

**COMMITTEE MEETING
LAKE PLEASANT, NY
FRIDAY
DECEMBER 19, 2014**

**HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE
9:45 AM**

Members present: Clark Seaman, Neil McGovern and Phil Snyder

Also present: Bill Farber, Bob Edwards, Brian Wells, Roberta Bly and Sheriff Abrams

Commissioner Bly stated she has concerns with fraudulent cases. There seems to be more and more applications that they are receiving that her department believes are fraudulent.

Commissioner Bly spoke with the D.A. and she is willing to prosecute the cases but if she is the one doing the investigating that is a conflict of interest. She met with Chairman Farber and Sheriff Abrams and reported that the Department of Social Services is mandated to provide fraud prevention services and to some degree we have done that.

The problem with Hamilton County is most of this needs to be done as surveillance because residents work under the table, work seasonal jobs, they live rurally and their mail is delivered to a post office box and she just doesn't have the staff to do this.

The State offers 70% reimbursement for a fraud investigator. A lot of the other counties use a Deputy to do this contractually or with an agreement. The Sheriff has a Deputy willing to do this type of work and she is asking for the Committees support.

Mr. McGovern asked if the reimbursable is one specific area such as Medicaid, Commissioner Bly stated no.

Mr. McGovern asked what the one that would most likely be reimbursed is. Commissioner Bly stated it would be across the board. She would have to do a study on that, she would like use them in the TA portion of it where we actually do cash assistance.

When Ms. Quintal was Commissioner they would do a repayment agreement, where they would agree to repay the County a certain amount.

Mr. Farber stated the reality of the repayment agreement is that it really doesn't create any disincentive for people to try. You take a crack at beating the system, they catch you, you have to pay the money back, and there's is no real penalty to trying to avoid getting caught. We are seeing this becoming a bigger and bigger problem.

Mr. Farber stated that we are going to make the effort to catch people and prosecute them. It's gotten out of hand terms of what they have to deal with.

Mr. Wells asked if a client is in a repayment are they eligible for services the follow year.

Commissioner Bly stated normally no, if they already have a repayment and it is not satisfied. They can only get an emergency benefit once a year, so if you make your payments, then by next year when you are eligible for it then yes you are eligible again.

Mr. Wells asked payment or payment in full; Commissioner Bly stated payment in full. The people who do repayments are only because they are ineligible for services with us, but they have an emergency need, such as their power has been turned off.

Sheriff Abrams stated Commissioner Bly proposed the idea that they possibly use a Deputy. This person would be contracted with the Department of Social Services, he would do so many hours a month, use his personal car, own insurance etc. They feel it is crucial that it is put in the newspaper that the Department of Social Services is starting a fraud investigating unit.

Mr. McGovern stated if the tax payers know residents who may be double dipping that could be to our advantage, they may also be our eyes and ears so having that put in the newspaper is not such a bad idea.

Mr. Farber stated he will report at the Board meeting today that the Department of Social Services cracking down.

Mr. Wells asked if there is any special training.

Sheriff Abrams stated the Deputy who will be doing the surveillance has agreed to take a training and will pay for his own insurance and will pay for the training.

Mr. Wells asked if they see more of this, this time of the year, Commissioner Bly stated yes, during HEAP season.

Sheriff Abrams left at this time.

Commissioner Bly announced she has a Caseworker who is retiring at the end of March, Gail Carmichael. She is looking to replace her position.

She has been working with Probation Director Taylor and through a STSJP Grant they would be able to fund a position at 62%. They were thinking of having that person work half of the time with Department of Social Services as a Caseworker but also do duties for Director Taylor under the PINS Program. The County would need to fund the remaining 38%. The grant has been approved.

The Personnel Officer will need to give a test and create a list; that would be just about the time that Caseworker retires.