

# **Allegheny County Council**

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## **Committee Meeting Minutes**

**Wednesday, September 12, 2007**

**4:00 PM**

**Conference Room I**

## **Committee on Health & Human Services**

***Mike Finnerty, Chair; Joan Cleary, Susan Caldwell, Brenda Frazier, Bob Macey,  
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**  
**Dr. Bruce Dixon, Director, Health Department**  
**Marc Cherna, Director, Health & Human Services**  
**Ramon Rustin, Warden, Allegheny County Jail**

**Summary:** *Invited guests in attendance: Dana Phillips for Dr. Dixon; Marc Cherna, Ramon Rustin*

*Recognized attendees: Pat Valentine, Human Services*

*Council staff in attendance: John Mascio and Jared Barker*

**II. Roll Call**

***Roll Call:*** Present: Brenda Frazier, Bob Macey, William Robinson, and Michael Finnerty  
Absent: Joan Cleary  
Phone: Susan Caldwell

**III. Approval of Minutes**

**3403-07** Motion to approve the minutes of the August 21, 2007 Health & Human Services Committee Meeting.

**Action:** **A motion was made by Robinson, seconded by Frazier, that this matter be Passed. The motion carried unanimously.**

**IV. Agenda Items**

**Discussion Topic:**

**Closure of the Mayview State Hospital**

**Summary:** *The Chair said that he would like to determine if the decision to close Mayview for the betterment of the people or purely a financial decision. He presented statements of fact regarding the benefits, qualities, purposes, functions and attributes of Mayview. He said that he is afraid that closing Mayview would be harmful to some people with mental illness and that they could end up homeless or in jail.*

*Mr. Cherna said that the decision to close Mayview was the state's. He said that there are still 7 other similar facilities in Pennsylvania. He went on to describe various mental health services provided by the County. He said he thinks they could place many of the people in community settings and in-patient beds.*

*Ms. Valentine said that there is a high turnover at Mayview. She said that the closure of Mayview would enable the County to develop more community based facilities for the mentally ill. She described many of the developments in place which are available through the County.*

*Mr. Cherna said that the County is committed to provide the same quality services as Mayview.*

*Mr. Rustin said that the closure of Mayview is a concern for most wardens through the state. He said that their concern is that it may result in a huge increase in prison population because prison would substitute for a mental facility. He did say, however, that if the authorities have determined that this would not affect the prison population that he has to believe them, but he will monitor it very closely. He said that if the prison population should increase with the closing of Mayview, then the state should provide some funding. He said currently the state provides no funding for the jails.*

*Ms. Phillips said that it is not in the best interest for the patients to spend the rest of their lives in Mayview. She also said that they have been successful in transitioning people from jail to community based facilities.*

*Mr. Cherna said that he would provide Council with a DVD of a PBS special regarding this issue. He said that the state has denied that they are closing Mayview for financial reasons. He said the state indicated that they feel it is better for the people and that is why they will provide funding to take care of these people who are placed in community based facilities. He said that a Bill is in the state house which would require the money acquired through the sale of Mayview be funneled into other services to accommodate those that are displaced and for future patients.*

*Discussion took place regarding the operation of community based facilities.*

*Mr. Robinson said that Council should ask the state legislature for their support in caring for those with mental illness. He said that Council should send some type of formal request.*

*Mr. Finnerty asked Mr. Cherna if he would have to increase his staff. Mr. Cherna said yes, but the state would cover the cost.*

## **V. Adjournment**