

Health & Social Services Committee Minutes
July 3, 2019 – 4:00 p.m.

Present: Chairman Dick Lucia; Committee Members Tara Gaston, Darren O'Connor, Dan Pemrick, Jon Schopf, Sandra Winney, Tom Wood; Supervisor Matt Veitch; Spencer Hellwig, County Administrator; Hugh Burke, County Attorney; Cathi Duncan, Public Health; Michael Prezioso, Mental Health & Addiction; Mayor Meg Kelly, Bradley Birge, Lindsey Connors, City of Saratoga Springs.

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

On a motion made by Mr. Wood, seconded by Mr. O'Connor, the minutes of the May 8, 2019 meeting were approved unanimously.

A motion was made by Ms. Gaston, seconded by Mr. O'Connor, to support and authorize the County to apply for Entitlement status as it relates to grant funding availability for Community Development Block Grants through the US Department of Housing and Urban Development. Unanimous.

Mr. Hellwig introduced Mayor Meg Kelly, Bradley Birge, Administrator of Planning & Economic Development and Lindsey Connors, Community Development Planner, from the City of Saratoga Springs. Mr. Hellwig said that he and other County staff recently met with the City staff regarding the County's interest and willingness to take on the designation of an entitlement county. Currently the City manages the block grant program independently based upon HUD regulations. HUD has recently indicated that the County is able to take on the designation and be able to distribute the funds for a number of programs countywide. Based on the discussions with the City, the County could be eligible to obtain over \$1M over what the City is now receiving, and these funds can be used on a countywide basis. Mr. Hellwig said that the administration of the program will be done by the City. Mr. Hellwig distributed a handout with a brief overview of the timeline of the process. Mr. Birge said that the City was notified by the Federal Government that the County is potentially eligible as a whole, above and beyond what the City receives. The program would be a collaborative partnership between the City and the County. The City has managed the program for the past 25 years and are willing and able to administer it county wide. Mr. Hellwig said that the Towns and Villages would each need to enter into a cooperative agreement with the County, allowing the County to be the applicant. The caveat would be that the towns and villages would no longer be able to go out and pursue the grants on their own, they would need to go through the County. Mr. Veitch said that this is a 3-year commitment. Mr. Birge said that the City runs the program through a 12-member volunteer committee that reviews and recommends applications annually. Mr. Hellwig said that they will need to have 200K of county population participating in order to meet the threshold for the designation. Mr. Birge clarified that this will take effect for 2020. By the end of the summer 2019, they are hoping to get a clear indication to move forward, they can then begin to pursue agreements, and over winter/spring work on a 5-year strategic plan that gives the objectives and priorities for which the funding will go toward.

Mrs. Duncan distributed a draft Public Health Order for Children's Camps. Mrs. Duncan said that the basis behind the request is due to the largest measles outbreak since 1993 in NYS. Mrs. Duncan said that there are new cases downstate. Mrs. Duncan said that measles is a respiratory infection and is communicable airborne. It can remain airborne in a room up to 2 hours. Infectious period is 4 days before the rash breaks out and up to 4 days after. At this point in time, Saratoga County does not have any cases of measles. However, the risk of importing measles increases with summer travel and the tourist season. On June 13th the Governor signed legislation removing the non-medical exemptions from school vaccinations due to this outbreak. Those asking for exemptions due to religious reasons would no longer be able to do so. Mrs. Duncan said that Children's Camps were not covered under this legislation. Recommendations and guidance documents were distributed by NYS to the camps on June 3, 2019 however, Mrs. Duncan said that they have been made aware that there are a number of camps choosing not to follow the guidance documents. Mrs. Duncan said that there are 4 sleepover camps, 1 pending sleepover and 20 day camps in the county. Mrs. Duncan said that camp operations and practices are inconsistent and some hire foreign born camp counselors from countries that only require one MMR Shot. Mrs. Duncan said that she gets information from the Environmental District office because Saratoga County is a partial service Public Health Department. The NYS Environmental District office takes care of inspecting the camps. They assure that safety plans are being followed. Mrs. Duncan said that under the State Public Health Law and Sanitary Health Code orders, she is allowed to institute a local public health order. Mrs. Duncan said that five NYS local health departments (Madison, Sullivan, Ulster, Rockland and Greene) have drafted and instituted local health orders such as this, requiring the camps in their jurisdiction to comply with the vaccination requirements for the measles for both campers and camp employees.

Mr. O'Connor said that if this order was enacted, it would be applicable this year and would apply to parents who have already paid for summer camp and children already participating in camp. In other words, it would require all the town camps to basically kick out children from camps whose parents don't want them to have vaccinations for religious reasons, or ask them to get the immunizations required. If the parents maintain their religious viewpoints on vaccines, this order would require some children to be kicked out of camp, parents that have already enrolled and paid for their children to attend camp and children that are already participating in camp. Mr. O'Connor said that retroactively enacting this is unfair and is opposed to this item being put in effect for this year. Mrs. Duncan said that there is a Jewish Camp in Saratoga where the children come from Brooklyn where the outbreak is high right now. This camp is extremely non-compliant in vaccinations. Mrs. Duncan said that with 2 vaccines of MMR there is a 97% chance of immunization, 1 shot of MMR has 93% success. There is also a % of vaccine failure.

Mr. Pemrick expressed concerns over parents not knowing their children are attending a camp where other children may not be vaccinated. Mrs. Duncan said that letters should have been mailed to all of the parents with the recommendations, however not all camps are complying with the recommendations. Mrs. Duncan said that this order would support the Camp Directors against those parents that are adamant in not vaccinating their children. If there is a measles outbreak in a camp, it could potentially shut down the camp. Ms. Gaston expressed concern with camps that have new participants on a weekly basis, and if these camps would be inspected for each new group of campers. Ms. Gaston said that she strongly supports mandatory vaccination programs, and that perhaps Gramercy and the county could issue a public education campaign between now and when the order would be effective to forewarn those that vaccinations need to be received, perhaps this would give enough time for parents to get their children vaccinated.

Mr. O'Connor said that the school year just ended, there has not been a single outbreak in Saratoga County and the rush on this is a little overdone. The vast majority of Saratoga County residents are currently vaccinated and therefore protected. Ms. Gaston has concerns over the population of people visiting Saratoga County during the summer months that may increase the risk of an outbreak. Mr. O'Connor said that the vast majority of Saratoga County residents are currently vaccinated and therefore protected. Mr. Lucia asked if Warren or Washington Counties have enacted this. Mrs. Duncan said that they have not. Mr. Wood expressed concern over enforcement of the order, and who would enforce it.

A motion was made by Ms. Gaston, to adopt a Public Health Order regarding immunity to measles and children's camps in Saratoga County. The motion was not seconded.

Mr. O'Connor said that he would look forward to this next year. Mrs. Duncan said that she can send the NYS list of recommendations to all Supervisors so that they can follow up with each of their own Town camps.

Ms. Gaston said that the Code Blue mandate comes through the County. There have been some discussions and questions in Saratoga Springs regarding Code Blue and at this time there is no location planned for this winter. Ms. Gaston requested Mr. Lucia to set up a sub-committee to look into this and make sure it gets done on time. Mr. O'Connor said that he would be happy to serve on the sub-committee. Ms. Gaston would also like to serve on the committee. It was decided that Mr. Schopf also be appointed to the committee.

On a motion made by Ms. Gaston, seconded by Mr. O'Connor, the meeting was adjourned unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,
Therese Connolly
Deputy Clerk of the Board