

**WINNEBAGO COUNTY
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES**

PUBLIC HEARING

DATE: Wednesday, June 24, 2015

LOCATION: Oshkosh Human Services Building

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

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Jerry Finch, Jim Koziczowski, Ron Kuehl, Larry Lautenschlager, Rob Paterson, Harold Singstock, and Tom Widener

BOARD MEMBERS EXCUSED: Donna Lohry and Mike Norton

STAFF PRESENT: Bill Topel, Tom Saari, Mary Krueger, Leo Podoski, Gina Vanden Branden, 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. Tom 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 Paul Eisen: Paul is a Winnebago County Supervisor. He stated that in 2007 the Personnel Function Review Committee presented information to the County Board as a guide to evaluating county programs. At that time, the Human Services Department identified some non-mandated programs and services that could be candidates for spending reduction should there be a need to reduce the tax levy. Paul requested that the Human Services Board update this information and present it to the County Board as a Special Orders item.

Paul explained the Stepping Up initiative, which is a national effort to reduce the number of people in jail with mental illness. Communities are asked to come together to develop an action plan that can be used to achieve a measurable impact. It is sponsored by NACO; the American Psychiatric Foundation; and the Justice Center of the Council of State Governments and was launched in May asking counties to adopt a resolution supporting this initiative. Paul will further discuss this initiative with the Sheriff's Department and Human Services.

Testimony given by Kate Pfaendtner: Kate is the parent of a Friendship Place member. She said the Oshkosh location is getting ready to celebrate its one-year anniversary. The program offers coping skills to members and an opportunity to practice their "soft" skills. It provides a way for them to be productive members of society and to give back. Kate thanked the Board for their support and asked that they continue to support Friendship Place in the next budget.

Testimony given by Andrea Phillips: Andrea is the Assistant Director of Friendship Place in Oshkosh. She said their services for one person costs \$23 per day compared to \$1,760 per day for a psychiatric hospital stay. The results of a survey from their three-month trial period of being located in Oshkosh showed that 88% of regularly attending participants indicated they had a decrease in psychiatric hospitalizations. The program helps members become more independent and to deal with their mental health in a positive and productive way. Andrea thanked the Board for their continued support.

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

Submitted by:

Dorothy De Grace, Secretary
Winnebago County Department of Human Services