



## Tioga County Worksession Minutes July 20, 2017 – 10:00 a.m.

### Legislators present:

Legislator Hollenbeck  
Legislator Huttleston  
Legislator Monell  
Legislator Mullen  
Legislator Roberts  
Legislator Standingger

### Absent:

Chair/Legislator Sauerbrey  
Legislator Sullivan  
Legislator Weston

### Guests:

None

### Staff present:

County Attorney Peter DeWind  
Legislative Clerk Maureen Dougherty  
Deputy Legislative Clerk Cathy Haskell  
Commissioner of Social Services Shawn Yetter (*departed @ 10:28 a.m.*)  
Deputy Commissioner of Social Services Gary Grant (*departed @ 10:28 a.m.*)  
Director of Social Services Liz Myers (*departed @ 10:28 a.m.*)

Deputy Chair Hollenbeck called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m.

### Northwoods Child Welfare Software: Social Services –

Commissioner of Social Services Yetter reported he is in attendance today with Mr. Grant and Ms. Myers to discuss a software project for child welfare. Mr. Yetter reported they previously met with Chair Sauerbrey and Legislator Standingger, HHS Committee Chair, to discuss this project. In addition, Mr. Yetter reported Chief Accountant Hollenbeck, ITCS Director Camin, and County Attorney DeWind have also been apprised of this project. Mr. Yetter reported this is a product that has been in use and Chemung County was the first county to use this software, which has been very successful. Mr. Yetter reported this is a tablet-based product that would significantly reduce the amount of time caseworkers spend on paperwork and allow them more time to spend with the families and children. Mr. Yetter reported child welfare is the only area in DSS that is currently growing as the other eligibility programs are decreasing because of the positive things occurring in the County. Mr. Yetter reported child

welfare increase is significantly driven by the opioid epidemic and he and staff are currently looking at ways to address this without increasing staff. In addition to Chemung County, Mr. Yetter reported Livingston and Oswego Counties have most recently started using this software product.

Director of Social Services Myers distributed an executive summary and sales product overview. Ms. Myers reported every caseworker would be assigned an iPad that would provide them with all the information regarding the families they are visiting. Ms. Myers reported this will increase the caseworker's ability to recall information, as well as directly document all of their work at the time it is occurring in the field. This would reduce caseworker travel and staff time by eliminating the need to travel back to the office to do the required paperwork following the visit.

Legislator Standinger requested Ms. Myers provide an overview of the hotline process and requirements, as some of the Legislators may not be aware of what transpires. Ms. Myers reported child abuse and neglect reports come in through Albany, NY where it is determined whether a hotline call is reportable. If deemed reportable, the hotline call is transmitted to the local district. Ms. Myers reported once Tioga County receives the call, a caseworker is assigned. The caseworker is responsible for taking the paper documents with them to visit the family and must respond within 24 hours. Ms. Myers reported 7-day safety assessments are required to be completed, as well as risk assessments within a certain timeframe followed by case closings within a certain timeframe. Ms. Myers reported this software product would enable supervisors and caseworkers better communication and ability to respond more efficiently while the caseworker is in the field.

Ms. Myers reported the current practice for relaying information from a supervisor to a caseworker is via phone with the caseworker having to write the information. This software product would allow the supervisor to send information to the caseworker, as well as the ability for the caseworker to retrieve other documents such as court orders. In addition, this software will allow for electronic signatures for families to sign releases of information, consents for treatment, etc. This electronic process would result in paper reduction. Ms. Myers reported the iPad also has the ability to take pictures which would assist in the eligibility determinations for foster care placements.

Deputy Director Grant reported another benefit is the scanning of all these documents. Mr. Grant reported the one area that continues to grow in terms of records management is child welfare. Mr. Grant reported these documents will all be scanned resulting in less records management needs.

Legislator Monell inquired as to whether there is a server that will store all the information. Mr. Grant reported this server will connect into the NYS network, which houses the child welfare software system. Mr. Grant reported this is key as without this connection, the concept will not work. Mr. Grant reported if DSS were to move forward with this software product, a request will need to be made to NYS to connect into the network. Mr. Yetter reported DSS looked into this product approximately 1.5 years ago, but did not follow through as it was unknown whether there was support from the State at the time. However, Mr. Yetter reported the State is much more supportive and is doing the download of the software that houses all the child

welfare system. Mr. Yetter reported this is most likely going to happen at some time by the State's direction, therefore, DSS would like to drive this process and be proactive.

Legislator Roberts inquired about connectivity in the County's rural areas such as Berkshire and Richford. Mr. Grant reported all the iPads will be on a data plan. Mr. Grant reported there may be dead spots where there is no connectivity, however, the system is designed to store any information entered until connectivity is available. Regardless of connectivity at the time, caseworkers will still be able to do all the entry, however, in terms of retrieving documents, this could be an issue. Mr. Grant reported most of the caseworkers are familiar with where the dead spots are in the County and can make arrangements in the event retrieval of a document was critical while in the field. Legislator Roberts inquired as to whether the caseworkers can connect via Wi-Fi while in the homes. Mr. Grant reported this is possible, however, not sure this is ideal. Mr. Grant reported in terms of security he does not believe connecting to individual Wi-Fi accounts is the best way to proceed.

Legislator Mullen reported as the State moves forward with this software program, do you foresee the capability for the software to be enhanced or improved as this software program grows. Mr. Grant reported this software product is specific to the child welfare world and is not specific to New York State. Mr. Grant reported this company is located in Ohio and they are expanding into New York State. Mr. Grant reported he does not foresee this as an issue.

Mr. Grant reported there are two components; software and support. Mr. Grant reported this system is going to work similar to Munis in terms of the County purchasing the software and the company being on-site for two months working with the DSS staff. Mr. Grant reported the first year cost to purchase the software and support is approximately \$500,000. Mr. Grant reported this is child welfare and in this world he can draw down approximately 62% in revenues for approximately \$300,000 leaving a remaining local share of \$188,000. Mr. Grant reported the request will be for the local share to be drawn from the County's capital software reserve account. Mr. Grant reported the current balance in this software reserve account is approximately \$350,000, according to the information received from Ms. Hollenbeck. Mr. Grant reported the local share of \$188,000 would pay for the initial first year costs. In regards to hardware, Mr. Grant reported the original quote from the company is \$105,000, which includes two dedicated servers. However, Mr. Grant met with Mr. Camin and he can provide DSS with virtual servers on the County side that will connect with the State side, therefore, saving the County the expense of purchasing the two dedicated servers through the company. Mr. Grant reported through Verizon, the County's carrier, we can secure iPads for \$380.00 each and a shared data plan for \$605.00/month. Mr. Grant reported he wants to confirm the hardware estimate with Mr. Camin, however, believes this is close. Mr. Grant reported the hardware consists of purchasing 29 iPads, which will accommodate all of the caseworkers and supervisors. Mr. Grant reported, according to Ms. Hollenbeck, there is approximately \$48,000 in the capital hardware reserve account. In terms of ongoing costs, Mr. Grant reported the annual maintenance and support is \$46,000 plus the ongoing costs for the shared data plan. Mr. Grant reported the ongoing costs would be addressed in the annual DSS budget process. Mr. Grant reported another benefit of this product is job satisfaction and turnover.

Mr. Yetter reported, to date, there is a 33% increase in calls since last year, but we have been growing over several years at a 10% increase. Mr. Yetter reported for several years in a row

there has been State legislation that would mandate caseload sizes on the county level. This legislation has always made it to the Governor's desk, but has never been signed. However, it is at the Governor's desk again and there is more pressure from state and national unions to sign this legislation. Mr. Yetter reported there is significant concern that the Governor will sign it this year. Mr. Yetter reported the Governor signing this legislation would mandate significant changes on the number of caseworkers needed to be in compliance. Historically, Tioga County DSS has been around 15 cases per caseworker.

Mr. Yetter reported he has discussed the RFP issue with Mr. DeWind and whether a RFP is necessary as this company is the only vendor at this time offering this software product. Mr. Grant reported Livingston County did a RFP that included language for counties such as ours to piggyback. Mr. Grant reported some county attorneys are in agreement with this concept and others are not. Mr. Grant reported Oswego County is sole sourcing the bid, as there is only one vendor at this time. Mr. Grant reported we have three options: RFP, sole source, or piggyback and believes additional discussion is necessary with Mr. DeWind on our approach. Mr. DeWind reported the RFP process is the safest approach when dealing with the State Comptroller's Office. Mr. DeWind reported if a RFP comes back in an unsatisfactory way then you can proceed in a different manner. Mr. DeWind reported since this is the only vendor we would be fine with sole source as well piggyback, however, it requires more investigation as to how this was let in the first place. Mr. DeWind reported if you have confidence in what you are going to end up with at the end of the process, the RFP is most compliant with Section 103 of the General Municipal Law. Mr. DeWind reported if there are any federal funds involved then the federal investigators in an audit process would rather see full and complete bidding, therefore, RFP is the safest approach. Mr. Yetter confirmed there would be federal funds involved.

Legislative Clerk Dougherty reported Mr. Camin has negotiated a 3-year maintenance cost with the County's vendors as a means of saving money and inquired as to whether there is any benefit to do the same with this vendor. Mr. Grant reported these are the quotes provided, however, if the County chooses to move forward with this process certainly we will meet with them for further negotiations.

Mr. Yetter reported he would like to prepare and present a resolution at the HHS Committee meeting on August 8, 2017 and allow the Legislature the opportunity for further discussion at that time. All legislators were in favor of a resolution forthcoming in August.

Ms. Dougherty inquired about the resolution process and whether separate resolutions will be required; one resolution to draw funds from the capital software and hardware reserve accounts and another authorizing the purchase of the software and hardware. Mr. DeWind reported one resolution would be sufficient.

### **Approval of Worksession Minutes – July 6, 2017**

Legislator Monell moved to approve the July 6, 2017 Legislative Worksession minutes as written, seconded by Legislator Mullen with Legislators Hollenbeck, Huttleston, Monell, Mullen, Roberts, and Standinger voting yes with Legislators Sauerbrey, Sullivan, and Weston being absent. Motion carried.

**Action Items:**

**ACTION ITEMS FROM JULY 6, 2017:**

**ACTION ITEM #1 – 7/6/17 – Paying Costs for Demolished Properties –**

Legislator Monell reported this action item has been completed in regards to request of information, as the data has been provided to the Legislature. However, the Legislature agreed this action item should be carried forward for further discussion and to keep this topic at the forefront. **This action item will be carried forward from the July 20, 2017 worksession.**

Informationally, Mr. DeWind reported he went to a Western County Attorneys Association meeting last week and there is current litigation occurring in Monroe County regarding this topic as they made the decision to no longer collect garbage, basic maintenance on abandon properties, and demolition costs for the towns. Mr. DeWind reported this decision has resulted in push back from the Towns of Brighton and Irondequoit, as both have pending lawsuits against Monroe County as to whether the County is able to determine these are not taxes but rather special assessments. Mr. DeWind reported this would not solve the issue with the village taxes.

**Other –** No topics for discussion.

**Executive Session -**

Motion by Legislator Mullen seconded by Legislator Standinger to move into Executive Session to discuss a litigation and negotiations matter. Motion carried to go into Executive Session at 10:31a.m. County Attorney DeWind remained in attendance.

Executive Session adjourned at 10:44 a.m.

Meeting adjourned at 10:44 a.m.

Next worksession is scheduled for Thursday, August 10, 2017.

Respectfully submitted by,  
Cathy Haskell  
Deputy Legislative Clerk