

**Health & Human Services Committee**  
**August 29, 2023**  
**Minutes**

**Members Present:** Committee Chair Anthony Doldo, Legislators Allen Drake, John Peck, Jeremiah Maxon, Frances Calarco, Steel Potter, Corey Grant, Board Chair William Johnson

**Others Present:** Legislators Robert Cantwell, Philip Reed, Michael Montigelli, Daniel McBride, James Nabywaniec, Patrick Jareo, and Robert Ferris, County Administrator Robert Hagemann, Deputy Administrator Sarah Baldwin, County Attorney David Paulsen, Conf. Asst. for Fiscal Affairs Ashley Durham, Community Services Director Timothy Ruetten, Public Health Service Director Ginger Hall, DSS Commissioner Karen Marcum, DSS Housing Director Jillian Redder, Veterans Service Director Dave Pavey, Jason Harrington and other Representatives of the Jefferson-Lewis County Funeral Directors Association, Confidential Secretary Jill Jones

Chairman Doldo called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

Jason Harrington made a presentation to the Committee concerning the cost of indigent burials to the funeral homes/directors vs. the reimbursement received from the Indigent Burial Program through the Department of Social Services. He said the reimbursement received from the program is capped at \$ 1,905.50 and a cemetery charge not to exceed \$633.00, and there has not been an increase since 2011. He detailed what their services include for a direct burial which costs funeral homes \$5,450.00, and for a direct cremation which costs \$3,050 (not including crematory fee). He said funeral directors do not deny anyone services as they feel everyone deserves a dignified burial. He provided a copy of a hypothetical raise scale from 2011 to the present with an annual 2% increase which if had taken place would have resulted in a current rate of \$2,416.58. He said funeral directors have never asked in the past for an increase in their reimbursement rate, but with increasing costs it is now necessary for them to do so.

Funeral Director William Stoodley answered questions of legislators concerning funeral directors services and costs. He said people tend to choose cremation over traditional burial and related the following statistics: 2020 - 108 cases, 100 cremations, 8 traditional burials; 2021- 110 cases, 105 cremations and 5 traditional burials; 2022 - 137 cases, 127 cremations and 10 traditional burials; 2023 - 79 so far 69 cremations and 10 traditional burials. He complimented the current DSS employee, Stephanie, who handles the program. He said she does a phenomenal job and truly is a help to families in this situation.

Legislator Maxon asked that if a resolution to increase the level of reimbursement for the program is done, will it be coming through this Committee, or the Finance & Rules Committee because it involves fees. He suggested that a good solution would be to tie any increase in the rate for the program to the Consumer Price Index (CPI). Chairman Doldo said he would prefer it come through this Committee, the oversight Committee for that department. Following



discussion Chairman Doldo asked that a resolution be prepared to be addressed by this Committee next month raising the reimbursement rate for the Indigent Burial Program. Administrator Hagemann said research needs to be done in order to put an appropriate resolution together.

The Committee approved the minutes of the August meeting, as written. Chairman Doldo offered Privilege of the Floor however no one present wished to speak.

Chairman Doldo introduced a resolution Amending 2023 County Budget Relative to Social Service Department Accounts and entertained a motion for consideration. A motion was duly made by Legislator Drake seconded by Legislator Maxon and there being no discussion, the Committee agreed to sponsor the resolution as presented.

Chairman Doldo introduced a resolution Establishing Two Caseworker Positions and One Case Supervisor-Grade A Position Within Social Services and Amending the 2023 County Budget in Relation Thereto and entertained a motion for consideration. A motion was duly made by Legislator Drake seconded by Legislator Grant and there being no discussion, the Committee agreed to sponsor the resolution as presented.

Chairman Doldo introduced a resolution Authorizing 2023/24 Comprehensive Planning Resource Allocation Agreement with the NYS Office of Children & Family Services and Authorizing Contractual Youth Program Agreements and entertained a motion for consideration. A motion was duly made by Legislator Potter seconded by Legislator Calarco and there being no discussion, the Committee agreed to sponsor the resolution as presented.

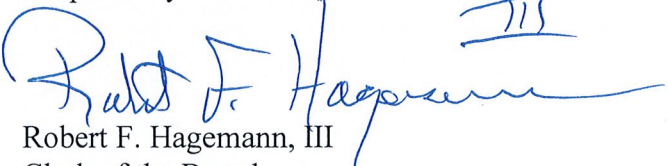
Administrator Hagemann introduced and welcomed the new DSS Housing Director Jillian Redder who was present.

Legislator Peck said if migrant individuals including children are ever housed in our area a health protocol should be established to make certain they are not bringing untold health risks to people in the area, and added that the federal government should pay for all costs associated with any migrants that are sent here.

Legislator McBride asked if the DSS monthly newsletter could be shared with legislators. Administrator Hagemann confirmed it can/will be.

There being no further business of the Committee, on a motion by Legislator Maxon seconded by Legislator Steel and unanimously carried, the meeting was adjourned at 6:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

  
Robert F. Hagemann, III  
Clerk of the Board