

Changes made in Adult Protective Services

BY MARIAN MCMAHON

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LAKE COUNTY – Lake County Department of Job and Family Services Director Matt Battiatto provided an update on the Child and Adult Protective Services division at the Nov. 24 Lake County Board of Commissioners meeting.

He said Lori O'Brien, who assumed the position of administrator last June, has been reviewing the division's protocols and programs with a special focus on adult protective services.

"Starting earlier this month we have a unit that is now responsible for adult protective services," Battiatto said.

Previously, since all calls for adults and children came through the same hotline number, the division's social workers all handled calls about children and adults.

The new unit has four social workers and is headed by a social worker with a master's degree. Two of the social workers will handle most of the adult calls. The other two will help if there is an overflow of adult cases, but will otherwise assist with child cases.

The social workers will receive additional training.

"We had this in the works for awhile but it turns out it's very consistent with the Senior Levy consultant's recommendation," Battiatto said. "If you remember, one of the recommendations was that we have special geriatric social workers to perform the adult protective services function."

Board President Dan Troy asked about the types of abuse covered.

"The adult protective law

says that it covers people 60 and over and we receive referrals of abuse, neglect or exploitation, but the law specifically says it would be exploitation by a caregiver," Battiatto said.

He clarified that exploitation by a relative or hired caregiver would be handled by Adult Protective Services, but exploitation by someone like a contractor is a criminal matter. However, pending legislation might include exploitation by non-caregivers as a complaint for Adult Protective Services.

"To be very honest, Commissioner, myself and our association are opposed to that because we're not really in a position, a social worker really is not in a position, to go out and investigate that a roofer exploited a senior," Battiatto said.

Currently, Adult Protective Services works with whomever reports such exploitation so far as getting a police report filled out and giving emotional support, he said.

Troy asked if the part about exploitation by non-caregivers was part of the legislation which would require financial institutions to report large withdrawals by seniors who are likely being exploited.

Battiatto said it was.

RESOLUTIONS: FINANCE DEPARTMENT

- Approving payment of bills as listed on the commissioners' approval journal in the amount of \$912,355.89.

- Approving purchase orders as listed on the commissioners' purchase order approval journal in the amount of \$183,788.26.

- Increasing appropria-

tions for various non-general fund accounts.

- Transferring cash and appropriations within various general and non-general fund accounts.

DEPARTMENTAL REPORT UTILITIES

- Before 2015, LCDU customers needed to pay their bills by cash or check in person or by mail.

As of last January, LCDU started offering customers the option of making credit card payments online or by phone.

"Since the adoption of our credit card option, we have, on average in our billing office, between 800 and 1,000 credit card payments taken each month," said Public Services Coordinator Matt Armand.

He said allowing credit card payments is of most benefit to people who might be short on cash, so they can pay and not have their service shut off. There have been about 10,000 total payments made by credit card this year.

"We've collected \$1.3 million roughly from that option alone," Armand said.

The county landfill is also seeing an increase in the use of credit card payments.

Troy said LCDU has definitely seen an improvement in customer service since Armand was hired for that position.

COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

- Administrator Jason Boyd said there would soon be the annual meeting of the County Commissioners Association of Ohio in Columbus.

"I will be chairing as the president of the County Administrators Association ..."

Boyd said. "We'll have a fairly significant roundtable discussion on a couple different topics that are quite relevant to us today."

Topics of discussion will include budgets, investment earnings, workforce investment areas and capital planning, such as for jails and public safety centers, as well as best practices for financing and construction of such projects.

PUBLIC COMMENT

- Brenda Spadaro of Madison Township advised the commissioners that seven volunteers had begun clearing the Dock Road terminus area Nov. 21.

"Feedback from the residents has just been overwhelmingly positive," she said.

The commissioners had recently declined to vacate the Dock Road terminus as requested by owners of an adjacent property. Spadaro and others had presented hundreds of signatures on a petition opposing the vacation so the public would still have an area where they could drive up to look at the lake.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

- The commissioners adjourned to executive session to discuss personnel – employment.

MEETINGS

- Meetings are held in the Commissioners' Chambers of the Lake County Administration Building, 105 Main St., Painesville. All meetings are open to the public. Requests to address the government board may be made at any board meeting or presented to the Commissioners' Office by calling (440) 350-2753.

The next regular meeting of the commissioners will be Thursday, Dec. 10 at 10 a.m.