

**WINNEBAGO COUNTY
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES**

PUBLIC HEARING

DATE: Wednesday, June 23, 2010

LOCATION: Neenah Human Services Building

TIME: 6:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Jerry Finch, Jef Hall, Jim Koziczowski, Ron Kuehl, Donna Lohry, Rob Paterson, and Harvey Rengstorf

BOARD MEMBERS EXCUSED: Mike Norton and Tom Widener

STAFF PRESENT: Bill Topel, Ken Stoffel, Tom Saari, Mary Krueger, Leo Podoski, Ellen Shute, Ann Kriegel, and Dorothy De Grace

Jim Koziczowski, chair of the Department of Human Services Board, opened the hearing at 6:00 p.m. by welcoming those present in the audience and introducing the Board members and staff who were present. Jim explained that the intent of the public hearing is to provide an opportunity for the public to comment on programs funded by the Department of Human Services for residents of Winnebago County who are affected by developmental disabilities, chemical dependency or mental illness, and on the financial and social service programs available through the Department. Jim reviewed the guidelines for the hearing.

The following information is testimony given:

Testimony given by Leah Schwartz: Leah represents Friendship Place in Neenah, a drop-in center for the chronically mentally ill. Leah said that over the past 18 years that she has been a part of Friendship Place, she found that it has begun to evolve. They have many programs that teach their consumers about giving back to the community, not just taking from resources. They are trying to move from a passive, negative entitlement attitude to an active, positive self-responsible attitude. It is a safe place for consumers, because they would oftentimes end up being isolated at home instead. The consumers who come to Friendship Place are offered help with nutrition and grocery shopping; job seeking skills; and a life skills series regarding health and social issues. They have several groups that meet regularly, such as living well with mental illness; a dual group on drug & alcohol; and a self-help group.

Testimony given by David Vickman: Dave is the transit coordinator for the Oshkosh Transit System. Dave thanked the Board and Human Service employees for the county's ongoing support of elderly & disabled transportation programs. He said that over one-million trips are provided by Oshkosh Transit each year within Winnebago County. The trips include access to medical appointments and employment, as well as transportation to help people live healthy and independent lives. The participation of the variety of funding sources and grants that help them provide these services is vital in keeping transportation options affordable and available for consumers. Because of this funding arrangement, each dollar invested in Oshkosh Transit delivers over \$4 in transportation service. Dave said they have requested funds for 2011 to support the growth in the elderly population in Winnebago County; new contract rates; and changes to the Long Term Care program management. Dave thanked the Board for its continued investment in transportation and for its consideration of this request.

Dave explained that in the past they provided funding to Lakeside Packaging Plus in Oshkosh for transportation services by using state and federal funds to match the county's support. Dave said they misunderstood that under the Family Care District residential facilities would provide transportation. Therefore, they no longer have an arrangement with Lakeside Packaging Plus nor have they requested funding from the county for services in 2011. Dave said he believes Family Care and IRIS will provide some form of transportation to the employees of Lakeside Packaging Plus, but it will be more expensive, and it will probably not be as flexible as the past system. Dave intends to work with the county on this issue and hopes to have the support of the Board.

Testimony given by Paul Eisen: Paul is a Winnebago County Supervisor. Paul said he believes there is a need in the Human Services Budget to delineate the programs that interface and impact with the Criminal Justice System. It is his observation that there is a need to delineate the Human Service hours that are logged in supporting the Sheriff's Department functions. Paul said he would like to see in the DHS Budget what is anticipated in the Long Term Support area with employees migrating to the Lakeland Long Term Care District. Paul said he also observed that there seems to be some goals of reducing the expenses for juvenile mental health and AODA issues. He suggested using the PVHC facility for non-criminal placements of this population.

Testimony given by Ada Hall: Ada is a Board member and volunteer at Friendship Place. She said the biggest achievement of the drop-in center is that mental health in-patient admissions are down. She said the volunteer staff is able to identify when consumers are having difficulty with medications, and they refer them to Clinical Services or their doctor. By avoiding in-patient hospitalization, there is a savings to tax payers. Ada thanked the Board for its continued support to Friendship Place over the years.

With no further testimonies offered, the hearing was adjourned at 7:00 p.m.

Submitted by:

Dorothy De Grace, Secretary
Winnebago County Department of Human Services