



DAUPHIN COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

WORKSHOP MEETING

NOVEMBER 18, 2009

10:00 A.M.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Jeff Haste, Chairman
Dominic D. DiFrancesco, II, Vice Chairman
George P. Hartwick, III, Secretary

STAFF PRESENT

Chad Saylor, Chief Clerk; Janis Creason, Treasurer; William Tully, Esq., Solicitor; J. Scott Burford, Deputy Chief Clerk; Randy Baratucci, Director of Purchasing; Stephen Libhart, District Attorney's Office; Sandra Snyder, Register of Wills; Dan Eisenhauer, Director of MH/MR; Peter Vriens, Human Services Director; Mavis Nimoh, Director of Drug and Alcohol; Robert Burns, Director of Area Agency on Aging; Leila Brown, Solicitor's Office; Melissa Wion, Personnel; Rick Trynowski, Drug & Alcohol; August Memmi, Director of Community & Economic Development; George Connor, Community & Economic Development; Fred Lighty, Esq., Human Services Director's Office; Carolyn Thompson, Court Administrator; Keith Kepler, Controller's Office; Sue Cohick, Director of Children & Youth; Sandy Pintarch, Children & Youth; Faye Fisher, Director of Personnel; Tom Guenther, Director of IT; David Feidt, Solicitor's Office; Steve Chiavetta, Director of Registration & Elections; Diane McNaughton, Press Secretary; Kay Lengle, Personnel; Dave Schreiber, Personnel; Amy Richards, Commissioners' Office; Jena Wolgemuth, Commissioners' Office; Brenda Hoffer, Commissioners' Office and Richie-Ann Martz, Assistant Chief Clerk

GUESTS PRESENT

Emily Opilo, Jim Roxbury, Jim Sinkovitz and Joe Sanks

MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Haste, Chairman of the Board, called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m.

MOMENT OF SILENCE

Everyone observed a moment of silence.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Everyone stood for the Pledge of Allegiance.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Haste: We have a series of meeting minutes that we will take up at next week's meeting.

ELECTION BOARD MEETING

A complete set of Election Board Meeting Minutes are on file in the Commissioners' Office.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Mr. Haste: We are at the point in time in the meeting for public participation. Is there anyone in the audience that would like to address the Board at this time? (There were none.)

DEPARTMENT DIRECTORS/GUESTS

A. Stephen Libhart, District Attorney's Office

1. STOP Grant from PCCD

Mr. Libhart: As you are all probably aware, you can see on the Agenda that again this year we are applying for the STOP Violence Against Women Act funding that we typically receive. The County, traditionally and again this year, has already divided those funds between funding a detective, the clinic at the YWCA and funding the District Attorney's handling of the domestic violence cases. This represents a two-year project period for the total \$497,000. The indication that there is an in-kind match is already allocated and is an approved budget item. They go to cover some benefits and some other expenses. It doesn't represent any new appropriation that we haven't already seen. It basically is just going to continue the same level of funding that we have had in the past.

Mr. Haste: Do you need action?

Mr. Libhart: If you would like to take action today, I can take it. The deadline is December 5, so if you would rather table it until next week that is acceptable.

Mr. Haste: We will put it on next week's Agenda.

B. Dan Eisenhauer, Director, MH/MR

1. Presentation on Annual MR Plan

Mr. Eisenhauer: I'm here to present an overview of the 2010/2011 Mental Retardation Annual Plan. Every year DPW requires us to submit an annual plan for Mental Health and Mental Retardation funded services. This year, the planning guidelines for the Mental Retardation Program are dramatically changed, because effective July 1, 2009, DPW assumed direct funding responsibility for the waivers. So, I will give you an overview of how our role has changed.

We, at Dauphin County MH/MR Program, at least our Mental Retardation staff, now operate under a contractual arrangement with DPW for certain waiver monitoring functions. We no longer manage funding; however, we do have a responsibility for quality assurance, provider monitoring and actually managing what is now referred to as a number of waiver recipients or the number of waiver-funded slots allotted to Dauphin County citizens. We have about 415 individuals enrolled in Mental Retardation waivers. It is our responsibility to manage the appropriateness of people receiving waiver-funded services. Again, effective July 1, DPW is contracting directly with community providers.

The Plan outlines our basic responsibilities for base funding. We still have about \$5.5 million of Mental Retardation base funds. We use those funds for people that are either not eligible for waiver-funded services. We use it for people that are on a waiting list for waiver-funded services and we use it to meet emergency needs for people who are either in-between funding streams or who are often presented to us in a crisis. We have to manage and monitor waiver capacity. Sometimes individuals are disenrolled from a waiver. Sometimes people who are enrolled in waivers die, either from old age or whatever. When that happens there is a new timeframe for how we must assess people on an emergency waiting list and get them enrolled in a waiver. We also have a requirement to plan for people's special needs. People aging out of children services and residential settings, people that are on the emergency waiting list for services, and people that are recent graduates from special education. We have 87 Dauphin County residents that qualify for emergency status, which means that the technical definition for emergency is that people's health and safety are in danger if they don't receive services within one year.

One of the things that we've done over the last three years is a lot of retraining and worked a lot more closely with families, consumers and our support's coordination agency about how we determine people's priority for services. There are two main categories of need: critical and emergency. You can see that in 2009 the number of

people that we have on a waiting list for services dramatically decreased compared to the two prior fiscal years. There are two reasons for that. One is we did get a huge waiting list initiative in 2007 and 2008 so we were able to serve about 120 new individuals in Dauphin County with new funding. The other thing that we have done is that we paid a lot more attention to how people are being assessed for emergency needs. We've been able to get some people enrolled in other waivers. We have been able to get some people services in other ways. The number of people on the emergency waiting list is dramatically reduced in 2009 compared to prior years. That is progress in a positive direction.

Mr. Haste: Where are those 87 people located?

Mr. Eisenhower: Most of them are living with family members. Most of them are adults living with family member caregivers. Some of them are children like in an RTF setting or a group home setting. Most of them are adults.

We do expect a graduate initiative in this fiscal year, meaning young adults can participate in special education up to the age of 21. The school system is primarily responsible for their services, their employment training and their supportive services. Once they graduate from special education, they become the responsibility of our system. It's a defined program that we put a lot of energy and attention into and that is the recent graduate initiative. We usually try to find people employment opportunities. We try to provide some in-home habilitation. These are essentially 21 and 22 year old young adults that need to transition from a school setting to a community setting. Most of them we have been trying to move into employment-related options as opposed to what we used to call day program or shelter workshop. We have had some success in doing that. As you can see, we anticipate 33 graduates coming up in 2010 and 15 more in 2011. Some of those folks are already enrolled in the waiver, which means that they are eligible for waiver-funded services and being served. But, as you can see we have a total of 29 people within the next two years that we don't have funding for. Those people are considered to be priorities in our system.

One of the other things that we talk about in our Plan is our system concerns. With the State running the waiver programs, they radically changed the way provider rates are handled and how provider payment is handled. One of our concerns is that provider rates just aren't stable. Some provider rates are literally too low and some are too high. There is no effective mechanism to address an insufficient rate. DPW intends to do something that they call revenue reconciliation, which is in a broad sense if a provider received, for instance, \$2 million in fiscal year 2008/2009, DPW intends to find a way to get that provider about \$2 million in fiscal year 2009/2010 regardless of how their billing is going. They are trying to keep revenue, more or less, equal to the prior fiscal year. There is a mechanism for how that is done. The issue is they don't want providers to be overpaid nor do they want providers to be underpaid. I can tell you that ODP is behind in their cost reconciliation and their revenue reconciliation. We are not quite sure where that process stands. We don't have a direct role in it, except our fiscal staff are supposed to continue to monitor provider cost reports. It is a lot of work for our fiscal

staff to review the information submitted by providers to us. There continue to be some problems with how services are authorized. Again, we are not paying for services through our department, but our staff is literally authorizing the services and the plans for individuals. If an individual needs five units a week of in-home support, our staff literally authorizes those services on behalf of the individual and then the provider uses that authorization to bill DPW. There continue to be a lot of concerns about the authorization process. How did the interface of those billed units equal the gross revenue that providers end up with? A lot of system issues remain unclear. Unfortunately DPW's response for most of these things is that it is a work in progress, even our responsibility for monitoring providers. There is supposed to be a standardized form. There is not one yet that we can use. So, our ability to monitor providers is delayed, because we haven't gotten the appropriate tool yet to use. That is just an example.

For the most part, I will say that the switch to Treasury payment for providers went pretty smoothly. I think if you were going to poll providers they would say that they are getting paid, they are getting paid on a timely basis. There are concerns about how they'll end up the fiscal year, but at least they are getting paid and paid on a timely basis. Statewide there have been 35 requests for additional emergency funds to assist with cash flow and so far DPW has granted those requests. I think from the cash flow perspective the change has gone fine. It is just working out all the details that are far from over. As far as initiatives for Dauphin County, we do have several things that we are working on in partnership with our providers, consumers and family members. Even though we do not have the funding, we still are working on various initiatives. One of them is the employment initiative. We are working with universities, schools and employers to develop job opportunities for people. We are also working on some homeownership options where families can assist their adult family member with mental retardation in purchasing a home. We can provide in-home supports for individuals as opposed to a traditional group home setting. It is more of an integrated model. We haven't actually used it yet, but it is an initiative that we're developing. We are also working more on what we call "life sharing" arrangements where an adult consumer lives with a family, not their own family member. The family that they live with provides a level of behavioral support for the individual. One of the reasons we are focused on that is, historically about 70% of waiver funding has gone to support people and group homes. Over time we would like to shift the percentage of funds to more community-based and more integrated settings. One of the ways that we are doing that is trying to move people from two or three-person group homes into a family living arrangement. The other initiative that we have is to reduce the use of restraints or restrictive plans for people in group homes.

Last, but not least, we have a new thing that we started, family networking opportunities. This year we just held an event at Fort Hunter. We asked all MR providers to do a table of information and sort of a Family Fun Day so that people receiving mental retardation services or people waiting for services can develop their own social network, learn from providers. We can provide some supports to families and individuals without funding and those are the sorts of family networking opportunities that we are trying to develop

in Dauphin County. I will say that we have excellent participation and assistance from our providers, which made that day a success. We will continue to do things like that.

The other thing that we are concerned about is we do have an aging population. People with mental retardation are living longer. Their life expectancy is actually getting more towards the norm of the general population, which means that we have an aging population. In some of our group homes, people have complex medical needs so we are trying to figure out how we provide nursing support, how we can work with Aging on developing some service options for people that are living a lot longer than they used to say 10, 20 years ago.

You will notice that there is no funding anymore, because we are no longer required to do a funding request for our Plan.

Mr. Hartwick: Most of this I heard in our Board Meeting. I just have two questions. You talked about our office determining the appropriateness of people receiving services. Define appropriateness.

Mr. Eisenhauer: Literally there is a rating document about the type of support that people need; the intensity of support people need and how soon they will need it. If a person is 16 years old and enrolled in special education since the school is responsible for the services for those individuals up to the age of 21, we plan for that individual, but they don't rise to the level, unless it is an unusual circumstance, they wouldn't necessarily be on an emergency or critical status in the waiting list, because the timeframe for services is five years out. What that means is that we have to do annual reviews of everyone on our waiting list, at least annual reviews, to see what level of service they need, how soon they need it and how they are functioning in the absence of those supports. Sometimes parents, family members, neighbors provide assistance, but we know that they can't for a length of time. The most common example is there might be two parents providing care to an adult with mental retardation and one of the parents dies and then the other parent cannot sustain the level of support anymore. That is a change in need to us. That is someone that rises who maybe was on a critical level on our waiting list, but is now an emergency.

Mr. Hartwick: I know the former allocation included all the contracts to providers, there was an admin piece to that for the County, the loss in revenue was not significant, but nonetheless there was a loss in revenue. What is the total amount of revenue that is spent on MR services in Dauphin County? Has that increased or decreased since the direct contracting process with the State?

Mr. Eisenhauer: We won't know for another 18 months.

Mr. Hartwick: Under the simplified plan requirements, our funding that we receive is about what?

Mr. Eisenhauer: About \$5.5 million of base funded services.

Mr. Hartwick: Is that an adequate amount of funding for us to achieve those 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 goals you defined as the simplified plan requirements?

Mr. Eisenhauer: We still get waiver administration funds. So, it is a contract. The State is purchasing waiver administration services from Dauphin County. So, we are still getting waiver administration funds, in addition to our base funds. We always want more base funds, because the more funds we have, the more people we can meet their needs. Waiver administration funds are adequate right now.

Mr. Hartwick: That's what constitutes the \$5.5 million?

Mr. Eisenhauer: No, that's an addition to the \$5.5 million.

Mr. Haste: The \$5.5 million is the base.

Mr. Eisenhauer: The \$5.5 million is what we spend on services to individuals. The waiver administration is what pays for our staff/office.

Mr. Hartwick: I guess the question should be are the waiver administration funds adequately supporting the office?

Mr. Eisenhauer: Yes.

Mr. Hartwick: And there will be no General Fund allocation that you are going to be requesting in order to support those operations as we move forward in future years?

Mr. Eisenhauer: I can't predict future years. That is a concern of ours, but right now our waiver administration is more than adequately meeting our expenses.

Mr. DiFrancesco: Just two questions to clarify part of what you said. You said how the State is designing their allocations to overcome the too-high, too-low assessments, I'm curious who determines when an assessment... You're saying these are the fees charged so how would the State decide what is too low? I understand how they might decide what is too high, but if a provider comes in and charges what they charge how does the State?

Mr. Eisenhauer: The State sets the rates. It is a very complicated process. Providers have to submit cost information how much it costs them to provide services. There are all kinds of rules and disclaimers for what dollar amounts you are allowed to put in every one of these lines on these spreadsheets. That's the provider's estimate of their expenses in providing the service. They also have to predict the number of units they will deliver, the number of people that they are going to serve and then the State uses that information and devises a rate. The State actually sets the rate, not the provider or the County. Providers then look at their rate and say I think I can produce another service units to draw down enough funds, yes or no. We aren't clear on how the State

takes the information the providers send in and use it to set rates. They apply all sorts of assumptions and all sorts of analyses that we frankly don't understand. When we did the rate setting, which the County used to do the rate setting, we had a rate setting package that providers used and we understood where that information came from and we understood how we set a rate. We don't know how DPW is doing it. That's just resulted in some providers, based on the historical rates for service, the services haven't changed. For example, if I'm a provider and last year in Dauphin County I was getting \$17.18 for this unit of service and all of a sudden this year the State says your rate is \$12.50. We don't know where that came from and how. The State is saying that even though your rate is \$5 less per unit we will work with you at the end of the year to somehow give you about the same amount of revenue that you got last year even though the rate is different. It amounts to a lump sum payment to the provider at the end of the year. As a provider organization, again I'll use the example, if they gave you about \$2 million last year; they will give you about \$2 million this year. They call it a revenue target. The State has established a revenue target for every provider. It is considered practice. I think this administration has determined that they understand that some of this rate setting is flawed. They are trying to do something like hold harmless for a year or two so that they can work out all the glitches in their rate setting process.

Mr. DiFrancesco: In terms of the service providers in this area, what would be your evaluation of any real damage done to the service providers through this budget crunch?

Mr. Eisenhauer: We have one provider that ceased providing services, because the rate was inadequate. Some other providers are going through an appeal process. Some are waiting to see how revenue reconciliation helps them or not. We had one provider cease services.

Mr. DiFrancesco: How does that impact the service availability? Is there still ample service?

Mr. Eisenhauer: That particular service was a very difficult one. It was a specialized service. We are working with that provider. We are working with other providers to try to fill the need. There were about 80 people receiving that service. We've found alternatives for about 50 or 60 people. We are still working on the other 20.

Mr. DiFrancesco: That service provider didn't go out of business; they simply stopped choosing to participate under the State.

C. Human Services Departments Budget Updates

- 1. Dan Eisenhauer – MH/MR**
- 2. Mavis Nimoh – Drug & Alcohol**
- 3. Robert Burns – Aging**
- 4. Sue Cohick – Children & Youth**

Mr. Hartwick: Through a request of the Board, we were to bring all of our categoricals in following the final passage of the Budget. We actually have a State budget passed. With that we wanted to get an idea of what the actual budget allocations are and the answers, as often is the case in human services, are not that easy. There are a lot of moving pieces still, particularly in the MH budget and D&A. Categoricals that received allocation letters are Children & Youth and Aging. They know exactly what they are going to be receiving from State agencies. We wanted an idea to be able to determine whether or not they are going to be able to provide services to the end of the year. We wanted to be clear that we are in a difficult position and wanted to make sure that the reduced allocations that we receive this year go into direct services, we are going to be holding the line on employee salary increases to attempt to manage this in a way that is going to directly allow consumers to benefit from the resources that are available or the lack thereof. We're also going to talk about in certain areas making sure that it is clear that we are not going to be providing provider increases during this time period directly to providers so that message is very clear today. All the money that we receive from the State budget allocations have to go into direct services for our clients. They have all been significantly reduced. MH is the first up.

MH/MR – Dan Eisenhauer

Mr. Eisenhauer: We haven't received our allocation. So, I can't tell you precisely what our funding level is going to be. We've tried to interpret what Deputy Secretary Joan Erney has talked about what is included in the budget. If I was going to sum up, she went through a sort of laundry list of about 12 items where some were more money than they initially thought and some were less. How that's going to directly come to Dauphin County, we don't know yet. Our estimate is based on everything that Joan Erney has said and based on a draft allocation that we got all the way back in August. So, an August draft obviously got changed ten times by October. We are trying to assess all that information. The net result of which is that we think we have a minor reduction in funding in the Mental Health program compared to 2008/2009. We believe that we are going to get a little less CHIP funding. That is related to a specific individual that we are serving. We're not necessarily complaining about that yet, because we haven't discharged that person into the community. That is one funding reduction that we know about. We are working with OMSAS about how they are going to reallocate that funding to us.

Mr. Hartwick: The CHIP monies go towards individuals who are formally institutionalized and they are transitioning from a State mental institution back into the community and whether or not they are going to be adequately funded or else they are going to fall on the responsibility of the existing MH dollars or County taxpayers.

Mr. Eisenhauer: We did not discharge the individual last fiscal year. We requested permission to carry over the funds and they denied the request, but they promised to work with us closer to that individual's discharge to reallocate a portion of that funding to us.

Mr. Haste: Wasn't that the commitment when they closed the State Hospital?

Mr. Eisenhauer: Yes. Again, I'm just saying that when you see the numbers you are going to see a reduction. It is an understandable reduction at this point and we are still in negotiation with the State about that funding amount. I think we'll come to an agreement on that amount. We do think that we are going to see about a 2% reduction in our base funds in Mental Health. Base funds make up about 40% of our allocation. We anticipated that cut and so prior to executing contracts, we already reduced provider contracts in Dauphin County by about \$400,000 to accommodate what we anticipated. We don't believe we are going to have to make any additional cuts for the remainder of this fiscal year. We notified the providers about what services were being cut and why in advance. I called them and sent letters well in advance of the fiscal year. The biggest impact was an outpatient provider. We also worked with the HealthChoices Program to try to see if the HealthChoices Program could support that outpatient provider since we no longer have the funds to do that. That was a largely successful effort. Again, I'm not saying that there was no impact, because there was. There are two specific services that we ceased funding in Dauphin County.

Mr. Hartwick: This system, I remember we all sat here and listened to your MH report at the end of the last State fiscal year cycle, and you saw significant increases in the number of people who are seeking out services. If I remember correctly it was over 40% increase in the folks who are seeking out services. From the State you received a significant cut. That has to pose some real challenges in trying to serve that large amount of people again with fewer dollars.

Mr. Eisenhauer: We have growing waiting lists. I don't want to get into this topic too much, but part of the debate on national healthcare is the concept of rationing services. We have been rationing services in the public-funded mental health system since the 1970s.

Mr. Haste: So has Canada and they have national healthcare.

Mr. Eisenhauer: I don't want to engage in that debate, I'm just saying that is what we do. We have a limited budget so we ration the availability of care. It is based on literally how sick someone is and how much provider capacity we can afford. People are on a waiting list. The waiting list for mental health services is not nearly as tight and documented as the mental retardation system. The mental retardation system has fewer individuals and their needs change more slowly over time. An annual look at a person's status is for the most part a sufficient way of determining a person's need. For people with mental illness it can change by the day. Someone will walk into the Case Management Unit for an intake and we will assess them as being eligible for outpatient services. We put them on a waiting list for outpatient services. They might get an appointment in three months or six months. We keep them engaged with a case manager. If their symptoms get worse, we reassess them for a different level of care and if so we try to get them into a partial hospitalization program or an inpatient stay. If

they don't get worse while they are waiting, they wait until the next available appointment. That is what I mean by rationing care.

Mr. Hartwick: They could end up in Dauphin County Prison and be a part of our mental health diversion team. There are additional resources spent from our County taxpayers to take care of an inadequately funded mental health system. That is really what it boils down to and those numbers continue to decrease the amount of services we provide and continue to increase. It is just falling on other parts of our system, because the State didn't have the stomach to adequately fund those services.

Mr. Eisenhauer: Our funding has been declining for the last three years. Our waiting list for services has been increasing for three years; dramatically increasing. We have waiting lists for residential, targeted case management, which is in-home case management for people that have serious mental illness, outpatient, and partial hospitalization. Again, we basically perform a level of risk management in how we prioritize people for services. People with forensic involvement get a higher priority, people who are dangerous to themselves or others obviously get a higher priority for services. People that are causing a community disruption, but not necessarily to the level of commitment or to the level of forensic involvement, get a higher priority for services.

Mr. Hartwick: It depends upon what else is happening in their life at that time, whatever issues are going on at that time. You don't have the capacity to be able to stay on top and assess and provide the adequate level of services. Our mental health system is already distorted and not adequate and it just became a lot more challenging. From what I see from the State budget perspective that is probably one of the largest impacts, and as you show they are serving 45% more individuals asking folks to get on the waiting list. We are really going to see folks more in the Prison and in other areas of human services and using County taxpayer dollars to become able to fund Federal and State mandated services.

Mr. Haste: That just also means hats off to you and President Judge Lewis because dealing with those difficulties we have been proactive with the mental health court and the Mental Health Diversion Committee and are at least trying to address it in a positive way given these negatives. I know that is a bad thing that has happened, but it has also caused you to get very creative and proactive and I appreciate that.

Mr. Eisenhauer: I also want to thank our other human service partners. We have been working with Children & Youth, Juvenile Probation, Aging and Drug & Alcohol. People with mental illness are involved in all those systems. I thank Peter for helping us in all those things. I think we are collaborating better. We are trying to maximize the use of our funds. We are trying to work collaboratively across our agencies. We share a lot of common consumers. I think in spite of the negatives, we also have some positives.

Mr. Hartwick: It would be nice if we had supportive services to go along with our mental health courts and diversionary programs. You would see a whole lot less of issues within the community. There is obviously an established need.

Drug & Alcohol – Mavis Nimoh

Ms. Nimoh: As Dan reflected, we have not gotten our official allocations yet from the State. DPW, however, Office of Mental Health Substance Abuse Services has sent over their allocations and it is \$1.45 million. This represents a reduction in our IGT funding. That was \$462,319 in fiscal year 2009 and the State backfills \$188,940 of this amount. We had anticipated a 2% reduction in State based funding. So, we had budgeted accordingly. We also lost approximately \$14,928 for our SAP program, which comes from the Governor's discretionary funds. We've also lost the tobacco grant. The State has decided to use the tobacco funding for budget purposes.

Mr. Hartwick: SAP is the Student Assistance Program.

Ms. Nimoh: These are the reductions that we anticipated and we budgeted accordingly. Last fiscal year our budget was approximately \$4.168 million and this year our estimate is \$3.8 million. Until we actually get the final numbers from the State we are not sure.

Mr. Haste: You already anticipated these cuts.

Ms. Nimoh: Correct.

Mr. Haste: That is the key that we are trying to determine today is any further negative impact on the General Fund. And, what you are saying is that there won't be any further negative impact, because we already anticipated this in July.

Mr. Nimoh: We are not 100% sure, because up until two months ago we were still working on finalizing the 2007/08 fiscal report that was the blended years of the Executive Commission and the County. That report just got completed. That also had an impact on fiscal year 2008/09. So, we are not exactly sure until we get the final allocations with what the County match requirement is going to be, because that depends on exactly what the budget number is. We did anticipate, as I said, those projected cuts.

Mr. Hartwick: That is money in the system that is already troubled with the \$3.8 million when you talk about us trying to move to a long return treatment, providing treatment to individuals wherever they arrive, whether it is emergency rooms or providers and provide recommendations for longer term treatment, which seems to be successful. We are going to have to continue to monitor our providers as they are making those recommendations so they are not going over their allocation. We are not going to be adding any additional County General Fund. We are already in a tight budget year where pensions have gone up and healthcare costs have gone up. We've got issues with the City. There are all kinds of concerns out there and ultimately we have got to do

with what we have and making sure we are monitoring and not coming back for a large County request at the end of the year is not the intention of the Board.

Mr. DiFrancesco: Give me the total number again and the reduction?

Ms. Nimoh: The total, the difference thus far amounts to approximately \$435,000 from the previous fiscal year budget.

Mr. DiFrancesco: That is your reduction. Within that \$335,000 reduction, what would the impact be on providing service?

Ms. Nimoh: We spread it across the Board, but are required to continue treatment services so there will be some reductions, move to a decentralized model. Currently we are on pace where we were with the new decentralized model so we don't anticipate any excessive amount of treatment, but we obviously preauthorized for every treatment episode, which was not done previously. That is one measure where we are holding the line on budget. We also have other options that we've never explored before should there be a significant increase in treatment services, we can do such things as working with DPW in trying to get people on HealthChoices funding and medical assistance quicker. Historically that hasn't happened utilizing medical assistance enough to kind of fill in those gaps. We have some options should we see a push on our system.

Mr. DiFrancesco: What you are saying right now is that based on the reduction of the \$335,000 at this point there is no need to reevaluate staffing levels and service providing, that you are finding alternative ways to provide those services and there is no cuts that need to be made.

Ms. Nimoh: Not at this time.

Mr. DiFrancesco: You can live within the budget that was passed?

Ms. Nimoh: Yes.

Mr. DiFrancesco: I want to be clear, because I know D&A was one of the areas that the State was going to cut. I want to be sure that we are living within what was passed so that we don't have to address issues down the road where "Hey, by the way, surprise, we are going over budget," because that is not an option.

Ms. Nimoh: It is not a mandated service from the State so at such time that we are out of funding, we are out of funding. We preauthorize every treatment episode so that is probably the greatest measure of how we limit what we can do and what we can't do.

Mr. DiFrancesco: The unfortunate part is when the Commonwealth decides to take what logically should be dedicated funding like the tobacco dollars and they decide to balance their budget outside of the area where it makes logical sense for that money to be invested instead of cutting other programs that are not funded and are unnecessary.

It is a sad statement that we are sitting here saying that when someone shows up at your door, because they want to change some problem in their lifestyle that the potential is there that money is not available and in fact there are funds that should be dedicated to that purpose. You are living within your budget?

Ms. Nimoh: Yes.

Mr. Haste: I want to thank you for hearing what we said back in July with the Drug Court and the concerns that we have with the jail.

Ms. Nimoh: We are working very closely with the District Attorney's Office and are able to fund two individuals with the grants. That is helping with some of our budget.

Mr. DiFrancesco: The fact of the matter is that the program is working now and the fact that the program is working is saving tax dollars and providing a much better service to the people who are seeking the services.

Ms. Nimoh: Drug Court does a fantastic job.

Area Agency on Aging – Robert Burns

Mr. Burns: We received our budget allocation last week and the funding was flat relative to last year, which is what we anticipated and budgeted for. Our situation could improve in the final quarter of the fiscal year. The State Department of Aging always does a budget revision and oftentimes they release additional funds. Last year we did receive additional funding at that time and we likely will this year as well. We also think our funding under the Pennsylvania Waiver Program will increase. We have not gotten our allocation yet for that aspect of our budget, but we have more clients in the waiver funding this year than we did last year. So, there should be additional dollars. While we don't think the flat funding is adequate compared to MH and D&A it was decreased, we can and will live within the budget.

Mr. Hartwick: The growing senior population continues to establish need, but it tells you how certain systems are affected when there is a vocal voice and folks want to vote. I guess that won't affect sitting legislators in their ability to continue to become elected as a legislator when in fact it burdens the system and taxpayers of our County. Aging was not affected. They had a vocal voice in lobbying on the Hill and it should be based upon need. Not to say that there's not even more established need in Aging than we obviously can serve, but you guys received your funding right away.

Mr. Burns: We are happy with that.

Mr. DiFrancesco: You mentioned flat funding. Is there a pressure point at what you are seeing right now in your budget of any programs that you expect to suffer, senior citizen centers or anything like that? Second question: was the lottery fund raided at all from the budget process?

Mr. Burns: I don't think the lottery fund was raided this year. You'll remember the last two years, each year they took about \$250 million out of the lottery and put it into DPW. This year they didn't. The pressure point for us is in all the discretionary spending that we have, such as one-time grants, to senior centers, which we have done, at least for the last several years. I don't anticipate having that money this year. We did put the centers on notice of that at the beginning of the fiscal year. That will be a burden to them absolutely. Typically that money is used for some type of infrastructure upgrade or some type of programming that they wanted to purchase.

Mr. Haste: The time may be right for senior centers to look at consolidating where it is possible so that we get the maximum bang for the buck. That has been talked about in different parts of the community and I think this highlights the need to take a look at that.

Mr. Burns: We agree with that.

Mr. DiFrancesco: Probably it would be covered in other areas, service providers in the community. Were any entities that were providing services to your clientele hurt by the budget? Did any service providers go out of business? Probably that would be picked up by mental health and other areas.

Mr. Burns: I don't believe anyone went out of business. There was one that declined to contract with us this year, because they felt that they needed a higher rate to continue. We have 18 providers. We have enough providers, but I'm sure they were stretched out as well.

Mr. DiFrancesco: Were there any service providers within D & A that either went out of business or stopped providing services as a result of the budget?

Ms. Nimoh: No.

Mr. Hartwick: There were specific services that were adjusted.

Children & Youth – Sue Cohick

Ms. Cohick: While Sandy is handing out our information, I do want to put out there a couple pieces of information for your consideration. Like the others, we certainly will make every attempt to live within our allocation and predict that we will be able to do that, but I would like to highlight a couple influencing factors for your consideration.

Mr. Haste: Notice the difference there. Everybody else said they would, she said they would make an attempt to.

Ms. Cohick: Some of those influencing factors, we make our predictions based upon the continuing trend of reduction of placements. We are working very closely with Juvenile Probation, as well as our office internally to focus on finding safe alternatives

for children so they would not be required to utilize out-of-home placements. We have been successful in doing that and predict that we will have ongoing success, but some factors that may influence that could be a change in political environment. For instance, if we do find that there are additional policemen hired within the Dauphin County area, as Steve Suknaic has mentioned several times, that may result in increased arrests, which also could potentially increase out-of-home placements for juveniles. That is a factor that we have tried to predict for, but we don't yet have the knowledge as to how to adequately predict for that.

In addition to that we are also seeing an increase in requests for assistance related to housing support, support for utility bills and with the increase in rates expected in January for electricity and other utilities we expect there will be an increased demand on our services. There are children removed from their homes because of inadequate housing. If that increase happens, that will have an impact upon us in our budget predictions as well. We have tried to look at those and take those into consideration, but what you are seeing is our best knowledge at this point, the impact that they will have.

Ms. Pintarch: The spreadsheet I provided for you first starts off with good news. For 2008/2009 our costs were actually much lower than anticipated, again, as a result of reduced placements, particularly with Juvenile Probation having a substantial decrease in their number of children in out-of-home care. The original needs-based budget request that was submitted in August 2008 included the Commissioners committing to a \$10.1 million County share of those expenses. At that time, based upon trends in 2007/08 were projected at \$47.6 million. Based on our actual costs for 2008/09 certainly I believe that our approved needs-based budget of February 2009, which were our tentative allocations from the DPW of \$42.9 were rather reasonable and I think would adequately cover our anticipated costs for the current year. Basically what has happened, if you look at the column entitled "Revised Budget of October 2009", those were the net results of the past budget and our current allocation letter. You can see that our expenditure levels were not reduced by the State, which we are very happy about. The primary shifts, to support that budget, are seen in our revenues from the State being reduced by \$374,000. That is more than offset by enhanced Federal funding through our Title IV-E through the American Recovery Act. They have actually increased our Federal financial participation rate by about 6% on Title IV-E. All of the reductions in State funding are projected to be made up by Federal funding. There is an \$111,000 reduction in projected County costs. The final column is our tentative implementation budget as submitted with our August 2009 Needs Based Budget, where we project out through the year 2010 and 2011. At this point, our implementation budget is actually showing a reduced amount of expenditures anticipated for the current year. I believe that is more than adequate to cover where we expect to be. Based on the first quarter, our expenses were somewhere around \$8.7 million. Our expenditure levels, again, continue to reflect the reduction in out-of-home placement costs. We are making some last-minute changes in our implementation budget at the recommendation of the DPW to address a few issues. That will be minimal and will still be well within the allocation that we were provided by the State in October.

Mr. Hartwick: Some cautionary notes, our intakes in our Intake Unit have almost tripled the amount of requests that we have had for opening services. We are doing a whole lot more on the front-end of services to adequately assess the needs of the people making the requests and obviously the kids who are having services requested for. That process is going to take a significant amount of upfront investment. If in fact the legislation that we worked on passes, the State reimbursement rate for that intake part of the process will increase so we will see an increase in the amount of State reimbursement for the dollars that we will need. We are seeing a huge amount of increase for the need for services and the calls that are coming into our department. One of the things that we have talked about besides training and changing some procedures, we are going to be adding some additional staff there in the upcoming budget, which I think has been a part of our needs-based budget process to insure that we are appropriately assessing and making sure that the right level of services are being provided. Understanding that we have had issues this year in child protection and safety is critical to Dauphin County and it is very difficult as we see the numbers go down in other areas to predict why the actual request for services for the protection and safety of our kids has gone up so significantly. The amount of calls and intakes that are being requested, it is not just for a month, they have been trending this way for several months now and have almost tripled. We need to do some investigation as to why that phenomenon is occurring.

Ms. Pintarch: I can address some of the issues I see from a fiscal standpoint. We are seeing a phenomenal increase in, as Sue mentioned before, for housing issues. Cases where we may have 20 or 30 years ago frequently placed children, because of unclean conditions, excessive issues regarding infestation by roaches, just really some very severe housing-related issues. We do have a grant and I think we have a real commitment to not place children if that is the primary reason that we are getting referral. We are doing everything that we can through using our housing grant monies and Act 148 dollars to deal with those issues. So, we are assisting families to maintain their households and not put kids in out-of-home placement, because of issues such as that. I think we are doing many innovative things, things that are really attempting to be proactive to keep our numbers down as far as out-of-home placement, which is the real driver in our budget.

Mr. Hartwick: As kids go to out-of-home placements and get bumped from place to place, the likelihood of them having huge disruptions, mental health issues, drug & alcohol issues, and criminal justice issues grows by each placement.

Ms. Cohick: We are currently working collaboratively with the Housing Authority of Dauphin County to apply for a Federal grant that would provide vouchers for families who are at risk of their children being placed due to inadequate housing, as well as supporting older youth. That grant will be submitted in December and, if awarded, we would receive those monies effective July 1, 2010 to help support that.

Mr. DiFrancesco: I have a very subjective question. It is really based on your opinion, but it is something that we have to wrestle with and try to figure out. As part of our budget hearings the issue came up in working with Juvenile Probation and I know both departments have been doing an exceptional job of keeping kids out of placement, which in my opinion is the best scenario if you can find an alternative to sending a child away that keeps them in the community and gives them the support that they need. That is the best way to do it and the least expensive way to do it. The JPO case levels right now are very low. What I'm trying to determine is how much, where is the rate breakpoint? How much impact do those case levels have... How many are successful in keeping kids out of placement? Unfortunately, it is a question that I have to ask to you and JPO and the Courts, because there are three different components that come into play and there are three different opinions that may come to the table. The case levels where they are right now are extremely low. This is sort of like every single school district in Pennsylvania saying what is the proper class size to get a quality education for our children? It is subjective. It is really not objective. It is not based on solid facts. Our case load is very low right now in our JPO office. My question is on the case management side, what is your opinion on the impact that those lower case levels are having on keeping kids out of placement as a direct reason for them not going to placement?

Ms. Pintarch: I can say from a financial standpoint that every child that a probation officer or Children & Youth worker maintains in their home versus an out-of-home institutional placement saves at least \$200 a day. So, take that times 365 and you are talking about \$60,000 to \$70,000 a year versus wages and benefits that for a new worker probably would run between \$45,000 in total. You are talking about one child staying out of care. If you can have a caseworker or probation officer that is able to maintain five children you just extrapolate those numbers. We believe that the key to our budget is always maintaining kids in their own homes or with relatives versus higher level placements. If we are successful in doing that by providing upfront services, family preservation services, more intensive services where we are able to see families on a weekly basis versus maybe once a month, makes a tremendous difference. We are able to recognize the trigger points that may create additional abusive situations, make referrals to families for outside services and be far more proactive in maintaining families' impact versus the out-of-home placement.

Ms. Cohick: I think something that will impact that is what is known as "shared case responsibility" which is a new mandate that is coming down from the State. They are just in the final stages of writing that bulletin. It is where Children & Youth and JPO will share cases more formally. I think, even though caseloads may be lower possibly for JPO right now, that doesn't mean that the workload will decrease. We are going to be working with them to work more collaboratively and have our JPO officers help support what traditionally would be viewed as C&Y activity. For example, they are now going to be looking at the family unit rather than just the individual child that has the offense. We are also asking them to help support documentation so that we can justify whether there is a need for Children & Youth involvement in that case. Those implications, although

again case loads may be lower, and that may be a continuing trend, the expectation of those officers may be increasing, because of that collaborative effort.

Ms. Pintarch: We are also expanding our independent living services to our youth that are aging out of our system. Those are expanding, not only for dependent children who have left foster care. We are providing services up to the age of 21. Those services are also being expanded to include juvenile delinquents. The ability of probation to also recognize the needs of their aging youth and working collaboratively without independent living staff is really going to be crucial to hopefully enable these kids to stabilize themselves post-placement and maintain themselves in the community without getting into additional trouble. We do have expanded services that do require additional casework in JPO service delivery of our workers.

Mr. DiFrancesco: This is one of those challenging positions where if you look at it without any additional consideration you say, "Oh, we can cut people", but in reality if we cut people it could drive our costs up if they are not as effective as keeping kids out of placement. It has been a real struggle trying to figure out what is the right thing to do in this case.

Ms. Cohick: I would suspect if you were to cut, we would be coming to you and asking for an increase.

Mr. DiFrancesco: I just wanted to get your take on it. We are not seeing you now at this time in our calendar year budget.

Ms. Pintarch: Deputy Secretary Richard Gold has made a commitment to counties and particularly to Dauphin County that as we save placement dollars that they will continue to make our Act 148 dollars accessible to us and reinvest in our programs to maintain kids in their own homes. They have been very supportive of our requests for additional staff to provide in-home services to kids so that we are able to maintain our children in home and reduce the number of children in placement.

Mr. Hartwick: If you take a look at the 2009/2010 projected budget, that was the old way of doing things. If we are going to continue to do things the way that we have done instead of changing the system over the last five years we would have spent about \$48 million on children and youth services. I'm going to put Sandra on the spot, I suspect that when we finally come in with our numbers we'll spend under \$42 million, would be my guess.

Ms. Pintarch: I think we looked historically back in the years, probably around 2000; we were increasing our budget by \$2 to \$3 million every year, because of increased out-of-home placements.

Mr. DiFrancesco: The same question to you that I have asked to the others: any loss of service in the community based on the budget, any businesses put out of business?

Ms. Cohick: We have not had any local placement providers out of business and I don't believe we have had any in-home service providers in child welfare that have reduced their services. We have had a few that have had serious cash flow issues, which they had to address by tapping into their lines of credit, which has really been detrimental to their overall budget. There have been a few providers Statewide that have gone out of business, but it has not been a serious issue. There have been some closings of some detention centers Statewide and a few other facilities within larger providers, but very few providers that to date have actually gone out of business.

Mr. Hartwick: I'm so upset that the detention centers are closing.

PERSONNEL

Ms. Lengle: Do you have any questions on the Salary Board items?

Mr. Haste: I see for the Court Reporters we have four. Why four? Is my math off?

Ms. Thompson: Not at all. We have prepared the paperwork in accordance with our budget presentation knowing that you would address it.

Mr. Haste: So, you two were trying to see if I'm paying attention.

Ms. Thompson: Apparently you are.

Mr. Haste: So, that was a mistake, it should be three?

Ms. Thompson: When we prepared it, we didn't even know we had three. As of now we have three.

Mr. Hartwick: We are still justifying the increase in revenue to be able to offset salaries and benefits.

Ms. Thompson: I'm sitting here in case you have more questions of me.

Mr. Haste: The only other technical question I have is I know we have to do them, but none of them have been approved by the budget yet. So, we don't have a funding system.

Ms. Thompson: The direction came from Kay. I was going to wait until December. She said if you do it all during... that's not just court reporters; it is all the judicial law clerks. We are creating all the positions for the two new judges within this period of time.

Mr. Haste: Just so we coordinate this very closely with Mike Yohe, because I don't want to get into a situation where your numbers don't match Mike's.

Ms. Thompson: We are not looking to fill any... We might fill the court reporters at the very end of December and if the Judges' request to get their assistants in a couple days early. Other than that we are looking at doing them the first week of January.

Mr. Haste: How can you fill them at the end of December if we don't have a budget?

Ms. Thompson: They would be put into this budget year, just for those few days.

Mr. Haste: So, you have funds to do it this year?

Ms. Thompson: If the Courts as a whole are coming in under budget that is what we were looking to do. We would, of course, coordinate with Mike and make sure that we are all on the same page to do it. Kay suggested that we create the paperwork now, create the positions just to get it done so it is one less thing that Personnel has to do when they are in December putting through all the paperwork changes at the end of the year. We are willing to wait until December if you would prefer to pull those and create those in December.

Mr. Hartwick: My own concern with that is the continuity of what this year's budget looks like when you create positions in our fiscal year what that does to our current year budget and how that is reflected ongoing. We will show this year ending with all of these positions as a part of this year's budget, which is not something that we budgeted for...

Ms. Thompson: Is it problematic if we create them in December?

Mr. Haste: As long as they are not effective until January.

Ms. Lengle: I was under the understanding that they were supposed to be starting late December so that they could be acclimated before the judges come in.

Mr. Haste: We don't have a budget. We don't have those approved yet. It is tough to create them in December until we have a budget for January. I assume that some of these will be, but I'm just saying that we are creating positions for which we don't have a budget yet.

Ms. Lengle: We can't start people if we don't have the positions.

Mr. Haste: I never had the intention of starting them in 2009.

Ms. Thompson: Even for a couple of days so they get their feet on the ground so when the judges start they are ready to start scheduling appointments.

Mr. Haste: Do you think the judges will be having cases right away?

Ms. Thompson: If I have my way they will.

Mr. Haste: I doubt that will happen.

Mr. Saylor: This is a Workshop and obviously...

Mr. Haste: This is one of those things that we have to work out.

Mr. Saylor: If we don't get it clarified by next week we can either pull it or vote it down.

Ms. Thompson: I have no problem creating them early in December. I have no vested interest in getting them done except that it was the hiring window and I thought...

Mr. Haste: I understand that as long as we have them starting in January and that is all contingent upon having a budget. There are some assumptions made here that may be accurate, but we don't have a budget.

Ms. Thompson: How else would we do it?

Mr. Haste: It is something that we have to deal with.

Mr. DiFrancesco: You create them effective with the new budget year. There will be a budget in place.

Mr. Hartwick: I would prefer to see it done when we set the positions starting the brand new fiscal year. It is a consistent transition and it accurately reflects the dollar amounts that have been budgeted in the previous year. If you do this you are mixing those funds from this year for personnel purposes even though you have overages. What categories are you going to be drawing from, how are you going to be putting them in the personnel line items? I just think from a continuity standpoint, we have done it every year as we create positions or talk about new positions that are part of the budget process and then the Salary Board goes ahead and creates those positions at the first meeting in January.

Ms. Lingle: That would be January 6, 2010. They were hoping to have them start before that.

Ms. Thompson: They will start work before that date, because the judges are sworn in on the 4th. The staff will be in place on the 4th. We do need them before the 6th, unless you want to do it retro. What I will do is go back to the President Judge and make sure it is okay that they are all starting that first day in January and then I'll get back to you to see how you want to handle it.

Mr. Haste: That's alright.

Mr. DiFrancesco: If the budget is passed.

Mr. Haste: We do it every year. Once the budget is passed any new positions created in the budget we put in that package and that is how we deal with it.

Ms. Thompson: Can you retro them to the 4th?

Mr. DiFrancesco: The budget would be passed.

Ms. Thompson: Normally the positions for 2010 are approved in January. We'll work it out.

Ms. Lengle: Any questions on the Personnel Packet? (There were none.)

There are two items under the Changes that I would like to request a vote on today. They are Items #54 and #55 due to the effective date.

It was moved by Mr. DiFrancesco and seconded by Mr. Hartwick that the Board approve Items #54 and #55 in today's Personnel Packet; motion carried.

PURCHASE ORDERS

Mr. Baratucci: Do you have any questions on the Purchase Order Packet that you received yesterday? As usual there are a few budget issues that we will fix before next week. It is there for your review and approval next week, unless you have any questions. (There were none.)

You should have also received with your Packet, the final 15 Remote Access Requisition requests from Adult Probation. That was the one that they divided into three. On the second batch you had Mike Potteiger come in and explain it. This will be the third batch.

Mr. Haste: The air cards.

Mr. Baratucci: Yes. They can be moved to next week for approval as well.

The last thing that I have is a little bit off the topic, I just wanted to make sure that you guys realize that my roommate, office mate is having his 40th birthday, the one and only Mr. Edgar Cohen. I know that he looks a lot older than 40, but really we did check his birth certificate and he really is only 40 today. I invite you to stop by and wish him a happy birthday and if you want any of his cake you better get there quick, because it is going fast.

Mr. Haste: Do the two of you share an office now?

Mr. Baratucci: We thought about knocking out a little hole. It would have to be a big hole. So, happy birthday to my buddy Edgar.

TRAINING PACKET

Mr. Haste: It looks like #1 and #7 we need to take action on.

Mr. Saylor: So I'm told, Items #1 and #7.

It was moved by Mr. DiFrancesco and seconded by Mr. Haste that the Board approve Items #1 and #7 of the Training Packet; motion carried.

ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

- A. Report of Act 44 Tax Fund. (*****A VOTE IS REQUESTED 11/18/09*****)
- B. Appointment of Mike Solomon to the Dauphin County Assessment Appeals Board. (*****A VOTE IS REQUESTED 11/18/09*****)

Mr. Haste: We have two items on the Agenda and a vote is requested for both. Item A is the Report of the Act 44 Tax Fund and the second is the appointment of Mike Solomon to the Dauphin County Assessment Appeals Board. Are there any questions? (There were none.)

It was moved by Mr. DiFrancesco and seconded by Mr. Haste that the Board approve Items for Discussion Items A and B, listed above; motion carried.

SOLICITOR'S REPORT – WILLIAM TULLY, ESQ.

Mr. Tully: There are no changes to the Revised Report, but happy to answer any questions you might have. (There were none.)

CHIEF CLERK'S REPORT – CHAD SAYLOR

Mr. Saylor: Commissioners, likewise, I have nothing unless there are any questions of me. (There were none.)

COMMISSIONERS' COMMENTS

Mr. DiFrancesco: Last night I attended a meeting at the Dauphin/Middle Paxton Ambulance Service. Six years ago, you may recall that I held a meeting among the ambulance service providers and the municipalities here in Dauphin County, because prior to us coming on board, say the 2003 timeframe, we had lost, I believe, as many as three ambulance services. It looked like the entire system was going to collapse. It was with mixed emotion that I say that it was six years before the next crisis really happened, but the fact of the matter is, that particular volunteer ambulance service remained a volunteer service. They were down to a core of maybe five or six active participants who were all getting up in years and all were coming to the realization that

they can no longer do the physical requirements. So, that ambulance service is now looking at their alternatives. It is a system that continues to be plagued by challenges, specifically in the volunteer area. Volunteers are just not there. The standards of education have grown considerably. The hour demands are incredible and in our changing society, unfortunately, there's a lot less volunteer spirit within that particular industry and a lot more young kids even coming out of school looking to be paid to do it. I just give you an update that it is a significant event. In all likelihood there will be a change coming in that geographic region.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Mr. Haste: We are again at the point in time in the meeting for public participation. Is there anyone in the audience that would like to address the Board? (There were none.)

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, it was moved by Mr. DiFrancesco and seconded by Mr. Haste that the Board adjourn.

Respectfully submitted,

Chad Saylor, Chief Clerk

Transcribed by: Richie-Ann Martz