



Committee on Seniors & Constituencies

~AGENDA~

Tuesday, May, 16, 2017

10:00 AM

Committee Chair: David J. Tubiolo

Committee Room, 148 Martine Avenue, 8th Floor, White Plains, NY 10601

www.westchesterlegislators.com

CALL TO ORDER

The committee on Seniors & Constituencies will meet on Tuesday, May 16, 2017 at 10:00 am.

MINUTES APPROVAL

1. Tuesday, March 21, 2017 at 10:00 AM

I. ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

The committee will discuss the reasons prescription drugs cost too much; Chair Tubiolo will have an update on the opioids crisis and the most recent movie night.

II. OTHER BUSINESS

Unfinished Business and any other agenda items to come before the Committee.

III. RECEIVE & FILE

ADJOURNMENT



Committee on Seniors & Constituencies

~MINUTES~

Tuesday, March, 21, 2017

10:00 AM

Committee Chair: David J. Tubiolo

DRAFT

CALL TO ORDER

With a quorum present, Legislator Tubiolo called the meeting to order at 10:20 am.

Table with 4 columns: Attendee Name, Title, Status, Arrived. Rows include David J. Tubiolo (Chair, Present), Sheila Marcotte (D10 Legislator, Present), MaryJane Shimsky (D12 Legislator, Present), Alfreda Williams (D8 Legislator, Present), and Michael Kaplowitz (D4 Legislator, Absent).

Others In Attendance: BOL: Yolanda Valencia, Mary Jackson CEO: Ann Darcy, WC Dept. Of Senior Programs GUESTS: Carolyn Fluckinger, Family Service Society of Yonkers; Carol Christiansen, Drug Crisis in Our Backyard; Dorothy Thompson, FSSY

MINUTES APPROVAL

On motion of Legislator Shimsky seconded by Legislator Marcotte the minutes were approved 4- 0.

- 1. Tuesday, February 21, 2017 at 10:00 AM

I. ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

Legislator David Tubiolo invited Carol Christiansen, Director of Development of Drug Crisis in Our Backyard, to speak on the follow up about the opioid crisis. In the previous meeting it was discussed that about 36% of opioid overdose death were seniors. Legislator Tubiolo informed the committee that he is working with the Mayor of Yonkers on dropbox forms and is in the process of setting them up. The police department has access to them and they will be brought to senior centers at least once every two months so that seniors can get rid of any excess medication and to make them aware. Senator Terrence Murphy has been doing a lot to fix the current situation and has been very supportive with this epidemic. He has drop boxes setup in police stations in towns around northern Westchester. Legislator Tubiolo then invited Carol Christiansen to speak. She was at a roundtable with other organizations that also recognized the importance of battling the drug epidemic with seniors. The organization she works for is trying to bring awareness about the drug epidemic. She spoke of a forum to be held on April 6th, with Drug Crisis in Our Backyard, Ask Alliance for Safe Kids, and Senator Murphy. Legislator Tubiolo thanked Legislator Shimsky for bringing a few things to their

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attention. He then discussed his plans to stay on top of the issue and continues with action and prevention. Legislator Tubiolo read some statistics that stated that substance abuse is projected to double 2.8 million in 2007 to 5.7 million in 2020. The situation is only going to get worse and they will work to help, make people aware, prevent and act. Carol Christiansen mentioned that doctors should also be made aware of the situation because they are the ones prescribing some of these drugs. Legislator Shimsky suggested that they also work on teaching people how to be smart medical consumers. Carol Christiansen spoke about how people are only allowed to receive 10 or 5 day supplies of opioids as opposed to receiving 60 day supplies like before. Legislator Tubiolo stated that pharmaceutical companies also need to be held accountable for their involvement in this epidemic. Carol Christiansen shared that Big Pharma was fined because they told doctors that oxy was not addictive which, was false information. Legislator Shimsky and Legislator Tubiolo reflected on the idea that opioid have been a part of world history multiple times and it has never done any good. Legislator Tubiolo hopes to have the drop boxes set up by either March or April. All he looks to do is protect our seniors. Senior centers also have to be made aware. Legislator Shimsky asked what would make someone, a medical professional, qualified to go into a senior center and spread awareness. Legislator Alfreda Williams spoke about creating a mailing or some sort of awareness campaign to help. Legislator Tubiolo then invited Ann Darcy from Senior Services and Programs, Carolyn Fluckinger, and Dorothy Thompson up to the table to speak. Legislator Tubiolo gave a shout out to two very dedicated seniors. Carolyn and Dorothy spoke about the Kinship Cares program, which provides financial support and other support for caregivers. The Westchester Grandparents Coalition was started to mobilize resources and information and provides training. School clothing and holiday gifts are also provided and many organizations have helped to collect these resources. The Youth bureau provides support and assistance as well. Kinship refers to family, such as grandparent, aunt, and uncle, raising children. Most of the caregivers are older grandmothers with a fixed income and maybe multiple health problems raising the kids alone. They are doing this because the parent is unable to provide care. The reasons for this range from incarceration to mental health issues. The children sometimes also have special needs. There are currently in Westchester only 68 kids in the kinship care program as of November. There are 7300 relative caregivers raising children in Westchester. About three fifths of those are grandparents. The amount that the caregiver gets to raise the children outside the foster care system is a lot less than what is given to caregivers of kids raised within the system who receive on average \$26,000 a year and that number can go up to \$56,000 a year if the child has special needs. They also get services that include transportation and counseling. The outcomes of young people are better for those who live with a relative outside the foster care system as opposed to those raised within the system with a foster parent. The Kinship program exists to help caregivers. They need to know about the programs available to them and how to apply to them. They also help grandparents with any school issues that may arise and how they can help. They provide regular support groups for the caregivers so that they can have other people

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they can relate to. They have two English support groups and one Spanish support group in Yonkers, and one English group in New Rochelle. As needs arise, they will continue to expand the support groups countywide. They also have parenting training for caregivers. Legislator Tubiolo asked if there were different issues between immigrant or foreign born and American born or if they were all the same. Carolyn answered stating that the issues were the same. The program recently received a grant that is targeted to be responsive to Spanish speaking immigrants. This new grant allows them to help those who maybe be undocumented as opposed to other grants that only allow them to serve those who are citizens or have green cards. They assure that the information of status will remain confidential. They also have family youth programs during school breaks and a summer program that sees that the kids get school clothing. They also help these families obtain food and transportation if necessary. They aim to help them become independent and self sustainable. They have an advocacy project called the Grand Power Advocacy project where people have learned to advocate for themselves and other people. Dorothy Thomson is a member of this project who raised five grandchildren and currently is raising a grandchild who is special education. She took the kids from their mother who was in and out of jail. She is an advocate and volunteers in the school system and is a mentor in the kindergarten. Twice a month she is in the support group where she can talk to others going through the same situation. She is really appreciative of all the help and support she has received from Carolyn and the program. Carolyn discussed how they are trying to get their state funding renewed and asked for the continued support of the legislators to keep this program funded. September has become Kids Care Month in New York State. They will have recognition and asks if the legislators will consider a Proclamation for this month. It lets caregivers know that what they do is important and educates the public about this topic. Legislator Shimsky suggested an Eblast letting the community know that there are resources available to those who are in this situation and where those who want to help can help. It was brought up that not all caregivers have internet access to which Legislator Shimsky said that there would be other ways to communicate this information to the community. Legislator Sheila Marcotte then asked who set the rates for the money received by caregivers in or out of the foster care system. Carolyn said she would get back to her with the exact information. She stated her desire to work with DSS to help problems like these. There are very few Kin gap care cases that allow for more autonomy for caregivers. Legislator Williams then asked if anything had been done to increase the available resources to kinship caregivers. Carolyn stated that there has been. At one point DSS was able to provide grandparents grants that they could use to get anything that the child may have need but as a result of a drop in the economy they are no longer available. There have been certain programs that are needed but are not available such as, summer camps, after school programming, and tutoring. They are pushing at a state level for refunding of the kinship programs. Legislator Marcotte also suggested Eblasts to help provide and inform the community of resources that may be available. Ann Darcy agreed with advocating for funding of the Kinship programs at a state level and agreed to email more information with regards to the programs position

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in the budget. She then asked Legislator Tubiolo if the dropbox program he had dropbox program he was working on was available in municipalities outside of Yonkers. He stated that it was more of a collaboration between himself and the mayor of Yonkers. Ann then stated that it would be a good idea to get this program into senior centers. Legislator Williams stated that there are drop boxes within the municipalities police departments that seniors could use. It was agreed that ways should be found to make them more accessible.

II. OTHER BUSINESS

Unfinished Business and any other agenda items to come before the Committee.

III. RECEIVE & FILE

ADJOURNMENT

Moved by Legislator Tubiolo seconded by Legislator Marcotte the Committee adjourned at 11:04 am

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