

AUTISM COUNCIL MEETING

March 5, 2009 – 3:00 p.m.

PRESENT: Supervisor Anita Daly, Chairman; Supervisor Matthew Veitch, Saratoga Springs; Wes Carr, Youth Bureau; Mary Beth Hynes, Town of Ballston; Cathi Duncan, Public Health; Supervisor Tom Wood, Town of Saratoga

Chairman Daly called the meeting to order.

Chairman Daly said if people know of other individuals who would want to work for this committee, please bring their names forward. She said we are being recognized by more entities, and we can only do so much. We will need other individuals to work with us on the County's behalf, she stated. Anyone who is referred to the committee will be working on the County's agenda, she added.

Discussion was held on the Autism Risk & Safety Management First Responders' Conference that will be held on March 26th at the Comfort Suites in Clifton Park from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Chairman Daly said our presenter, Dennis Debbaudt has confirmed and has scheduled his flight. She said she has met with Senator McDonald's office, and they are extremely excited about the presentation we have been putting together with them. They have sent out letters to all EMT's, First Responders, police and firefighters inviting them to this free conference. She said Mr. Debbaudt will be at the Comfort Suites on March 25th, from 7:00 – 9:00 p.m. for an informational session on Parents & Caregivers Of Persons Living With Autism. She said for the March 26th conference, we need to follow up with the Sheriff's Department, State Police, police departments and the D.A.'s office. She said we will be providing lunch to all participants free of charge. She mentioned the people attending this conference will receive continuing education credits. She said she plans to attend this conference, but she cannot attend for the whole day. Mr. Carr said he will be there for the duration.

Chairman Daly requested the committee members to encourage anyone who they think would be qualified to attend the conference. She said she would like to see 100 people there. She stated she will ask to be on the Clifton Park Town Board's meeting agenda to speak about this. She stated Senator McDonald would like the opportunity to open this up to Rensselaer County, but first priority will be given to Saratoga County people. Mr. Veitch said Saratoga Springs will be sending one police officer and one fireman per Commissioner Kim. Chairman Daly said we will make a formal outreach to our County D.A.'s office. I will speak at our Agenda meeting to request all Supervisors to encourage participants.

Chairman Daly said Jen Ciulla has done a flier for us on the informational session that will be held the evening of March 25th, and she requested the committee members to take as many fliers as they would like to pass out. She said she is asking for an RSVP to make sure there is enough coffee and cookies. She stated at Shen, they have a Special Ed PTA, and she will reach out to them. She said we have a tremendous asset in Dennis

Debbaudt, and she would hate not to capitalize on what he has to offer. She said Jen has received some responses already on the First Responders' Conference. Paul Lent, our Director of Emergency Services, is also proposing to send out an e-mail encouraging individuals to attend. Mr. Carr suggested that Mike McEvoy, EMS Coordinator for Saratoga County and who lives in Clifton Park, should be contacted. Chairman Daly said she would make a personal phone call to him. Mr. Carr said Ed Tremblay, of Emergency Services, would probably be the point of contact between the County and him.

Chairman Daly said Mr. Carr will be ordering give-a-way pens for the conference.

A discussion was held on the NYS Therapeutic Recreation Association Conference, March 28 – 31 at the Holiday Inn, Saratoga Springs. Mr. Carr said in SUNY-Cortland, their Inclusion Recreation Center had links to various trainings going on in the State. He said he has one copy of this Conference brochure. He said the woman from SUNY-Cortland, who was at their State Youth Bureau Association Conference in October, will be at the conference presenting a number of different workshops. Chairman Daly requested Mr. Carr to find out if we can just attend for the topic of inclusion recreation. She said she will be out of town that weekend, but she would like the various towns to know this is available if they would like to send someone from their recreation departments. She said maybe we can target a particular town or city that could serve as a pilot and then let us know what they learned to be shared with the rest of us. Mr. Carr mentioned Steve Porto, of Wilton, may already be attending. Chairman Daly requested him to reach out to the communities to see if any are attending this conference. Mrs. Hynes said their summer rec program could stand to have suggestions made. Chairman Daly said concentration in the area of recreation should be on our to do list once we get through our conference. Mrs. Hynes mentioned in April, the Albany Chapter of the Autism Society has their yearly dinner. She suggested that maybe we should have some kind of presence there.

Chairman Daly said she received a call from Jason Maxwell. He is a chef from Clifton Park who is on Hell's Kitchen, and he has a child with autism. She said he was interviewed by The Saratogian, and they put him in touch with us. He wants to work with this group and bring his skill as a chef to help teach children about nutrition. He would like to teach cooking or teach nutrition, she said. She said she will need to contact him back, and she thinks it would be good to put something together for awareness month. She said she is sure she can get people to donate food. He is interested in a long-term relationship, she said. Mrs. Hynes suggested doing something through a Farmers' Market. Chairman Daly said maybe he could come to a Board meeting for a presentation.

Mrs. Hynes said in the past, we talked about an awareness day that would be held in Saratoga Springs. Mr. Veitch said we haven't done anything with that, as it is a big task. There would be room rental fees involved, etc., but it is still an idea that is out there, he said. Chairman Daly said in the County's next budget cycle, this committee can come forward with a dollar amount for next year's budget. There is a lot to be done with time and resources, she stated.

Mr. Carr said in looking at the initial announcement about the inclusive assessment training, it is free of charge. Chairman Daly said maybe someone from the Clifton Park Recreation Department will be going to that conference and can serve as a volunteer. It would be great if each recreation department had a certified assessor. Mr. Carr stated Diane McGarry, who is the Youth Services Specialist in his office, could possibly become certified.

On a motion by Mr. Veitch, seconded by Mrs. Hynes, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Elaine M. Sodemann