

Legislative and Research Committee Minutes
October 1, 2012 – 4:00 p.m.

Present: Chairman Sausville; Supervisors Lewza, Raymond, Rowland, Richardson, Yepsen, Collyer, and Wood; Ryan Moore, Mgmt. Analyst; Steve Dorsey, County Attorney; Mr. Hamilton, Farm Bureau; Press.

Chairman Sausville called the meeting to order and welcomed all in attendance.

On a motion made by Ms. Raymond, seconded by Mr. Richardson the minutes of the July 2, 2012 meeting were approved unanimously.

Mr. Sausville said Bath Salts are manmade synthetic chemicals that induce the same kind of intoxicating effects that other drugs have. Although they are not wide spread in Saratoga County, they do come into the county by way of SPAC. The State Legislature has taken some action and there has been action at the Federal level as well. There is more that needs to be done, largely in education and further regulatory development, he said.

Mr. Moore said there are some places in the State that have unfortunately had problems with Bath Salts more than we have had here locally. There was a press release from the Governor's office in the month of August saying that the reported emergency room visits in upstate New York as a result of Bath Salts up through August of 2012 were already 191 compared to 39 in the previous year. Saratoga County doesn't seem to have that large of a problem with it, with only one case reported by the Sheriff, he said. Mr. Moore said after speaking to the City of Saratoga Springs Police, there were several cases of users and people in possession of these substances, but nothing so far that has led to violence.

Mr. Moore said Ms. Levison reached out on his behalf to Saratoga Hospital where they said they hadn't had any experiences with this in the emergency rooms until 2012. There is just a handful, so far, related to the concert crowd, and the Mental Health Department has reported one client that has used this.

Mr. Moore said the Prevention Council has done a lot of education in the schools about synthetic Marijuana. He said the City of Saratoga Springs Police thinks they have done a good job on getting the message out.

Mr. Moore said it is a combination of the State DOH and the Governor's Office, through regulation, where they addressed this in August, but the State could take an additional step in terms of passing legislation. The Federal Government passed legislation, but the problem is enforcement. In order to enforce something on a local level, to empower the local police to enforce it, it really has to be a State Law, he said.

A motion was made by Ms. Raymond, seconded by Mr. Rowland to urge State Legislation on the ban of manufactured Bath Salts. Unanimous.

Mr. Hamilton gave a brief overview of the Clean Water Act Draft Guidance proposed by the EPA as follows. He said the US Congress has not approved this and, in fact, several times over the years they have denied this proposal. This is a Congressional change that is why this is a guidance document, which is a concern because they can essentially bypass Congress and do this anyway, he said. This would also bypass any comment period, so this is really something that the EPA is trying to pass through. They know that it failed in the past and they don't want public input and they don't want US Congress involved. He said the Farm Bureau's biggest concern is for farms that might have a stockpot or ditches running around its borders where they would have to call the Army Corp of Engineers to figure out who has jurisdiction over that water. If they were to say the EPA, then you would have to get permitting through the Clean Water Act to use that land. Another big concern, as far as farmers applying nutrients to the land, would be if you would have to have another nutrient management plan in place to protect those waters. There are a lot of financial concerns for farmers who are already severely burdened with regulations; this would be catastrophic on top of what they already have to follow, he said.

A motion was made by Mr. Rowland, seconded by Ms. Raymond to oppose the Clean Water Act Draft Guidance proposed by the Environmental Protection Agency as presented. Unanimous.

On a motion made by Mr. Rowland, seconded by Mr. Richardson the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,
Chris Sansom