

Allegheny County Council

*County of Allegheny
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Committee Meeting Minutes

Thursday, January 8, 2009

4:00 PM

4th Floor, Gold Room

Committee on Health & Human Services

***Joan Cleary, Chair; Jim Ellenbogen, Mike Finnerty, Nick Futules, Amanda Green,
Bob Macey, Chuck McCullough, and William Robinson - Members***

I. Call to Order

Summary: *The meeting was called to order at 4:00 PM*

Invited Guests:

Jim Flynn, County Manager or Designee

Dennis Biondo, Director, Kane Regional Centers

Michael Wojcik, Allegheny County Solicitor

Summary: *Invited guests in attendance: Derek Uber for Mr. Flynn; Mr. Biondo*

Recognized attendees: Mary Stevens, Administrator, Glen Hazel Kane

Council staff in attendance: John Mascio, Jared Barker, and Jennifer Liptak

II. Roll Call

Roll Call: Present: Michael Finnerty, Nick Futules, Bob Macey, Chair Joan Cleary, Committee Member John DeFazio, and Committee Member Jan Rea
Absent: Jim Ellenbogen, Amanda Green, Chuck McCullough, and William Robinson

III. Agenda Items

Motion

4562-09

Motion Expressing the Sense of Council of Allegheny County requesting the Health & Human Services Committee to conduct an extensive inquiry into the alleged abuse of a resident at the Kane Regional Center in Glen Hazel, and to explore the feasibility of periodic employment background checks to insure the safety and well-being of Kane Center residents.

Sponsors: Jan Rea

Action: Held in Committee

Discussion Topic:

The Committee will discuss the alleged patient abuse at the Kane Regional Hospital in Glen Hazel.

Summary: *Mr. Biondo provided the committee with an extensive summary of the policies and procedures that are followed at the Kane Regional Centers and what was done in response to allegations of abuse in November. He said that when he became aware of the possibility of abuse, administrators were instructed to notify the County Police and other appropriate authorities. He said that he could not provide more detail because there is an on-going investigation of this matter.*

He said that one of the steps he has taken was to make all Kane staff members aware of the emphasis on reporting abuse. He distributed a memorandum (on file) that he sent to all Kane staff members instructing them to promptly report any occurrence of abuse that they may witness. He said that they may file these complaints anonymously if they so

desire. He also produced a letter (on file) from the Pennsylvania Department of Health clearing the center of any "deficient practice".

Ms. Stevens told the committee that they are developing cultural diversity and sensitivity training for Kane employees and that they are planning a forum for patients' families to discuss any concerns they may have.

Ms. Rea, Mr. Futules, and Mr. Macey all asked Mr. Biondo to describe the background check process. Mr. Biondo said that currently, they follow state law which mandates that a background check be undertaken prior to any prospective employee before they can begin working. He said that the law has been in effect for 10 years and some employees may have begun working there prior to the enactment of that law. He said that they are considering conducting annual background checks on all employees and that he would share that information with Members of Council.

All Council members in attendance said that although they were very upset with the allegations of abuse, they were very pleased with the over all quality of care provided at the Kanes.

Ms. Stevens extended an open invitation to all Members of Council for a tour of the Kanes.

IV. Adjournment

Summary: *The meeting adjourned at 4:30 PM*