

**COUNTY OF OSWEGO**  
**HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE**  
10:00 AM April 29, 2009

**PRESENT:**

Jack Proud, Chair  
Barbara Brown, Vice Chair  
Daniel Chalifoux  
Art Gearsbeck  
Margaret Kastler  
Doug Malone  
Morris Sorbello

**STAFF/GUESTS:**

Kevin Caraccioli, Esq., Counsel for DSS  
Philip Church, County Administrator  
Barry Leemann, Legislature Chairman  
Kathleen Fenlon, Director of Youth Bureau  
Frances Lanigan, Commissioner of DSS  
John Ferry, Coordinator of DSS Child Support Unit  
Donna Kestner, Director of Veterans  
Dr. Dennis Norfleet, Director of Public Health  
Larry Schmidt, Dir. Office for the Aging  
Richard Mitchell, County Attorney  
Ted Jerrett, Clerk of the Legislature  
Fred Maxon, Dir. of Purchasing  
Mr. & Mrs. Pringle

**MEDIA:**

Aaron Curtis, Palladium Times  
John Doherty, Post Standard  
Steve Yablonski, Oswego County Today  
Andy Mattison, News 10 Now

=====  
**Call to Order:**

Chairman Proud called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m.

**1. Approval of Minutes:**

Minutes of 3/18/09 – Moved by Leg. Sorbello, Seconded by Leg. Brown, all in favor  
Minutes of 3/25/09 – Moved by Leg. Chalifoux, Seconded by Leg. Brown, all in favor  
Minutes of 4/08/09 – Moved by Leg. Brown, Seconded by Leg. Kastler, all in favor

**2. Youth Bureau:**

**A. Budget Modification - Reality Check**

Youth Director Kathy Fenlon requested support for a budget modification to accept an additional \$9,223 Cost Of Living Adjustment from NY State for the Reality Check Program and to apply the funds to program costs.

**Motion to support request:** Legislator Chalifoux

**Second:** Legislator Brown

**Vote:** Unanimous

**3. Health Department:**

**A. Appointment of Hospice Administrator**

Health Director Dr. Norfleet requested support for a resolution to the Legislature appointing Ms. Lynne Bogart as the Hospice Program Administrator. Recently implemented requirements are making this necessary for us to continue our Hospice Program. Dr. Norfleet noted that Ms. Bogart is already serving in that capacity without title and there will be no change in compensation resulting from this appointment.

**Motion to support request:** Legislator Brown

**Second:** Legislator Gearsbeck

**Vote:** Unanimous

**4. Budget Modification - Rural Health Network**

Health Director Dr. Norfleet requested support for a budget modification to accept \$1,500 from the Rural Health Network to help defray costs for Community Health Assessment.

**Motion to support request:** Legislator Brown

**Second:** Legislator Sorbello

**Vote:** Unanimous

**5. Professional Advisory Committee Report**

Dr. Norfleet handed out minutes of the December 9, 2008 Professional Advisory Committee which includes an observation that the Health Department's Certified Home Health Nurses (CHHA) are being overwhelmed by demands for documentation that have nearly doubled.

Leg. Malone inquired about our response to recent concerns about the H1N1 (Swine Flu) Virus. Dr. Norfleet noted that we are in constant contact with the NYS Department of Health which is in regular contact with the National Center for Disease Control (CDC) and, so far, normal procedures such as washing hands frequently, staying home when sick, etc. have been effective. Dr. Norfleet added that recent years of preparation for such concerns as the avian flu have been helpful in dealing with H1N1.

**4. Office for the Aging:**

**A. Stimulus Funding – Meals Program**

Office for the Aging Director Larry Schmidt announced receipt of \$30,000 in Stimulus Funding for the Senior Meals Program noting the funds will be used to offset county costs.

**5. Social Services:**

**A. Budget Modification – TANF**

DSS Commissioner Lanigan requested support for a budget modification to accept an allocation of \$16,489 to provide intensive case management for “non-compliant” Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF).

**Motion to support request:** Legislator Brown

**Second:** Legislator Kastler

**Vote:** Unanimous

**B. Commendation and Discussion – Child Support Collection Unit**

County Administrator Phil Church shared copies of a recent letter from Commissioner David Hansell of the NYS Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance, commending Commissioner Lanigan and Oswego County DSS for their child support program whose performance “was among the best in New York State” last year with several measures of success significantly higher than the state wide average (Copy attached). Administrator Church and the Committee commended Commissioner Lanigan and her department for their outstanding performance.

**C. State’s Offer to Visit Central Registry and Review of Proposed Legislation**

Commissioner Lanigan introduced Oswego County’s Coordinator of Child Support Services John Ferry who reviewed efforts to establish paternity and pursue child support to hold parents responsible for the support of their children and minimize the burden to taxpayers.

Chairman Proud noted the listing in the agenda packet of 84 proposed State Senate and Assembly Bills dealing with child abuse and particularly Assembly Bill A6791 Sponsored by Assemblyman Will Barclay and co-sponsored by Assemblypersons, Townsend, Oaks and

Scozzafava which would allow DSS to do follow-up visits and evaluations for five years on children for whom there have been three or more past cases investigated.

Commissioner Lanigan distributed an April 28, 2009 memo outlining actions taken by Oswego County DSS to enhance child protective services including specific actions taken since March 25, 2009 (copy attached).

Leg. Gearsbeck moved to remove from the table a previous motion to accept the resignation of DSS Commissioner Lanigan.

Leg. Malone seconded the motion

At 10:40, upon motion by Leg. Chalifoux and seconded by Leg. Sorbello with unanimous support, the Committee entered Executive Session to discuss hiring/firing of personnel.

At 11:28, the Committee returned to open session. Chairman Proud ruled that after review of the facts, that the motion to accept the resignation of DSS Commissioner Lanigan was Out of Order for two reasons:

- There was never a resignation offered
- This Committee is not authorized to accept resignations

**6. Adjournment at 11:30:**

**Motion:** Legislator Brown

**Second:** Legislator Sorbello

**Vote:** Unanimous

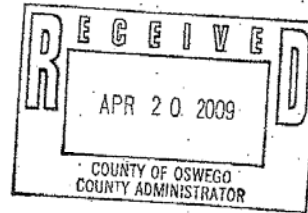


NEW YORK STATE  
 OFFICE OF TEMPORARY AND DISABILITY ASSISTANCE  
 40 NORTH PEARL STREET  
 ALBANY, NEW YORK 12243-0001  
 (518) 474-4152  
 (518) 486-6255 - Fax

David A. Paterson  
 Governor

David A. Hansell  
 Commissioner

April 15, 2009



Frances V. Lanigan  
 Commissioner  
 Oswego County Department of Social Services  
 100 Spring Street  
 P.O. Box 1320  
 Mexico, NY 13114

Dear Commissioner Lanigan:

I am writing to commend you and Oswego County's child support staff for your 2008 child support program performance. In 2008, an historic \$1.7 billion in support was collected across New York State. This achievement is due in large part to the dedication and commitment to the children and families served through the child support program by child support professionals and leaders like you every day.

Oswego County's 2008 child support program performance was among the best in New York State. You collected over \$15 million for the first time in the county's history. This milestone reflects a \$2 million increase in annual collections over the last five years.

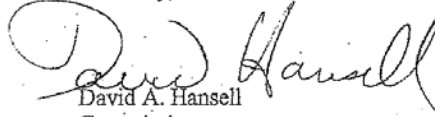
Your program's performance in establishing paternity and support orders is also impressive and notable. Oswego County has established paternity for over 96% of its caseload. This is well above the statewide average of 81%. You have also obtained support orders for 94% of the 7,700 cases served by your staff. This, too, is significantly greater than the statewide performance level.

Child support is a critical source of income for many custodial parents and can mean the difference between a family needing other public benefits or not. Oswego County's child support performance makes clear that you and your staff are serving your clients and community well.

*"providing temporary assistance for permanent change"*

Thank you for your leadership, and the commitment to the children and families in Oswego County demonstrated by your exemplary child support performance. OTDA looks forward to continuing to partner with you to make a great program even better in the future.

Sincerely,

  
David A. Hansell  
Commissioner

cc: Barry Leemann, Chairman, Oswego County Legislature  
Philip R. Church, Oswego County Administrator



**OSWEGO COUNTY**  
**Department Of Social Services**

*Frances V. Lanigan, Commissioner*

P.O. Pox 1320 Mexico, New York 13114  
phone 315.963.5435 • fax 315.963.5477

**To:** Health & Human Services Committee  
**From:** Frances Lanigan, Commissioner  
**Date:** April 28, 2009  
**Subject:** Child Protection Services in Oswego County – Update from 3-25 memo

**Actions Taken since August of 2008 to improve child protective services**

**September 2008**

- Requested Office of Children & Family Services to conduct a review of the all prior case files in the Erin M case as soon as possible
- Requested organizational structure and process review by Cornell through a contract with the Office of Children & Family Services. The goal is to take a critical look at our Child Protective Services and assist the Department to identify strengths and opportunities for improvement in our investigative process and/or organizational structure.

**October 2008 – December 2008**

- Cooperated with the Syracuse Regional Office to participate in a case review process known as On-Going Monitoring & Assessment
  - Review conducted in October
  - Report issued in December
  - Action plan developed and approved in December
- Met with all caseworkers & supervisors to review findings of the case review process
  - Shared overall findings with all caseworkers & supervisors
  - Met with individual caseworkers and supervisors to identify individual strengths & opportunities for improvement based review findings
- Identified training opportunities for staff to foster "best-practice" investigations
- Provided trauma response counselling for casework staff- consultant to provide support and reduce trauma related stress—*On Going*

**January 2009 – February 2009**

- Cornell-led organizational & process review started –fact-finding stage
- Implemented training recommendation on "Critical Thinking" initiative
  - Trained supervisors in the model process
  - Started weekly "group case reviews" in February
- Added Case Supervisor to focus solely on Child Protective activities

**March 2009 – May 2009**

- Cornell review continues- anticipated completion by end of May
- Developing a recommendation regarding current staffing based on trend analysis of data relating to child protective investigation workload. (April)
- Scheduled peer-to-peer training using caseworkers recognized for using "best-practice" approach to their investigations.
- Staff participated in state sponsored training designed to learn how to better prepare for case contacts, setting and achieving goals and plan follow-up actions (March)
- Initiate quarterly random case reviews with Syracuse Regional Office staff
- Re-assigned a vacant caseworker position from Adult Protective Services to Child Protective Services (April)
- Requested meeting with Phoenix Schools superintendent to identify opportunities to work together (March 18<sup>th</sup>)

**Additional actions since March 25th**

- Requested a meeting with Oswego Hospital ED staff. Meeting held April 28<sup>th</sup>
- Cornell staff wraps up on-site visits 4-28-09. Expect report by mid to end of May.
- Coordinating operational re-structure, staffing & program recommendations with Cornell review of operational structure. Goal is to have for May HHS Committee meeting (5-27)
- Researching funding options for proposal on staff and program enhancements.
- Participated with the Child Advocacy Center (CAC) in recognizing April as **CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION** month
- Worked with County Public Information Office on articles to educate the public about Child Abuse