

**HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE  
MINUTES  
NOVEMBER 7, 2005**

The Health and Human Services Committee of the DeKalb County Board met on Monday, November 7, 2005 @ 6:00p.m. in the Administration Building's Conference Room East. Chairman Robert Rosemier called the meeting to order. Members present were Marlene Allen, Eileen Dubin, Sally DeFauw, Julia Fullerton, Eric Johnson and Ruth Anne Tobias. Others present were Pat LaVigne, Mary Olson, Diane Strand and Marshall Hayes.

**APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES**

**Moved by Ms. Tobias, seconded by Ms. Fullerton, and it was carried unanimously to approve the minutes from October 2005.**

**APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA**

Addition to the agenda – Medicare D and Mr. Marshall Hayes will be explaining the issue to the committee.

**Moved by Mr. Johnson, seconded by Ms. Allen, and was carried unanimously to approve the amended agenda as presented.**

**DEKALB TOWNSHIP SUPERVISOR – PAT LAVIGNE**

Chairman Rosemier introduced Ms. Pat Lavigne, DeKalb Township Supervisor, to explain the various programs that she offers to the citizens in DeKalb County. Ms. LaVigne said that DeKalb Township was founded in 1850 and all townships started out as a measuring tool to keep track of the land. For poor people it was called the poorhouse and poverty fund. Then, of course, someone had to build roads and that's how it all started.

They have three sections in the township, two of which are the road district (30 miles of unincorporated roads), assessing department (11,000 parcels). They are, by law, supposed to take care of the poor. Her General Assistance Program works with 14 of the 19 townships. They see between 25 to 50 ongoing clients a month. To get a grant through the township and if you are physically fit, they will send you to work 38 hours a month for the \$200 grant that you receive from them each month. They do a phone intake application and send the their clients "notices of rights". People also come into her office to register for Social Security Disability. If they do not show up for their job then they are sanctioned for 90 days.

Ms. LaVigne also said that currently the medical costs for her clients each month equals \$2200 a month. The total amount that they spend each month for General Assistance is \$20,000. Ms. LaVigne said that her office works regularly with Ms. Olson's office, Community Services Department of DeKalb County, to help people with their needs. Ms. LaVigne said that they are not an enabling program, her office is trying to teach them self-sufficiency.

Her office also places people in the DeKalb County Rehab and Nursing Center. They currently have 104 women on the list and 60 men on the list for admission. They do not discriminate between private pay patients and Medicare patients. The client calls her office and lets her know that they are going into surgery and that they will need a bed at the Rehab and Nursing Center, especially for rehabilitation purposes.

Ms. LaVigne said that she gets all of her funding from all tax dollars. She also said that she gets .7cents out of \$100 assessed value.

Chairman Rosemier thanked Ms. LaVigne for her report.

#### **MEDICARE D - MARSHALL HAYES**

Chairman Rosemier introduced Mr. Marshall Hayes of Elderly Care to address the Medicare D issue. Mr. Hayes explained that there has been a major overhaul of the Medicare System to include prescription drugs. Many senior citizens and those advising them are really struggling already trying to interpret the new regulations and plans. There are 11,000 seniors in DeKalb County and they need to make a decision within 8 months on which plan they want. January 1, 2006 was supposed to be the deadline to sign up but the Federal government gave them a grace period to May 2006 without a penalty. The penalty is that you will lose one percent of your benefit forever.

Mr. Hayes further explained that if you have creditable coverage already through your prior employer or whatever, you can say that you don't want Medicare D. Every employer is supposed to let all of their retirees know whether they have creditable coverage or not. Many employers have not done that. Some employers have tried to determine if they are or not and have sent their information to the federal government to see if they are. One employer sent a letter, that he has seen, that stated "we think that we are creditable but we don't know yet." If those people decline and later their company goes under, they will not be penalized, and they will need to keep their letter from their employer to prove it. If they can't prove it then, how many ever months that lapse, they will lose.

Because of staff limitations Elder Care Services will have to limit their focus to the frail, low-income elderly that don't have any sort of coverage. Yet if they have circuit breaker or Senior Care, they will be enrolled automatically into one of two programs. This is where it gets complicated. There are all sorts of problems that can happen. Let's take for example NIU retirees, who have creditable coverage and who are also on senior care and circuit breaker, they will be auto-enrolled. Now if they don't call and cancel their circuit breaker and/or senior care, they will be auto-enrolled. Once they are, their carrier will drop them forever. They will not only lose their pharmaceutical coverage, but also their medical insurance forever.

Those agencies in the County that have all gone to the same training classes that he did are now saying that they are very confused yet on the new Medicare D plan and that they can't do this anymore. Because of this Mr. Hayes suggested that someone might be hired on a part-time, temporary basis to help the senior citizens in the county to counsel them on this new Medicare D plan. There are about 160 plans that are offered in the State of Illinois. In Rockford they are telling him that it is taking them between 45 minutes to 1 hour for each client that they see. Mr. Hayes said that they feel that they will serve between 5,000 to 6,000 seniors in an 8-month period. There are only 2 or 3 people in his office that are doing it right now. S.H.I.P. is helping people with the counseling too, that he knows of.

The committee asked Mr. Hayes how much money he would need to pay this person? He said that it would be for about 8 months and that he would not have to pay for benefits since it would be part-time. He is thinking of a salary amount of around \$12,000. He said the person that he is thinking about is retired.

Ms. Allen asked Mr. Hayes if various agencies could also help pay for the position? Mr. Hayes he did not really know if they could. Ms. Olson said that she didn't know if they could really ask the agencies right now because of their budgets and the end of the year.

Ms. Olson reminded the committee that there is money that has been returned to her office because the agency did not spend all of the money awarded to them. She felt that the amount was more than \$12,000.

Chairman Rosemier said that he will have to check into that and then thanked Mr. Hayes for speaking to the committee about the Medicare D issue.

Before adjourning, Chairman Rosemier said that he will be rescheduling Ms. Lofton and Mary Olson for the December meeting along with Ms. Micki Chulik.

### **STATUS OF GRANT FUNDING SURVEY**

Chairman Rosemier said that he mailed 30 surveys and he has received 13 so far. He will be giving the results from this survey at the December meeting.

Chairman Rosemier also said that Mr. Bockman shared with him that there is a program that is called Experience Works, which is like the old Green Thumb Program, that helps senior citizens to get jobs. They had 90 spaces and 60 of them have been filled. They still need to fill 30 spaces. The seniors can work up to 20 hours a week and the program pays all the costs. The agency doesn't pay anything and the seniors make some money.

### **DECEMBER AND JANUARY MEETINGS**

Chairman Rosemier and the committee agreed to hold their January 2006 meeting on Thursday, January 5, 2006.

He then brought up the two letters that the single parents wrote about their problem in finding daycare in the county. That is why he scheduled Ms. Chulik for next month's meeting. He will be writing a letter on behalf of the committee about their issue.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

**Moved by Mr. Johnson, seconded by Ms. Allen, and it was carried unanimously to adjourn the meeting.**

Respectfully submitted,

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Robert Rosemier, Chairman

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Mary C. Supple, Secretary

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