

Health & Social Services Committee Minutes
May 6, 2020 – 2:30 p.m.

Present: Chairman Dick Lucia; Committee Members Eric Connolly, Todd Kusnierz, Darren O'Connor, Sandra Winney, Tom Wood, Benny Zlotnick; Supervisors Tara Gaston, Ed Kinowski, Dan Pemrick, Tom Richardson, Jonathan Schopf and Chairman of the Board Preston Allen; Spencer Hellwig, Chad Cooke, County Administrator; Steve Dorsey, County Attorney; Cathi Duncan, Public Health; Michael Prezioso, Mental Health and Addiction; Pamela Wright, Clerk of the Board.

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

On a motion made by Mr. O'Connor, seconded by Mr. Wood, the minutes of the March 4, 2020 meeting were approved unanimously.

A motion was made by Mrs. Winney, seconded by Mr. Wood, to authorize the acceptance of additional state aid in the form of COLAs for Direct Care and Direct Support Professional initiatives in the amount of \$45,367 in the Mental Health Department and amending the budget in relation thereto. Unanimous.

Mr. Prezioso said that this is a housekeeping resolution to reflect received state aid for cost of living increases for our contract agencies.

Mr. Lucia asked Mrs. Duncan to give an update to the Committee. Mrs. Duncan said that an upgrade will be done this afternoon to the website. It will have a dashboard and will be easier to look at. Ms. Duncan said that the Public Health Planner and Troy Hilts from the Planning Department worked together on this upgrade. Mrs. Duncan said that as of today there are 368 confirmed positive cases. 63 active positives and 43 suspected positives. 165 people are still under mandatory quarantine. The death rate seems to be holding at 14. There are currently 9 people in hospital. Mrs. Duncan said that the Governor has been putting forward a lot of information with regard to phased re-opening. Mrs. Duncan cautioned that this would need to be taken slowly in order to avoid a hospital surge. Mrs. Duncan said that Saratoga County is included in the designated Capital Region along with Warren, Washington, Rensselaer, Schenectady, Albany, Columbia and Greene Counties. Out of this entire region, Saratoga Hospital is the only one that has been given the go ahead to have elective surgeries. Mrs. Duncan said that she is calling for a regional meeting which will include Directors, Commissioners of Counties along with Emergency Services and Administration to discuss what the entire region are doing and how the Governor's criteria can be met in order to re-open. Mrs. Duncan said that increased testing is imperative. There are 3 nursing homes and several assisted living facilities within the County and they want to make sure due diligence is being done and getting everyone tested. A written plan for isolation facilities is also necessary.

Mrs. Duncan said that for each positive case that comes in, they have to create case investigations where they have to develop a line list of how many people they came in contact with when they were positive and two days prior. This takes a lot of investigating. At this point, the State is going through the process of hiring contact tracers to augment what the local health departments are

currently doing. These new hires will need to be over 18, have empathy, be able to use their own computer and the provided software, and can work from 20 hours/week to full time from home. For every 20 contact tracers there will be one supervisor who will be the go between for the tracers and local health departments. The cost of the additional contact tracers will be paid for by the State. There are currently 11 contact tracers in the Saratoga County Public Health Department.

Mrs. Duncan said that drive-in testing is currently only happening at the Saratoga Hospital. She said that they are looking into other alternatives for additional testing sites. Mr. Lucia said that testing is also available in Warren County. Mr. O'Connor said that in order to meet the Governor's numbers, Saratoga County would need to at least double their current testing numbers.

Mr. Kinowski said that he recently spoke with Senator Jordan regarding a letter that can hopefully separate Saratoga County and other northern Counties out.

Mrs. Duncan said that people who are essential workers, those who are asymptomatic, or those who have been in close contact with someone who has tested positive are eligible for testing. If people have any problems getting a script to get tested, they can call the Saratoga County Department of Public Health to get assessed for a script. Mrs. Duncan said that there have not been a lot of cases in small children and therefore has only seen a smattering of Kawasaki type symptoms. Mr. Kusnierz confirmed with Mrs. Duncan that Public Health employees are currently only being paid according to their current negotiated contract. Mr. Kinowski expressed concern over young adults not taking this pandemic seriously, not wearing masks or practicing safe social distancing. He said that he has been helping to get the message out in his newsletter and encouraged other towns to do this also. Mr. Lucia also expressed concern over large crowds in his local supermarket this weekend due to the opening weekend of campers.

Mr. Lucia thanked the department heads and staff in the Public Health, Social Services, Office for the Aging, Mental Health, and Youth Bureau departments for all of their hard work during this time.

Mrs. Duncan reiterated the importance of everyone wearing a mask and keeping social distance. Mrs. Duncan also reiterated the importance of people getting tested, especially if they are essential workers dealing with the public.

Mr. Kinowski suggested that townships get together and pool purchasing resources if a source is found for purchasing masks.

On a motion made by Mr. Zlotnick, seconded by Mrs. Winney, the meeting was adjourned unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,
Therese Connolly
Deputy Clerk of the Board