

HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE
Special Meeting
October 13, 2015
NOT APPROVED

Committee Members Present: K. LaForge, D. Pullen, S. Burt, D. Decker, C. Jessup, C. Crandall (Absent: T. O'Grady)

Others Present: M. Alger, H. Budinger, V. Grant, K. Graves, D. Healy, T. Miner, B. Riehle, T. Ross, R. Scott, D. Root, N. Ungermann

Media Present: No media present.

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 3:12 p.m. by Human Services Committee Chairman Kevin LaForge.

Bonadio Group

Legislator LaForge introduced Bonadio Group Manager Tim Ball and Principal, Municipal Consultant Nick Mazza. Mr. Mazza explained they presented to the County about a year ago a larger scope of work. As a result of the last presentation and numerous meetings with the County, Bonadio Group proposes examining three areas within the County's Department of Social Services. Mr. Mazza highlighted Bonadio Group's success in looking at Montgomery and Sullivan Counties' Department of Social Services. Bonadio Group was able to save \$400,000 in Foster Care in one of the counties. Mr. Ball highlighted the rapport they have with Allegany County, and past success with saving the County money in 2007. Mr. Ball stated Bonadio Group helps local agencies save money, and become more efficient. He stated Department of Social Services Commissioner Vicki Grant met with Bonadio Group to look at cost-saving opportunities within the Department. As a result, three areas were highlighted: Foster Care, Chronic Care, and Fraud Department.

Bonadio Group will look at all ninety-eight children in Foster Care. They will specifically look at the eligibility including documentation of the children. Mr. Ball stated if they discover one to two children that are eligible for Federal funding; the savings would pay for the entire proposal. Ms. Grant commented there is an increase in foster care, and it is hard to determine eligibility. It also crosses over into different County departments. Mr. Mazza noted cases within the last twenty-four months can be re-opened to look at eligibility.

Mr. Ball stated in Chronic Care, Bonadio Group will look at Medicaid eligibility. They will examine best practices, forms, trends, and the organization of the Department. It is important that assets and income are properly documented because they are used before Medicaid starts paying for nursing homes. Ms. Grant stated it takes a lot of staff time to look at eligibility.

In the Fraud Department, Bonadio Group will look at program integrity. Mr. Ball described the need to be aggressive, but gentle when looking at fraud cases in the County. Ms. Grant stated she is looking for efficiency in this department. It also effects other departments such as the Sheriff's Department and the Court System.

Mr. Ball described the five step process in examining these areas. First, Bonadio Group will interview all staff. Then, they will look at the daily staff duties, policies and procedures, and job requirements. Next, Bonadio Group will test the files. They will randomly pick cases and test them. Bonadio Group will look at the length of the application process, review paperwork, and quality control procedures. Fourth, Bonadio Group will communicate with Ms. Grant once a month, and then present the findings after every area is examined. Mr. Ball stated it should take a month to look at one area, so it would be a total of three months to complete the project.

Finally, a report including findings, cost savings, and recommendations will be presented to the County. He stated he would start the process in January 2016, and present to the County in May or June 2016.

Legislator LaForge stated the project will cost \$24,000 to examine all three areas. It was also noted, if the County wanted to look at the whole Department of Social Services it would cost \$72,000. Mr. Ball and Mr. Mazza stated some of the cost may be reimbursable through Department of Social Services funding streams. Legislator Burt questioned who made the decision to look at only three areas in the Department of Social Services. Mr. Mazza stated Bonadio Group met with County Administrator Mitch Alger and Commissioner Vicki Grant to focus on the three areas in the Department of Social Services. Mr. Mazza stated it was the areas that had the most opportunity for cost savings. Legislator Burt asked if this was successful could other Departments be examined. Mr. Alger stated it was a possibility. Legislator Graves asked if factors such as physical environment, specifically cramped work spaces, would be examined when looking at efficiency. Mr. Ball stated yes; they would look at location of the offices, physical environment, and phone procedures. Legislator Decker asked Ms. Grant what prompted this discussion. Ms. Grant responded she was asked to look at efficiencies in her Department a couple of years ago. Legislator Healy asked if there was money set aside to pay for this project. Ms. Grant responded she had set aside \$5,000, but she will have to ask for more money to cover the project. Mr. Alger stated he budgeted \$24,000 for the three areas. Legislator Ungermann noted some of it may be reimbursable. Mr. Ball stated the Chronic Care and Foster Care costs may be reimbursable. Motion to direct County Attorney Tom Miner to prepare a tentative contract with Bonadio Group to examine the three areas in the Allegany County Department of Social Services was approved on a motion by Legislator Burt, seconded by Legislator Jessup, and carried. **Prepare Resolution**

Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the committee, the meeting was adjourned at 3:49 p.m. following a motion by Legislator Burt, seconded by Legislator Decker, and carried.

Respectfully submitted,
Rebecca Scott, Secretary to the Clerk of the Board
Allegany County Board of Legislators