFE crisis to fund early childhood; intended to focus community’s attention on pre-kindergarten needs; IIC contracts with many neighborhood providers; IIC is also now focused on universal pre-kindergarten but not really universal yet.

Office of Reentry – significant numbers of people leaving the state corrections system; 25% of all are coming back to Cuyahoga County, most of those to 5 neighborhoods in the city of Cleveland; they have housing, health, behavioral health and re-socialization needs. County has invested about \$2.5M, foundations have also supported. Reentry is in its infancy, but initial reports are good.

Office of Homeless Services – OHS was established about 15 years ago; staff is employed and housed by the county, but Cleveland shares the expenses. HUD application brings in about \$25M yearly; other federal monies used for prevention services, trying to get people rapidly re housed. OHS has worked over the past several years to solidify the emergency shelter system. 2100 Lakeside is run by Lutheran Metropolitan Ministries (LMM); houses 350-400 men; assists men to move out of shelter. Norma Herr Women’s Center (NHWC) - the women’s emergency shelter was just renovated thanks to county, city and foundations

County bears costs of operating men’s and women’s shelter. HHS levy monies used for emergency shelters; cannot use federal funds for emergency shelters; we are trying to reduce the numbers in emergency shelters, but know that there will always be some need.

Fatherhood Initiative – relatively recent initiative begun at the urging of former Commissioner Jones; so many programs focus on the needs of mothers and children, Comm. Jones wanted to focus some energy on helping fathers to get jobs, reunite with their families and support their families; office consists of one person who is doing a great deal of outreach

Several of these non mandated offices have done a great deal of fundraising through the philanthropic community. Private funding helps us see if things work before the county allots funds.

Levy Presentation

HHS levies bring in \$232M – used to be called health levy; over the years, the state loosened the laws around levies; now can bring all-encompassing “omnibus” levies; collected taxes on property and use collections across HHS systems

Having two levies is helpful and they have been successful; levies balance out the risk if one loses, we won’t lose everything; original expectation – was \$245M; with foreclosures and other economic issues, we are operating with lesser resources

Levy dollars now newly invested in additional areas; now funds some costs for juvenile court; rationale used was that the services juvenile court was purchasing were similar to those being purchased by DCFS; so the commissioners agreed to send some levy dollars to the court.

Figures are adjusted on a regular basis

Only once in 1978 did a HHS levy fail and it was passed the very next time; only one time did community support fall below 60%. Mr. Werner is particularly proud of the most recent passage right after voters opted to change the form of government; voters have been very supportive

Mr. Werner stated that the next levy will be up in 2012; advised to put levies on in the spring of the year; cannot pay for campaign out of county funds; campaign does have a balance of \$75-80K. Mr. Werner believes we will need about \$400K for the campaign; hope to bring people together in spring to get this ready for March of 2012. County produces a fact sheet for the levies because we cannot produce advocacy materials

Legislative Calendar – Mr. Werner presented a brief listing of anticipated contracts coming from HHS agencies through the next few months. HHS is asking for 1st reading passage on Ryan White funding reallocation and IIC agreement with Educational Services Center on Feb. 22.

IV. Comments/Questions of Council

Mr. Brady noted that the current budget was passed before Council came into office. This committee will be having extensive hearings on the next HHS budget; will work with the Finance Committee; there will likely be at least 2 weeks of HHS budget hearings in the fall or late summer.

Mr. Miller noted that give the certainty of significant impacts from the state budget, budget hearings to update the 2011 budget will begin in spring/summer; 4th quarter dedicated to the 2012 budget

Ms. Conwell asked Mr. Werner about FCFC. FCFC has 10 staff members; it is a policy and planning organization that is mandated by the state. Mr. Brady noted that these agencies will be asked to come before the committee as we organize our work.

Ms. Conwell asked how we determine which children get into Tapestry. Mr. Werner indicated that referrals actually come from DCFS and Juvenile Court based on criteria that Tapestry established. Neighborhood organizations like Fatima Center can also go to Tapestry and refer children; Tapestry client service specialists assess and determine eligibility.

Ms. Conwell asked when we expect outcome measures for the Reentry initiative. Mr. Werner said they are tracking outcomes, but many of their programs are relatively new. Mr. Werner will ask Luis Vasquez of the Reentry office for timelines of expected outcomes

Mr. Jones noted that the charter has an added focus on economic competitiveness; human services has always been the county's safety net, how will human services showcase their economic benefit?

Mr. Werner noted conversations that took place during the transition about the intersection of human services and economic development. The human service

industry in the county is massive and probably means \$2B to the economy; so it is a large part of the economic engine of the county

Many Human Service programs are designed to strip away barriers; e.g., assist families to go to work; not everyone can do that, but programs trying to do their best so that families get the assistance that will allow them to be active members of the community. Human Services is the entry point for people seeking job training, job placement; EFS is specifically working in those areas. The Dept. of Workforce Development monies flow thru HHS; WD is a combination county-city of Cleveland department.

Mr. Jones commented that there many projects are now beginning in the county; human services programs help people move to the other side of the ledger; HHS programs not as flashy as the Medical Mart, but reflect more on the integrity of the county.

Mr. Jones asked if there were any initiatives to expose those in reentry to entrepreneurship. Social entrepreneurship programming is in the works. Mr. Werner can get information about that.

Mr. Gallagher asked about other municipalities and connections with Homeless Services and Re-entry programs. Mr. Werner noted that some cities get their own block grants for certain services, but OHS works with them to coordinate services and programs.

Mr. Werner did not know if other municipalities were working with reentry, but recent data shows that human services needs are moving beyond Cleveland; no community in Cuyahoga County is not served by HHS

Mr. Miller asked about the number of programs now being funded; some previously funded and not now. Mr. Werner said that CSEA has historically been funded by federal and state dollars; before 2009, CSEA did not need county subsidy, because CSEA had federal and state funding surplus; but fed surplus now gone and county needs to supplement.

Mr. Werner noted that Youth Services and Treatment Aftercare had been subsumed in Juvenile Court; Youth Development Center closed in 2008; \$9M used for YDC invested in areas not previously funded; some went to community based alternatives. The Office of Reentry started in 2009.

Mr. Miller asked about social entrepreneurship? Mr. Werner used the example of a company called Evergreen, which established a laundry in University Circle and committed to employ people living in that neighborhood; because reentry people often meet significant barriers to employment, it has been suggested that assistance be offered to help them set up businesses or have businesses established to hire them.

Mr. Brady noted that Council approved major contracts for 9 months and wondered what will happen in the fall. Mr. Werner indicated that these contracts are usually done on an annual basis and without an RFP process; they were negotiated through specialized providers; no statutory requirement that human services contracts be competitively bid. The executive had questions; other counties do an RFP process; we intend to put out the RFP for services this spring; hopefully late March or April; proposals would be due in May or June. Mr. Werner would expect to bring contracts to Council in summer in time to be signed by 10/1. These would be 3 month contracts with some ability to extend them for 2012. HHS is looking at this as an opportunity to extend competition to a process that did not previously have competition.

Ms. Conwell asked whether we can do 15 month contracts. Mr. Werner noted that the issue is budget passage, so likely will ask to enter into contracts for 3 months, with an option to extend through 12 months.

Mr. Miller asked about multi-year contracts. Mr. Werner said we usually amend the previous contracts. Mr. Miller noted that a proposed contracting ordinance is trying to create a process with one approval per contract

V. Other General Public Comment

Mr. Brady invited any other members of the public who wished to speak to do so:

Rosie Palfy – Homeless Congress – represents homeless and formerly homeless; wanted to thank Council Members Miller and Connally for attending their meeting and other council members who attended Homeless Congress. The Congress is trying to get standards adopted for homeless shelters. Ohio has standards but they are only guidelines. Shelters say that they follow the guidelines, but there is no way to get complaints addressed. Ms. Palfy also noted that last year's move of the women into a temporary shelter that had inadequate shower facilities was a concern. Complaints were filed but the city still gave the temporary space an occupancy permit. The Office of Homeless Services is ~~over~~understaffed and underfunded.

LaJean Ray – Director of Fatima Family Center - this is an important time in our county; want to recognize needs and support the work of the council. Representatives will likely be attending these HHSA meetings.

The meeting adjourned around 3:00 pm.