

**HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE**  
**June 18, 2024**

Present: Jessica Moser, Chair; Thomas Kalamas, Vice-Chair; Vincent Nortz; Josh Leviker; and Barry Lyndaker.

Legislator Moser called the meeting to order at 1:49 p.m.

Legislator Moser moved to approve the May 21, 2024, committee meeting minutes as recorded, seconded by Legislator Kalamas, and carried.

**IGT overview – Eric Virkler, Treasurer**

Eric Virkler handed out a one-page report on the eight-year summary of IGT payments. Looking at the last 4 years it has been a negative \$5,163,844.00 on the budget. There was discussion on the difficulty of estimating payments and budgeting for this type of expense. Once the amount is requested by the State the Hospital can usually tell if it is high or low. Legislator Osborne suggested budgeting about \$4,000,000.00 each year because that seems to be what the average is. County Manager Ryan Piche pointed out that it is a tough balance because the county doesn't want to pre-charge the taxpayers, especially with a healthy General Fund balance to help absorb fluctuations.

Legislator Kalamas questioned if there could be a special reserve fund for just IGT payments, Eric Virkler responded that it would be something to think about as the General Fund balance is what has been historically used. Ryan Piche felt that it would be a good idea. Legislator Nortz questioned if the County was current with all payments, Eric Virkler responded that the county is but there will always be reconciliations. Ryan Piche responded that the 2022 reconciliation comes due in 2025, so in fact the county will always be behind due to the reconciliation process. The silver lining is that the Hospital, through IGT payments has received approximately \$14,000,000.00.

**Lewis County Youth Bureau Services – Caitlyn Lawler,**

Caitlyn Lawler began by stating that the Lewis County Youth Bureau Advisory Board was established February 5, 1997, by adopted resolution from the Board of Legislators. The board is made up of members from government, non-government, and student representatives from Lewis County School Districts. The role of the Youth Bureau is to make recommendations to the Board of Legislators and County departments regarding the provision of services to youth in Lewis County. It gives young people the voice to be heard and development of leadership skills to make a positive change in their community.

The Goals and Objectives are that the board shall assist with the preparation of the County Comprehensive Plan for Youth Services; Continually assess youth needs and

interests; Consult with the Youth Bureau Director to inventory community resources capable of meeting youth needs and interests and to encourage collaboration among those community resources; Plan for and encourage the development of services considered essential for meeting needs of youth and endorse modifications of current services; Consult with the Youth Bureau Director in securing and granting financial aid to public and private agencies and municipalities to expand current services or to create new services for youth; Consult with the Youth Bureau Director to assist with the monitoring and evaluation of funded programs; and the powers, duties, and responsibilities of the Board are as defined in Section 165.1 (e) of the Rules and Regulations of the New York State Division for Youth.

Youth Board members are expected to understand current youth needs and services; share with the Youth Board information on local youth activities and concerns; recommend how state aid available from the NYS Office of Children and Family Services to Lewis County should be allocated to youth programs sponsored by private, non-profit agencies, municipalities, or school districts; and share information about available county services and funding with local boards and youth groups. The current members of the Youth Bureau Advisory Board are Caitlin Lawler, Director & Ex-Officio; Legislator Nortz, Ex-Officio; Lisa Rennie, Chairperson; Ward Dailey; John Exford; Cassie Forbus; Michele LeDoux; Mike Leviker; April Seymour Ritz; Hailey Meagher, Harrisville student; Adah Simpson, Beaver River student; Gavin Tufo, Copenhagen student; and Brett Vogt, Copenhagen student.

Funding comes from the Office of Children & Family Services (OCFS) whose mission statement is “The Office of Children and Family Services serves New York’s public by promoting the safety, permanency and well-being of our children, families and communities. We will achieve results by setting and enforcing policies, building partnerships, and funding and providing quality services.” There are four funding streams through OCFS, Youth Development Program Funds (YDP); Youth Sports and Education Opportunity Funding (YSEF); Youth Sports and Education Opportunity Funding Infrastructure (YSEFI); and Youth Team Sports Allocation (YTS).

Youth Development Funds are for youth under 21 years of age. It is for new or existing programs related to one of the following: employment opportunities, life skills programs; alcohol & substance prevention; physical & emotional health; academic support; youth leadership/empowerment; juvenile delinquency prevention; teen pregnancy prevention; cultural competency; safe place out of school; abuse & neglect prevention/supports; anger management/conflict resolution; and mentoring/community service/youth activism. The Youth Sports & Education Funds are for youth ages 6 to 17. This funding can be used for coaches/instructors/direct staff/mentors, equipment, educational programming costs, facility/field/space, and a maximum of 15% of funds can be for administrative/overhead costs for implementing program. Data is collected through the registration process and the program must have a child protective policy in place. The outcomes that are measured are how many youths participate,

what percentage of youths complete the program, and what percent report their ability to socialize/interact improved.

Youth Team Sports funding is for youth under 18 years of age. The program must be organized physical activity in which groups of two or more individuals are in competition with two or more opposing individuals. Funds can cover coaches/instructors/direct staff/mentors, referee fees, purchase of equipment or uniforms, capital investment; instruction or coaching to support youth's ability to participate, facility/field space, and a maximum of 10% may be used to support administrative/overhead costs by municipal youth bureau. The 2024 allocations for funding were reviewed.

Youth Development Funds (YDF) was allocated \$23,399.00 in 2024. This funding was awarded as follows: Lewis County Suicide Prevention Coalition was given \$5,399 to purchase Gizmo's Pawesome Guide to Mental Health which are books on positive mental health to read to all 3<sup>rd</sup> graders in the county; Beaver Falls Beach was awarded \$2,000 to cover the cost of insurance and lifeguard salaries; 4-H Summer & After School Programs was awarded \$1,000 for STEAM curriculum for after school and summer programs; and Planned Parenthood Peer Education Program was awarded \$15,000 for open, paid positions for youth peer educators in Lewis County. Youth Sports and Education (YSEF) was allocated \$16,081.00. This funding was awarded as follows: Winter Recreation for Town/Village of Lowville was awarded \$7,819 for new skates; and Summer Recreation for Town/Village of Lowville was awarded \$8,262 for lifeguards, added transportation to Croghan for pond use as Lowville pool is not available this year.

Youth Sports and Education Infrastructure (YSEIF) was allocated \$10,344.00 and the funding was awarded as follows: Lewis County Hockey and Skating Refrigeration project was awarded \$10,344 for a new chiller. Youth Team Sports was allocated \$14,797.00 and the funding was awarded as follows: Lowville Youth Lacrosse was awarded \$10,797 for jerseys, equipment, scholarships, tournaments, etc. and Double Play Community Center was awarded \$4,000 for basketballs, volleyball and soccer equipment needs along with staff/coach salaries.

Lewis County allocated \$12,500.00 and the funding was awarded as follows: Girls Youth Softball was awarded \$2,500 for AED's & training, equipment, uniforms, insurance, etc.; Systems of Care was awarded \$2,500 for the parent and youth summit for fall of 2024; Summer Recreation for Town/Village of Lowville was awarded \$1,155.60 for extra costs of changes this year, and adding in snacks/meals; Winter Recreation for Town/Village of Lowville was awarded \$2,400 for new skates in popular sizes; NYS Vehicle Instructor Training was awarded \$1,544.40 for carabineers for every youth that attends a safety course; Lowville Elementary School was awarded \$1,000 for books for different ages to stock new book vending machines for students; and Lowville Free Library was awarded \$1,400 for bilingual story time materials.

To make sure that funds are distributed fairly the Youth Bureau must have a quorum when voting; applications for funding are sent out to members before the meeting so they can review and formulate any questions they may have. There are going to be more presentations by applicants before voting in the future. It is up to the board to best decide where funds will be allocated for positive youth development to a program/service that will use the funding properly and efficiently. The programs will be monitored, and site visits will be performed. New York State must approve of all allocations to programs and services as well. Press releases are done upon funds being opened and also after funds have been distributed.

Caitlin concluded by explaining that the Summer Recreation Program for Town/Village of Lowville runs from July 8<sup>th</sup> through August 16<sup>th</sup> and is funded through several outside sources. They are also expanding into Croghan this year with over 200 kids signed up already. This program serves kids from all over the county not just the Town or Village of Lowville.

Legislator Nellenback voiced his opinion that the Summer Recreation Program is helping kids which is absolutely fantastic, but it is really centered around Lowville. He gets complaints from constituents because of that fact. He feels that a certain amount of money should be allocated each year and then divided among the Towns specifically for youth related activities. This way each Town receives something for their youth population. The Town of Leyden gives funding to their two school districts for summer youth programs. It is important that the funding be earmarked specifically for youth activities and not just used by the Town for any purpose. Legislator Kalamas questioned whether this would be a one-time allocation or if it would be yearly, Legislator Nellenback responded that it could start as a one-time allocation for 2024 but then might be a budgeted line item in the future.

There was further discussion about this option. Legislator Dolhof voiced his opinion that perhaps the best thing would be to give the Youth Bureau more funding for them to handle as they seem to have a good system in place to distribute funds. There was discussion on past payments to Towns and how the funding was used. IN order to calculate appropriate amounts, the data needs to be updated which Jenny Jones and Caitlin Lawler will work on. Legislator Nellenback pointed out that the Towns really need to be educated on the Youth Bureau and the funding opportunities they offer. The Committee decided to table this discussion and idea for next month in order to collect more recent data and calculate the breakout of possible funding.

The following dockets were reviewed:

1. Authorizing MOU between Lewis County Community Services Department and Jefferson County Community Services Department for a bi-county Mobile Crisis Program as outlined by the NYS OMH in its state aid funding provided to both counties for behavioral health mobile crisis services.

AYE   5             NAY   0

2. Authorizing an agreement with the Alcohol and Substance Abuse Council of Jefferson County, Inc. d/b/a Pivot to develop and service an OASAS Substance Misuse Prevention Program for Lewis County residents, including the administration of the Bach Harrison Prevention Needs Assessment (PNA) Survey to 6<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, and 12<sup>th</sup> graders in the five school districts in Lewis County every other year at a cost of \$300,000.00 per year.

AYE   5              NAY   0  

3. Awarding the bid and authorizing an agreement with United Radio, Inc. to provide 360-degree surveillance coverage and remote access via the microwave radio system at ten (10) identified County 911 Tower sites at a cost of \$191,887.85, to be completed by December 31, 2024.

AYE   5              NAY   0  

There being no other business to come before the committee, Legislator Moser moved to adjourn at 2:36 p.m., seconded by Legislator Nortz, and carried.

Respectfully submitted,  
Cassandra Moser, Clerk of the Board