



## BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS WORK SESSION MINUTES

Thursday, October 21, 2021, 1:30 P.M.

Willowbank Office Building  
420 Holmes Street, Room 144  
Bellefonte, PA 16823

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### I. CALL TO ORDER

The public work session of the Centre County Board of Commissioners was convened at 1:33 PM by Chair of the Board Michael Pipe

In attendance were Commissioner Michael Pipe, Commissioner Mark Higgins, Commissioner Steven Dershem, Administrator Margaret Gray, and Executive Office Supervisor Natalie Smith.

County personnel present included Human Services Administrator Natalie Corman and Dave Lomison.

Guests present included Ed Zack and Ryan Macaluso.

### II. PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no comments received from the public.

### III. 2022 COUNTY BUDGET

#### A. Human Services

Human Services Administrator Natalie Corman reported that the Human Services Departments had revenues of \$28,400,000 in 2020, with revenues in 2022 projected to be \$38,318,000.

##### i. Veterans Affairs

Natalie stated that Director Brian Querry is requesting a \$2,500 increase within the personnel budget, to move the Veterans Service Officer from 37.5 to 40 hours per week to allow veterans more opportunities to schedule meetings.

Burial costs during 2021 increased. There were 27 veterans and 26 spouses who passed because of COVID-19. Administrator Margaret Gray asked if this could be considered an ARPA expense. Natalie will provide Margaret with a breakout of projected costs for COVID related burials.

Commissioner Pipe asked Natalie if there is an opportunity for grant funding in 2022. Natalie explained that there have not been as many outreach events, which is what the funding is provided for.

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Natalie reported that in the Fiscal Year 2020-2021 Centre County processed 192 names, totaling a little over \$3 million in awards, ranking Centre County 5<sup>th</sup> in the State. This Fiscal year, to date, 31 names have been processed.

ii. Children & Youth Services

Natalie noted that the 2022 purchased client services are in the amount of \$6.6 million.

For Fiscal Year 22-23 Children & Youth has asked for \$2,702,364 in the Needs Based Budget, which includes an additional caseworker, additional services, and takes into consideration staff retention issues with providers. The largest providers are FICS and the Centre County Youth Service Bureau; daycare providers are a set rate. There will also be costs due to placements within the Juvenile Probation program.

Ed said projected salaries total \$3,250,782, which would include \$1,637,256 of County match.

Natalie explained that 2021 has seen a dip in revenue, with purchased client services trending at less than 50%. Additionally, fewer county vehicles are being utilized for client visits which has led to increased mileage reimbursement.

Commissioner Pipe inquired about the allocation for building and improvement. This includes revenue for potential construction projects in August.

Children and Youth has asked for an additional position in the Needs Based Plan. The new position would only be budgeted for a portion of the year.

iii. Aging

Ryan Macaluso of Service Access and Management (SAM) joined.

Aging is receiving a direct allocation specific to the American Rescue Plan Act as well as CARES funding. The American Rescue Plan Act allocation totals \$492,000, which will be spent during the final two-years of the allotted three-year period. Commissioner Pipe asked about the limitations for how the funding can be spent. Ryan explained that this is all service based. Natalie explained that Human Services Block Grant (HSBG) funding can be requested for projects and then services can be subsidized through the American Rescue Act funding.

After the Census, the State updated numbers used in the formula to calculate distribution of HSBG funds. This will increase the department's funding by approximately \$40,000 annually.

Ryan reported that they received a total of \$287,000 in CARES funding. The department was given the choice to either spend the funding all in 2021 or roll some over to the next year. They spent approximately \$26,000 in Fiscal Year 2020-2021. The remaining funds were returned and will be reallocated to the County for the Fiscal Year 2021-2022.

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Natalie stated that there are no unfunded mandates. She also discussed medical equipment, transport and respite services that the department is looking to fund.

Current options service contracts will expire in June 2022. The County will need to go out to bid for new contracts. Natalie expects rates will come in higher.

Home delivered meals will also be going out to bid and Natalie is expecting higher rates for this service as well.

The ECHO house is listed as an expenditure but will be offset by grant revenue.

The Retired Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) salaries are funded in the 2022 Budget. The HSBG is a potential funding source as volunteer services are a specific category under the allocation. Commissioner Pipe noted a VITA grant that the County could potentially apply for to pay for the program.

Ed estimated salaries total \$1.3 million, which would include \$50,000 of County match.

Margaret asked about the SAM contract. The amount within the department's budget is their allocated portion of the contract.

iv. Adult Services

There has been an increase in homeless assistance from both HSBG and PHARE funding.

The department continues to receive Department of Agriculture funding and allocates it to food pantries. Natalie will be working with SAM to prepare a HSBG report. There was an extension from the State for the HSBG.

The early intervention, mental health daycare program will be expanded to include larger age groups. Other services to be expanded include children's services in schools, case management and homeless families.

Commissioner Pipe asked Ryan for an ERAP budget, separate from the department, to outline what is expended. Natalie stated that \$2,963,228 has been expended with \$3,107,796.43 spent on administration.

v. MH/ID/EI

The Budget accounts for grant funding that was awarded for crisis services. 2022 will have an increase of approximately \$2.175 million for purchased client services.

There are no requested changes to personnel or internal staff changes, however, there are caseworker vacancies that Natalie is looking to fill.

There are no new services or providers for purchased client services. If they are able to expand, the department would consider a new outpatient provider.

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With the new community care contract through BHARP, there is the ability to draw down administrative funding. There is no way to project the revenue at this time.

Ryan explained that the County match requirement is at the minimum. The expense budget will be adjusted throughout the year to ensure they stay within that budgeted amount.

Commissioner Pipe asked about potential salary increases. Natalie explained that MH/ID/EI would not have the ability to request additional funding through HSBG. Typical flexibility in funding would potentially allow the department to absorb that expense.

Personnel costs are estimated at approximately \$2.9 million.

vi. Transportation

Business Fleet

Natalie provided inventory of the current business fleet as prepared by the Transportation Office.

Director of Transportation Dave Lomison identified eight vehicles that should be considered for replacement based on age, condition and mileage. Six of the eight vehicles could be acquired as a Penn State InKind service. The two requiring purchase would be an interceptor for the Sheriff's office and a secondary vehicle for Emergency Management.

There are currently no vehicles under lease. The budget includes \$45,000 for each the Sheriff's Office and Emergency Management. Commissioner Dershem suggested when replacement is necessary the purchase of sedans, instead of SUVs, across the County.

Service vendor Joel Confer Ford was recently acquired by Stuckey. Dave recently met with Matt Stuckey, who will continue the current service contract for the remainder of the term. There is a one-year extension available on the contract. If Stuckey does not desire to extend, it will be put out for bid. Stuckey is also a COSTARS vendor, which will be valuable to the County.

Para Transit

Ryan reported an operational loss of approximately \$25,000 the last three months. Dave has had several discussions with the State, and it is expected that they are having discussions to make-up for loss.

Commissioner Pipe requested the fund balance at the end of 2020. Ryan explained that after State pandemic funding, the department was at a \$140,000 loss.

Several vehicle purchases were noted in the 2021 budget. Tom Martin, former Director of Finance, would remove the expense of the vehicle from

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the balance sheet and replace it with the depreciation amount. This is not yet completed or reflected in the 2022 Budget.

Commissioner Higgins asked about CATA's reduction of service in late evenings and weekends. Natalie reported that all routes (except for the Loop and Link campus services) will temporarily cease service from Monday through Saturday. CATARIDE paratransit service will begin at its current times but will also cease operation at 11 PM. All Sunday CATABUS and CATARIDE service will be temporarily suspended. This is due to staffing shortages. Dave said the County has the ability to take on additional clients.

Commissioner Dershem inquired about Bellefonte's request for CATA funding. Margaret said this was again included in the 2022 Budget, but the bus is no longer running a fixed route. This may be something that can be removed from the Budget after additional discussions with the Board.

Provided no additional grants from the State, the 2022 year-end projects a \$275,000 shortfall. Ryan explained that as of where the department stands now, and based on the last three months of data, he anticipates \$240,000. Ed asked if it is possible to eliminate vacant positions to reduce the shortfall. Commissioner Pipe asked that the Board review vacant positions at a later time and consider if they should be funded. Natalie will pull the personnel listing and review with Dave to see what can be removed.

Margaret suggested that Transportation trips for drop box pickups should be billed to the Election Office. Dave agreed as trips for other departments are billed to cover the expense of staff time and services provided.

Dave provided an update on the vans that have been ordered. Four cutaway vans are expected at the end of November, these will be the first vans with cameras. The four transit vans have not yet been produced by the manufacturer.

He also noted that PennDOT has discussed looking at CARES Act funding for recompences.

Commissioner Pipe asked if a rate increase was considered for drivers, could this be included in a request for rate increase through PennDOT. Ryan confirmed this.

vii. Drug & Alcohol

Case management funding received previously is up and the department has considered ways to apply for the next allocation to offset the cost of staff. Natalie added that they are looking for additional prevention funding to enhance services. She anticipates additional revenue to offset costs.

Ryan noted there are certain cost centers that the Department of Drug and Alcohol Programs requires County match funding.

Natalie said they will consider increasing the rate for outpatient services to align with regulations. They are adding an additional contract with

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Community Integrations and have been utilizing transportation for long range transports.

Commissioner Pipe inquired about the increase of miscellaneous operating expenses. Ryan said this includes payments for rent, utilities and reward incentives for participating in the Drug Court program. Natalie will provide the number of participants as requested by Commissioner Dershem.

Any available funding will be moved to services.

**IV. BUDGET MEETING SCHEDULE**

**Thursday, October 21, 2021**

Veterans Affairs – 1:30 PM – Willowbank 144

CYS – 2:00 PM – Willowbank 144

Aging – 2:30 PM – Willowbank 144

Adult Services – 3:00 PM – Willowbank 144

Transportation – 3:30 PM – Willowbank 144

MH/ID/EI – D&A – 4:30 PM – Willowbank 144

**Tuesday, October 26, 2021**

Correctional Facility – 2:00 PM – Willowbank 146

Information Technology Services – 3:00 PM – Willowbank 146

Cooperative Extension – 4:00 PM – Willowbank 146

**Thursday, October 28, 2021**

External Allocations – 2:00 PM – Willowbank 146

Personnel – 3:00 PM – Willowbank 146

**Tuesday, November 16, 2021**

Tentative Budget Adoption – Board of Commissioners Meeting – 10 AM – Willowbank 146

**Tuesday, December 21, 2021**

2022 Budget Adoption – Board of Commissioners Meeting – 10 AM – Willowbank 146

**V. QUESTIONS FROM THE PRESS**

**VI. ADJOURNMENT**

On a motion by Commissioner Dershem, seconded by Commissioner Higgins, the Board voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 4:11 PM.

ATTEST:

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Margaret N. Gray  
Administrator