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RESOLUTION #6-2016

**A RESOLUTION OF THE COUNTY OF DAUPHIN, COMMONWEALTH
OF PENNSYLVANIA, URGING THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY
AND ADMINISTRATION TO RESTORE FUNDING FOR HUMAN
SERVICES PROGRAMS TO HISTORIC LEVELS, AND TO PUT
MECHANISMS IN PLACE TO ASSURE ANY FUTURE BUDGET
IMPASSE OR BUDGET DELAY DOES NOT BECOME A BURDEN
ON DAUPHIN COUNTY AND ITS CONSTITUENTS.**

WHEREAS, counties are at the forefront for delivery of crucial human services that protect the most vulnerable individuals, such as child welfare and protective services, mental health, intellectual disabilities, substance abuse treatment, homeless assistance, meal programs, lottery funded transportation, and others; and

WHEREAS, the capacity to meet critical service needs has been compromised by a steady decrease in state funding over the past decade, especially the drastic ten percent (10%) aggregate cut to the seven human services line items in FY 2012-2013; and

WHEREAS, the Human Services Block Grant has provided much-needed flexibility for the 30 counties eligible to participate, but remains closed to the remaining 37 remaining counties; and

WHEREAS, new mandates and additional program requirements continue to be placed on counties in the face of decreasing state funds; and

WHEREAS, while the rebalancing initiative for child welfare services is portrayed as only an accounting change, the initiative shifts a full quarter of funds for mandated child protective services into the following budget year with no more than a promise of being made whole; and

WHEREAS, as a result of the six-month budget impasse in FY 2015-2016, counties and the providers with whom they contract were forced to make difficult decisions about remaining open and meeting clients' needs while state payments were withheld; and

WHEREAS, many counties tapped reserves, borrowed funds, reduced or suspended payments to vendors or subcontractors, limited staff travel, laid off or reduced hours of employees, among other strategies, to maintain their focus on service delivery and assure that clients felt no harm; and

WHEREAS, in order to continue providing services during the budget impasse, Dauphin County was forced to:

1. Use Dauphin County General Fund dollars in the amount of \$28,223,672 to ensure critical operations and programming within the Human Services Systems continued through the first six months of the budget impasse.
2. Have Drug and Alcohol Service Providers invoice Dauphin's SCA, but were not able to be reimbursed for the first six months of Fiscal Year 15-16 until January 21, 2016 for the services they had provided in the previous six months.
3. Watch as some Drug and Alcohol Service Providers that contract with the Dauphin SCA and serve Dauphin County clients were only one week away from not being able to make payroll due to this lack of funding.
4. Hear reports that as some Dauphin County residents assumed they couldn't seek services during the budget impasse.
5. Sustain Services in the Dauphin County Area Agency on Aging with the federal funding they receive. The timeline was very narrow and state funding came just in time, at the end of December.
6. Sustain basic need services at the Food Bank of the Northern Dauphin Human Services Center and Meals on Wheels to HSDF consumers, with Dauphin County General Fund dollars.
7. Delay four Human Services Development Fund contracts with providers due to the uncertainty of state funding allocations.
8. Ensure Dauphin County Social Services for Children and Youth, if not for Dauphin County funding from the General Fund covering expenses, over 110 providers, 300 Adoptive families and 108 Agency foster families would have struggled to provide services to children and families.
9. Ensure Dauphin County Social Services for Children and Youth responded to all changes in the Child Protective Services Law which increased referrals by 128% and the number of children in placement continued to rise without state funding for six months.
10. Manage an increase in requests by Dauphin County Social Services for Children and Youth for assistance from families in our community because other entities no longer had the funds to provide services. For example, we received additional requests from families who had housing needs.
11. Draft and prepare to implement a contingency plan for Dauphin County which included considerations for reducing staff operations to minimal essential staff and suspension of programs and services in each human service agency.

WHEREAS, Dauphin County has estimated lost interest revenue of approximately \$27,000 due to \$28,223,672 total funded by Dauphin County during the impasse.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that:

1. Dauphin County remains committed to the important role we play in delivery of services to our communities; and
2. Dauphin County stands ready to work in partnership with the County Commissioners Association of Pennsylvania in support of counties' top priority for 2016, the commonwealth budget and human services funding; and
3. Dauphin County supports restoration of funding of the ten percent reductions to the seven key human services line items that occurred in FY 2012-2013, as without restoration to prior funding levels, all counties find it difficult to serve the state's most needy citizens; and

4. Dauphin County opposes “rebalancing” initiatives for child welfare services that will force counties to reduce funding by a quarter, reduce payments to providers, shorten contract periods, or use county property tax funds to cover the state’s obligation until a future budget makes a true allocation; and
5. Dauphin County asks that state leaders continue to work with them to find ways to administer human services programs in a way that ensures both quality and efficiency, including expansion of the Human Services Block Grant to any willing and able county; and
6. Dauphin County will work in concert with the County Commissioners Association of Pennsylvania and state leaders to develop comprehensive solutions for any future budget impasse or delay to ensure that counties are never again put in a situation where they are forced to cover the state’s funding obligations.


THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that a copy of this resolution be sent to the Dauphin County legislative delegation, to Governor Wolf, and to the County Commissioners Association of Pennsylvania.

ADOPTED by the Board of Commissioners of the County of Dauphin, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, this 9 day of March, 2016.

DAUPHIN COUNTY
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

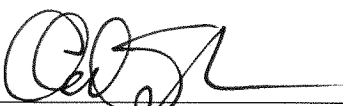


Jeff Haste, Chairman




Mike Pries, Vice Chairman

ATTEST



Chad Saylor, Chief Clerk



George P. Hartwick, III, Secretary