

**Tompkins County Office for the Aging
Advisory Committee Meeting**

July 22, 2024

Hybrid

9:30am

Members present: Hart, Lesser, Roe, Hultberg, Stamm

Liaisons: Hillson, Evans, Lynch, Champion

Staff: Monroe, Morse, Nelson

Public: Joe Milliman, Presenter

1. Hart called the meeting to order at 9:30am. No quorum.
2. COFA Update:
 - Submitted our budgets. We were tasked with submitting a 5% reduction budget and a maintenance of effort budget. We are in a pretty good position. Both have been accepted and we will have a budget meeting with Admin on the 30th.
 - Even with the 5% reduction, we did not have any major cuts to staffing or programming
 - Farmer's Market Coupons are in full swing. Have gotten about 400 coupons out, about 400 more to go. Hitting food pantries, senior housing, etc.
 - COFA Cooling Program. Helps people get air conditioners for their home. Follows same eligibility guidelines for HEAP.
 - Matt Nelson, new Outreach Worker. Works on PERS, falls assessments, outreach. Will be working on HEAP and Farmer's Market Coupons.
 - We are currently interviewing for the open Ombudsman Program and Outreach Specialist and once completed will be looking to hire another Home Health Aide
 - Four Year Plan: NYSOFA just sent program instructions last week. Working on that to hopefully present some of it to this group at August meeting. Once we submit it, it goes through a lengthy NYSOFA review process.

Lesser asked once approved how the four-year plan is actually used? Monroe responded that the plan is our guiding document which sets out what our plans are, intentions for funding, who and how many we are supposed to serve with each funding stream, what programs, etc. It is updated every year, however if there are any significant changes or additions during the year, we need to submit an update to our plan. An example would be the closing of one of our Congregate meal sites.

Evans asked if we are still seeking an RD? Monroe responded that that has not yet been resolved. Had Registered Dietician who worked 8 hours a week who monitored our program and our contract. We are working with NYSOFA to figure out how this actually works. Not sure we need an additional RD. NYSOFA states that a contractor cannot monitor themselves. Our Association on Aging has hired and contracted with an RD to help counties oversee their contracts. Trying to see if that would work for our county.

- County recently adopted its Strategic Plan. Document was attached to the agenda. Will guide the county going forward with its mission and goals. Majority of what we do falls under the Health and Safety pillar. Also available online. Champion explained that it is a guiding document for departments and Legislators.

Champion asked if we had any effect from the Crowdstrike saga? Monroe stated she was not here on Friday but was in touch with our Deputy who reported no issues.

3. Liaison Reports:

a. Lynch: FLIC-

- Registry listing contact has changed to Cheryl Baker
- Have extra equipment; if you know of anyone who needs durable medical equipment long term contact FLIC. Can get for free.
- Working to have a mural on their building. Will fill in as the process proceeds.
- Consumer Directed Personal Assistance Program (CDPAP) is an aide program that is funded through Medicaid; FLIC is the Fiscal Intermediary for Tompkins County which means they do payroll, help aides get proper paperwork; every year the state looks at ways to cut that budget. This year they want to go to one fiscal intermediary (FI) for the whole state and they want it to be someone who operates out of state. Independent Living Centers were written in to continue operating for this service, but the details are still unclear of whether they'll be handling payroll, or just doing extra services people need, etc. Not best plan, other states who have gone to one FI have experienced loss of aides, clients experience loss of service, some having to go to nursing facilities. If you want to learn more and/or advocate, please contact Jan. State looking for April 2025 for the one FI to be operational.
- Friday the 26th, having celebration of the Americans with Disabilities Act at 1pm. Showing two movies, "Fixed" and "Remembering Willowbrook"

b. Monroe for Burger: Lifelong-

- Hired a new HIICAP Coordinator who will be starting on the 23rd.
- Catalog will be out on the website and hard copies available by August 15th.

c. Evans: Foodnet-

- Construction is well underway; progress is coming along; Ribbon cutting is planned for end of September
- Having back loading deck covered with a roof to be able to better use it all season long
- Have had some staffing challenges; people who have left their roles. Have filled 2 of the positions. Looking for outreach drivers. Information available on their website

d. Hillson: TCWH-

- Community resiliency mural now finished on COFA building; done to promote vaccination and awareness as well as a memorial to those we lost during the pandemic. It features Millie Clark Maynard, as she was one of the first older adults to get vaccinated for covid. Will be having a reveal of the mural at the end of August.
- Water fluoridation work: working on a report from survey they have completed
- Sent out an announcement about funding opportunities for Substance Use Prevention and Treatment services; Funding was previously provided to the Alcohol and Drug Council which was abruptly shut down several months ago; Detox Center has also been closed. Looking to reopen that and get a provider in there.

Hart asked the status of the Fall flu shot, covid shot? Will one shot cover both or will it still be separate? Hillson stated that she did not know that information offhand but will look into it and provide an update at the next meeting.

Lesser asked about the ongoing changes for housing for the homeless. Hillson stated that more recently their Environmental Health services have gotten involved with the homeless encampments in terms of what they are able to provide enforcement around. They are working closely with the city and the owners of the property. Role of the health department is around refuse or garbage and other materials that might be in an area that could be harmful to humans and their health. Issued a notice to clean up that area. City has drafted a plan for clean-up.

Champion added that the other part of that is the shelter situation. Looking at expanding our shelter opportunities. An RFQ went out to find a developer and designer to see what an expanded shelter would look like.

e. Champion TC Legislature-

- Legislature is not actively working on the budget yet. Difficult year. Departments are being asked to submit a maintenance of effort budget as well as a 5% decrease. Has never seen departments asked for that much of a decrease.
- Two historical statues are going up through the History Center and the County Historical Commission. The statues are of Francis Perkins and Lucy Brown, both historical women leaders from the area. August 17th having a celebration/unveiling. Francis Perkins will be located at the Breckenridge Place apartments and Lucy Brown will be at the Henry St. John building.

Lynch asked about the County reserve funding. Is there a policy about how you use that funding when things are tight? Champion responded that this is a source of much debate on the legislature. There is a fund balance policy. Not sure there is actually a policy on how you spend it.

Hart asked what the major drivers were that's causing them to be in a deficit position? Champion responded that a lot of it is NY State. The FMAP funding related to social services and the Medicaid that we used to get reimbursed for, the state has decided not to reimburse us anymore, and that's millions of dollars. There is a lot of uncertainty. Sales tax receipts are also way down.

4. Old Business: No old business but Monroe reported that INHS has a program called Plus One ADU for Accessory Dwelling Units. Helps low to moderate income homeowners develop accessory dwelling units or bring an existing ADU up to code.
5. New Business: None
6. Discussion: Joe Milliman, EMS Program Manager for Tompkins County:
 - At the 911 Center at the Department of Emergency Response
 - New Rapid Response Program now called Tompkins County EMS
 - When you call 911, appropriate resources will be dispatched, 911 call center monitors the call from start to finish
 - That is ultimately what should be happening however we are currently in a national EMS crisis-workforce shortages, job applications are down, other areas of the healthcare industry are able to offer EMS personnel higher wages for less responsibility
 - EMS is seeing a huge increase in operating costs while at the same time seeing a decrease in the amount of revenue coming in; current Medicare reimbursement rate does not even cover the cost of the 911 call, or the personnel that are on the ambulance
 - Around the country, EMS services are changing the way they operate. 49% of EMS services are seeing a lengthen in their response time because they don't have the amount of resources needed; 37% of agencies are implementing alternative responses to low acuities (not happening in Tompkins County or immediate surrounding counties) but in some places in NYS if you have a call that's not life or death, they may say it could take up to an hour before you see an ambulance.
 - 20% of EMS agencies are moved to a tier deployment model that includes Tompkins County which means calls are ranked from most important to low important
 - 23% of EMS agencies are moving from double paramedic buses which meant there were 2 paramedics to every ambulance to having just one paramedic; Longer shifts- 24-, 36-, and 48-hours shifts are commonplace
 - Developed the TC Rapid Medical Response program: allows a fully trained EMS provider to respond to the scene and initiate life-saving care while waiting for a transport agency to arrive or cancel the transporting agency if not needed- allowing them to respond to other emergencies

Hart asked if they are staged across the county? Milliman answered that they currently have 3 vehicles and a total of 9 staff. They are staged in the town of Lansing, the town of Caroline, and the 3rd one rotates between Enfield and Newfield. They operate M-F, 7am-7pm. Year to date just over 300 calls. Program has been successful. No intentions of expanding at this time but remain open to community discussions.

Lesser asked if the hours chosen for the program are because of staffing issues or is that when the majority of the calls come in? Milliman answered that they were chosen based off of staffing. All but the Ithaca Fire Department are volunteer departments so during the weekday those individuals are primarily at their day job and can't leave work to respond to calls.

7. Next meeting will be August 26, 2024, at 9:30am.

Meeting adjourned 11:15 am