

Legislative & Research Committee Minutes
March 9, 2020 – 3:00 p.m.

Present: Chairman Kinowski; Committee Members Phil Barrett, Tara Gaston, Matt Veitch; Supervisors Todd Kusnierz, Jonathan Schopf and Chairman of the Preston Allen; Chad Cooke, County Administrator; Steve Dorsey, County Attorney; Michael Prezioso, Mental Health & Addiction; Andrew Jarosh, Treasurer; Craig Hayner, County Clerk.

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

On a motion made by Ms. Gaston, seconded by Mr. Barrett, the minutes of the February 11, 2020 meeting were approved unanimously.

A motion was made by Ms. Gaston, seconded by Mr. Veitch, opposing the Governor's proposal to shift 730.20 Competency Restoration Services costs to counties. Unanimous.

Mr. Prezioso said that when a person is facing felony charges, there may be times when the Court has questions about the person's ability to understand the charges against them and participate in their own defense. When this happens the Judge orders the Mental Health Department, who assigns two examiners to make a decision as to whether or not the person has the capacity to proceed. When someone is deemed to lack capacity to participate in proceedings, they are then sent by the Office of Mental Health to a secure state psychiatric facility. Up until now, the County has been paying 50% of the cost per person, per day, and in the Governor's recent proposed budget effective April 1st they are now asking the Counties to pay 100% of the cost. Between 2014 and 2019, the average cost per person during the course of their restoration has increased from \$5,600 to \$47,000. They are seeing an increase in the total number of days from 148 to 1,100. The average number of patients per month has increased from less than 1 to 4. The unique number of people being served on a monthly basis has increased from 2 to 7. The average length of stays has increased from 30 to 162. The average monthly cost per person, per day has increased from \$7K to \$13.5K. Mr. Chad said that total cost for the County for 2018 was \$535K and in 2019 the cost was \$648K. If the trend continues, this could potentially add \$1M to the annual cost.

A motion was made by Ms. Gaston, seconded by Mr. Veitch, to create a list of Federal Legislative Agenda items. Unanimous.

Mr. Kinowski asked Mr. Veitch and Ms. Gaston if they have any items to bring to the committee from their recent NACo conference. Mr. Veitch said that he serves on the Community Economic Workforce Development Committee who always advocate for full funding for the Community Block Grant funding. Mr. Veitch said that last year there was a proposal to make Saratoga County an entitlement County, however they did not quite make it to that point. Mr. Veitch said that Saratoga County may want to pass a resolution urging the Feds to continue that funding so that if Saratoga County ever becomes an entitlement county the funding would be in place. Mr. Veitch said that next year he may also be working on a resolution with the Emergency Services Manager from Madison County on EMS and Volunteer Fire Service and the workforce restrictions and requirements that are hindering their volunteer membership. Ms. Gaston said that there is a lot of

discussion about connectivity and broadband. After a meeting with Senator Schumer, he has indicated that he would be interested in adding cellular to his broadband bill which is going forward. Ms. Gaston said it would be important to encourage this. Ms. Gaston said that at the state level, public health funding is always an issue, and always in consideration of cutting the budget. NYSAC and NACo has supported resolutions to maintain or increase public health funding and Ms. Gaston said it would be timely to do this also. Mr. Kinowski said that Saratoga County priorities have already been passed onto the state legislators and suggested passing on the notes on these new items as opposed to doing new resolutions. Ms. Gaston said that she believes a resolution urging the addition of cellular should be sent to Senator Schumer. Ms. Gaston said that she can provide information to Mr. Cooke. Mr. Veitch said that he can also provide information regarding the CDBG funding if a resolution or letter from the Chairman will be drafted. Ms. Gaston said that she and Mr. Wright are both working with NYSAC to develop a one day connectivity forum. Mr. Cooke said that Peer to Peer funding is now back in the budget. Ms. Gaston said that when they met with Senator Schumer, they mentioned that Medicaid was a big process, Senator Schumer's response was that Saratoga County were not being very loud on the issue. Mr. Jarosh said that the County Treasurers were also encouraged to pass something and bring attention to the issue so that Senator Schumer can hear this from the ground up. Mr. Jarosh said that he can also provide information on this.

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

Respectfully submitted,
Therese Connolly
Deputy Clerk of the Board