

AGENDA SESSION
May 13, 2020 4:30 p.m.
Meeting Minutes

Vice Chairman Pemrick: Good Afternoon everyone and welcome to the Agenda meeting for the month of May. Could we have the roll call, please.

Mrs. Connolly: Supervisor Allen
Mr. Allen: Here
Mrs. Connolly: Barrett
Mr. Barrett: Here
Mrs. Connolly: Connolly
Mr. Connolly: Here
Mrs. Connolly: Gaston
Ms. Gaston: Here
Mrs. Connolly: Grattidge
Mr. Grattidge: Here
Mrs. Connolly: Kinowski
Mr. Kinowski: Here
Mrs. Connolly: Kusnierz
Mr. Kusnierz: Here
Mrs. Connolly: Lant
Mrs. Connolly: Lawler
Mr. Lawler: Here
Mrs. Connolly: Lucia
Mr. Lucia: Here
Mrs. Connolly: O'Connor
Mr. O'Connor: Here
Mrs. Connolly: Peck
Mr. Peck: Here
Mrs. Connolly: Pemrick
Mr. Pemrick: Here
Mrs. Connolly: Raymond
Ms. Raymond: Here
Mrs. Connolly: Richardson
Mrs. Connolly: Schopf
Mr. Schopf: Here
Mrs. Connolly: Smith
Mr. Smith: Here
Mrs. Connolly: Tollisen
Mr. Tollisen: Here
Mrs. Connolly: Veitch
Mr. Veitch: Here
Mrs. Connolly: Winney
Mrs. Winney: Here
Mrs. Connolly: Wood
Mr. Wood: Here
Mrs. Connolly: Wright
Mr. Wright: Here
Mrs. Connolly: Zlotnick
Mr. Zlotnick: Here
Mrs. Connolly: Quorum is present.

Mr. Pemrick: Thank you. Can we have a motion to approve the minutes of the March 11th meeting?

Mr. Kinowski: Mr. Chairman, I'll make that motion.

Mr. Pemrick: Ok, Mr. Kinowski and second Mr. Peck. All in Favor.

Several Voices: Aye.

Mr. Pemrick: It's carried. A motion to accept the agenda for the Board meeting scheduled for May 19th.

Mr. Zlotnick: I'll move that.

Mr. Pemrick: Mr. Zlotnick and Mr. Alan Grattidge, thank you very much. All in favor.

Several Voices: Aye. And that is carried.

Mr. Pemrick: We have Cathi Duncan here with us this afternoon. She has been asked to provide us with a brief update from Public Health perspective. Welcome Cathi and thank you for taking the time to do this.

Ms. Duncan: Sure. I don't know if you can hear my behind (inaudible)

Mr. Wright: Turn the mic on, right in front of you, just so they can hear you.

Ms. Duncan: Oh, ok. Thank you. So, as you are aware in your, seen in daily reports, we are updating our dashboard every day. We are up this afternoon to 407 positive cases and have active isolations people who are positive and in isolation 67 with quarantine of 167. We had 350 antibody tests done on individuals throughout the County. A good deal of them on their own or from the Department of Health. So, 31 of them have been positive which is a rate of right around 9% and we have had a total of 6,745 tests done throughout our county. We currently meet as you know the 5 out of the 7 metrics in the Capital Region for re-opening. And today's measure was based on, the reason that we didn't meet 6 was because of the 14 day decline in that hospitalizations that wasn't met. It started declining on 4/27 but gained 17 new hospitalizations on 5/12 and that is above what they would like us to do which is about 15 hospitalizations per day. So, we are working, currently, with 3 nursing homes within our County to get all the residents tested. That is the guidance out by the Department of Health that said that we have to provide we have to make sure that all the residents are tested and all of the workers are tested. And that guidance goes further by stating the facility has to provide testing for all of their employees twice a week to keep an eye on them. And so, we have been facilitating them and trying to assist them we have got, we handed out test kits from the Office of Emergency Services to assist them in getting some of those tests done. So, Wesley Nursing Home of course and then the Saratoga Center is another one and then Schuyler Ridge is the third nursing home that we are assisting. There is also other assisted and skilled little tiny facilities and homes adult homes that also have to follow the same guidance. So, they are putting their plans together and they have to submit them to the Department of Health and the Department of Health is responsible. It isn't a local health department thing for us to actually perform any of these things. It is the Department of Health that oversees them. So, we are hoping that we are going to see more testing done and that's just going to increase the numbers in a large way. We are working on establishing a phase one. We had our first meeting yesterday at what is called a Phase One Advisory Group. It consists of administration. We had Michael Prezioso there, Sheriff Zurlo, Code Enforcement Officers from the City of Mechanicville, Saratoga Springs, Clifton Park and Malta along with our Emergency Preparedness Coordinator and Mike McEvoy who is in the Office of Emergency Services, Marilyn Rivers is from the City of Saratoga Springs. We invited Dr. Holland and Dr. Cardeil (*spelling not provided*) to join us but it was short notice and they haven't attended yet. John Donnelly also from code enforcement Saratoga Springs and Joe Donnelly from the Fire as well as my health educator, Cathy Medick and myself. So, what we are aiming to do and what we just did this afternoon is we set up a new button on our website under COVID and it's called Saratoga County re-opening information. So we've loaded it so far with some very basic general information for businesses to look at and to be a guide as to when you're looking at your plans and you're figuring out how you want to go forward when the re-open happens you can look at these guides and this is something that we've gathered and pulled together from the Department of Health and the CDC. We will keep adding resources as we go and we will try to concentrate on who is in Phase One as to what industries or what particular groups are going to be opening first

so that we can have them think about how they are going to write their plan and then as we go along we will keep building on it for those in the different phases as they are going to want to enter. We are also working on our contact tracers because that's one of the metrics that we have to meet. We currently have 11. We have 13 additional contact tracers that we are going to be training through a John Hopkins course that the State had offered to us for free. It's online. It's a 5 to 6-hour certificate which is excellent. It has great information in it. And so, everybody is going to do that. They are going to take the course and they are going to get a certificate and we have the potential of getting more volunteers but it's something that we are going to talk about how we can accomplish that through our MRC. And then we have been talking about increasing testing in general with Saratoga Hospital. We don't have a definite yet but we put it out there but we are really, I am encouraging them to really think about opening another test site. And so, they are going to meet with us tomorrow afternoon to let us know what they have come up with logistically. But, I'm hoping, fingers crossed, that they will take me up on my suggestion of Exit 12 and that might make it a little bit more easy for people to get to. We are struggling with, I just got off the phone this afternoon with the State who just doesn't seem to get it. Now we have the kits where we were delayed in having the kits, but we don't have labs and the labs don't have the capacity and the labs are telling us yeah you are going to have to call us every time you are going to do a whole bunch of test because Wadsworth just can't handle it. So, they is a disconnect. They want us to do all this testing. Yet there are barriers to overcome. So, we do the best that we can. And we are trying to reach out to other labs that are, you know, like Lab Corp. And we are trying to get some of the insurance companies to go along with that and allow us to have these. They've got contracts and the ability to have those labs work on those tests but some of them are not as robust as Wadsworth so the turn around time is really can be like 5 to 7 days before we can receive the report. And that is not timely enough if some body is positive we want to know quickly that they are positive. So that's all I have to say at this point unless you have questions.

Mr. O'Connor: Cathi, I have one quick question. I had the (inaudible)... indicate that the capital region did meet the hospitalizations and that did meet the hospitalizations and that did meet the (inaudible).

Ms. Duncan: (inaudible) Now, it is 5 out of the 7.

Mr. O'Connor: Oh, you mean it changed from like this morning.

Ms. Duncan: Yes.

Mr. Pemrick: If you are going to ask a question would you just say it loudly and identify yourself please.

Mr. O'Connor: That was Darren O'Connor from Malta.

Mr. Pemrick: Thank you.

Ms. Duncan: I just printed it off the dashboard so.

Mr. Pemrick: Tara, I think you had a question.

Ms. Gaston: Yes, Supervisor Gaston, and yeah, I will, in his morning briefing the Governor changed us from 6 to 5. So, I have a question you were mentioning insurance coverage with regards to the test. Is that a problem that individuals are facing? Because it's my understanding that all insurances should provide it at no cost under the CARES Act. Is that....

Ms. Duncan: Correct. But then there's individuals that don't have insurance.

Ms. Gaston: Okay. And they don't have access to the testing?

Ms. Duncan: No, they do. They do have access to the testing. Absolutely.

Ms. Gaston: Like, I guess, the processing. Where is the problem? So that we can see what we can do. Because it is my understanding the intent of the State and the Federal action was to provide it to anyone that we felt should receive that testing at no cost.

Ms. Duncan: Correct.

Ms. Gaston: So, if we have people who aren't so maybe that's where we need to see what we can do.

Ms. Duncan: Ok, the only problem with it at the current time is that I have Albany that is the drive thru that will do this for essential workers. Basically, if you have any body who has symptoms or has been in close contact to somebody that has tested positive there's no problem, you will get tested. But there's a push back, on the labs, if it's an essential worker unless you call all the way to Albany for their testing. So, we are trying work that out for the essential workers.

Ms. Gaston: Ok.

Ms. Duncan: And if somebody just wants to be tested that's still is not available. We don't have testing and that's statewide. You still have to meet criteria.

Ms. Gaston: So even with the test kits that we now have.

Ms. Duncan: Yep.

Ms. Gaston: That's only sufficient for essential workers or for those who are symptomatic or with a known positive contact. If we have someone that is A-symptomatic or has some of the weird symptoms there's not.

Ms. Duncan: No, if you have symptoms.

Ms. Gaston: But if they aren't on the...okay. We just don't have enough for everybody.

Ms. Duncan: Correct. You don't have a blanket that I just want to go get tested. That's missing.

Mr. Pemrick: Is there another question.

Mr. Schopf: What does someone have to provide to show they are an essential worker?

Mr. Pemrick: Ok. Jonathan. Jonathan Schopf is speaking.

Ms. Duncan: What do they have to provide?

Mr. Schopf: Yes.

Ms. Duncan: I don't think they have to provide anything. I think they just have to state it that they are an essential worker. I haven't really gone on the State website and gone through that process but there is a long list of who qualifies as an essential worker. So, people who are working now, especially with the public, they are allowed to get their tests done.

(Mr. Schopf and Mr. O'Connor were speaking at the same time.)

Mr. Schopf: They don't have to provide their paycheck or anything like that to show you're employed at Walmart or Target or any essential business.

Mr. O'Connor: This is Darren O'Connor from Malta.

Ms. Duncan: You know, I really don't, I don't know the answer.

Mr. Schopf: Ok.

Mr. O'Connor: I went on the website. And I just put in my information. No exposure, no nothing. No symptoms. No nothing. I just said I was an essential worker being a supervisor. Got right in. They called me right up. I went down this morning and got tested. It was a cinch.

Ms. Duncan: Ok.

Mr. O'Connor: Just driving thru the Albany SUNY Campus.

Ms. Duncan: Yep.

Mr. Barrett: Where did you do that Darren?

(laughter)

Mr. O'Connor: SUNY Albany Campus.

Mr. Barrett: Oh.

Mr. O'Connor: And it's no problem. Doesn't hurt.

Mr. Barrett: Well that's good.

(Laughter)

Mr. Grattidge: Let us know your results.

Mr. O'Connor: Just as Cathi indicated in the website that you go to that it could be days.

(Laughter)

Ms. Duncan: It is. It has been days.

Mr. Pemrick: Ok. Let's call this. Cathi, thank you very much. We appreciate you coming here and answering these questions for us today and the update. Any other business to come before the Board.

Ms. Gaston: Chairman.

Mr. Pemrick: Yes.

Ms. Gaston: I just, I don't know if it's up for discussion but I would like it noted that I sent several emails to the Chairman and to the Board as a whole requesting information about the reopening committee, the composition, I believe that Supervisor Smith from Racing & Gaming should be involved, as a significant portion of our economy comes from racing and gaming. I also believe that Supervisor Lucia should be involved as the Chair of the Health and Social Services Committee, because health should be given at least as much respect and weight as the economy and I also believe that Ms. McCloskey should be involved, sorry, surprise, as a part of the employment and training because she and her department will be essential in re-training workers who may need to adjust. And, the fact that I have not been able as an elected official to get answers to these questions is more than a little frustrating. In addition, I was told by the Chairman that we would have a meeting a week or two weeks ago, I forget, all the months run together now, that did not happen. I was told that we could have the meeting today, to learn more about the questions that we had for Human Resources. Not only is that not part of the agenda, I do not see a representative from Human Resources in this room. This means that as a duly elected official I have requested repeatedly to get answers to these problems that are costing us significant money and respect in the public eye. And the Board's leadership has failed to do so. There's not a whole lot of discussion

behind it but I would like it on record so that my constituents who have been asking me about this is that I have been going forward to the Board to get answers are aware that I have been trying my damndest and if the Board leadership or the administration of the County chooses not to provide me those answers, I'm sorry, I continue to try my best. Thank you.

Mr. Pemrick: You're on the record. Motion to adjourn.

Mr. Barrett: Nope.

Mr. Pemrick: No, comment, Phil.

Mr. Barrett: Yeah, yesterday, I just want to give what I say some context since not everybody was at the Public Works Committee meeting yesterday. But, ah, there was discussion around ah, different projects that were slated to be completed this year. Phil Barrett, Clifton Park by the way. And, there were six chosen that would be under consideration for delay. Three of them were from the Town of Clifton Park. Now one of them, now we have on the agenda today a bridge project moving forward in the Town of Providence. I was told that the Ashdown Road Bridge Project, would not be able to move forward because of it's quote unquote complexity I think was the description and the reasoning behind that. So, if we take that out of the mix, we are down to 5 projects considered for delay into 2021 possibly later but hopefully just the year. 2 of those are from the Town of Clifton Park. They are the re-paving of Main Street which is in very, very bad condition. We have County personnel going down there rather often to fill potholes and other, take care of other issues. And the other is a traffic signal design for the intersection of Grooms Road and Vischer Ferry Road. So, both of those projects together \$209,000. So, at the Public Works meeting, naturally, I expressed my disappointment that three out of the six projects were from Clifton Park. And, that, there were still two, again eliminating the bridge project on Ashdown, there was two of the five left were still from Clifton Park. And they are very important projects. We have certainly been waiting for the Main Street repaving and the traffic signal design at that very busy four way stop, for some time. Now to hear that these projects may be delayed a year at least is very disconcerting to our town and our residents, the residents of Clifton Park. So since the total project cost between the two is \$209,000 I wanted to you know if I'm going to express concern about the delay, I naturally want to bring forward a solution so I offered that the Town of Clifton Park would loan the money to the County, the \$209,000 so we can get these very important projects done, this year. They need to get done anyway. So why wait; why delay what needs to get done, what should be done for the safety of Clifton Park residents and residents of other parts of the County obviously because other people in the County that live in other parts of the County use these roads regularly so I want to just be on the record that that offer was made at the Public Works meeting yesterday that the Town of Clifton Park would loan the County \$209,000 to get these two projects completed this year. We wouldn't charge any interest unless it's legally binding that we do charge interest, I don't know the answer to that; but would be more than happy to waive any interest. It would also save the County money because then you wouldn't have the Public Works Department having to visit Main Street on a regular basis to do repairs as they have been. Now the Chairman of the Committee, Mr. Grattidge to my right, asked a good question which was has the Town Board of Clifton Park approved the expenditure. At which point I expressed that I was very confident that would not be an issue whatsoever because they too want to see these projects completed at the earliest possible time. Again, due to their importance. So, I did contact all of our Town Board Members and they responded very quickly. All in the affirmative that they do wholeheartedly support the Town of Clifton Park loaning the County \$209,000 to get these projects done. So I just wanted to update the Public Works Committee and Chairman Grattidge as well as all of my colleagues here so hopefully the Town of Clifton Park and the County can work jointly to get these projects done this year and avoid putting off the inevitable and avoid putting off extremely important projects. So, I just wanted to provide that update and look forward to additional discussions.

Mr. Pemrick: Thank you Supervisor Barrett. Appreciate it.

Mr. Grattidge: Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Pemrick: Yes.

Mr. Grattidge: Just a follow up on Supervisor Barrett's comments. I said at the end of that meeting that I would ask the County Attorney for a legal opinion on whether doing something like this would be possible. So, at this point that's what this committee would be looking at.

Mr. Pemrick: Ok.

Mr. Grattidge: On the concept of this. And also, just to clarify the Ashdown Road project. That project was pulled before the pandemic hit for reasons concerning the railroad that goes underneath that bridge and a number of other issues so it wasn't pulled because of budget issues it got pulled because of other logistical reasons. That's the only reason that one got delayed another year.

Mr. Pemrick: Ok.

Mr. Grattidge: Anyone that has worked with the railroad in the past knows that they aren't the easiest agency to work with.

Mr. Pemrick: Thank you Mr. Grattidge. More to come on this, I'm sure.

Mr. Barrett: What Chairman Grattidge said was absolutely correct. Phil Barrett, Clifton Park again. So that's why we are focused on the other two which is the Main Street paving and reconstruction and the traffic signal design at Grooms and Vischer Ferry four way stop.

Mr. Pemrick: Very good. Anything else to come before the Board.

Mr. Kusnierz: Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Connolly: Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Pemrick: Yes, Mr. Connolly.

Mr. Connolly: I just want to respect some privacy here but this thing is hitting close. We just lost someone from the Town. A family member not a direct employee. But they're in our region, just today, just got the text. I continue to urge folks to social distance. It's, this person was young and healthy.

Mr. Pemrick: It can't be easy to take, sorry for the loss. And a warning we should all take to heart. How about a motion to adjourn?

Mr. Kusnierz: Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Pemrick: Yes.

Mr. Kusnierz: I just want to express my condolences to my colleague, Supervisor Connolly, and it does, this issue is hitting close to home for so many people and when it hits close to family, you know it's a tragedy. But I do have some other comments if I may for the record. First of all, I feel compelled to echo the comments that were stated on the record from my colleague from Saratoga Springs. Every member of this Board, we represent the public. We are entitled to receive the same treatment from whether it's the administration or the leadership when we request information. I requested some of the same information that Supervisor Gaston has, I have not received it myself. These aren't partisan issues that information that we are looking for. They are people issues. They are Public Health issues. And when we don't receive that information it does a disservice to our community and a disservice to our County. So, I am hopeful that the request of Supervisor Gaston is acted upon in a timely fashion so she and I as well get the information that our residents deserve. Second comment I have is I had the good fortune this morning to be part of a working group call that was put together by Elise Stefanik. She had invited members of Fulton and Saratoga Counties elected officials to participate in that call. A lot of information came out during that. Wide ranging and lasted about 30 minutes. Some of the things that were pointed out. We had representatives from NYS on there and I do have two questions probably for the County

Administrator based on the issues that were raised on that call. In just in a synopsis, the time the NYS budget was adopted they were looking at about a \$6B deficit. As a result of COVID, they already have at this point in time a \$10B to \$13B deficit. So, things are just going from bad to worse. But there was language that was included in the State budget that single handedly gave the Governor sole authority through his budget director to take and move money around the budget with no legislative input. And that is something that concern all of us in this room. The Aid to Localities Funding, they are going to be drawing money from all different sources and that's going to have a direct impact on the County and our local governments. So, we should all be prepared for that. One of the things that the Congresswoman indicated that she is working toward is an aid package of \$7.5B for NYS Counties to be able to draw from. She is hopeful that legislation will be approved and signed by the President. Another issue that came up from a Supervisor in Fulton County was the issue of Sales Tax. Basically, being pilfered for nursing homes. So, the question I have is, the sales tax revenue that is normally able to be kept by the County, here is Saratoga County, do we have a projection on what that impact will have on our County.

Mr. Hellwig said: The report that was handed out today, right now, has an \$18M deficit in our operating budget. Sales tax, the projected sales tax number right now is \$28.5M below what was budgeted. So \$128M to \$99.5M.

Mr. Kusnierz: Thank you. The other big issue that came up was the concern for the opening of the DMV's. The residents need that service and they are hopeful that the State will get that, will give the green light to the County DMV's to get up and operating at their normal base. It was a good call. If anyone wants to talk to me in greater detail about any issues or anything else that came up, I'd be happy to do that.

Mr. Pemrick: Well thank you for the information, Supervisor Kusnierz. Anyone else.

Mr. Schopf: Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Pemrick: Jonathan.

Mr. Schopf: Since we are all here today, could I ask for an update on the investigation for HR.

Mr. Pemrick: Yes. Mr. Lawler.

Mr. Lawler: I will respond to your question, Jonathan. Our committee has already met with 6 individuals in 2 separate meetings that extended almost 4 hours in total time. We are moving forward with the schedule that was given to us by the Chairman and the Vice Chairman to try to have a report available to the Board at the June meeting. We have more meetings scheduled for this Friday. I'm speaking strictly to the internal investigation. I make no effort and have no information regarding the external investigation. So, we will be having our third meeting this Friday and I would expect by next, by the full board meeting next Tuesday, we should be able to give an update as to whether or not we can finalize our report for the June meeting. But that's what we are shooting for right now. So, we have had two with one more scheduled on Friday. We've got a list of probably a half a dozen people that we want to talk with or at least we want to ask if they will talk with us. So, we will end up with multiple meetings and will end up with somewhere between 10 and 15 people before we are finished.

Mr. Schopf: Thank you Supervisor Lawler. Is there an update on the independent investigation?

Mr. Dorsey: I don't know if they are reporting to Spencer or not but I know they are interviewing witnesses. They have interviewed most of the five people who were named to make decisions regarding compensation. I know they did interview me. Beyond that I don't know. They don't report to me or tell me who they are talking to and when so I know their investigation is ongoing and well underway.

Mr. Schopf: Is there an anticipated date for report that you know of Steve?

Mr. Dorsey: Not that I've been given, no.

Mr. Schopf: Spencer or Chad do you know.

Mr. Cooke: I don't know a specific time. I know, I have been interviewed. They have sent me another request for information today. I don't know who else has been interviewed. I have no, they have not shared any report plans with me in terms of time frame.

Mr. Schopf: Thank you. Spencer, anything from you.

Mr. Hellwig: No.

Mr. Schopf: Thank you.

Mr. Pemrick: Any other comments.

Mr. Lawler: Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Pemrick: Yes, Supervisor Lawler.

Mr. Lawler: I just had a question for the County Administrator, he's way, way back there. I hope he can hear me ok. Correct me if I'm wrong but haven't you just recently sent out a rather comprehensive financial analysis of the impact on COVID.

Mr. Grattidge: For Sales Tax.

Mr. Lawler: For Sales Tax purposes.

Mr. Grattidge: The Treasurer did.

Mr. Lawler: I think it came from Spencer but included Drew's attachment.

Mr. Peck: (other speaking as well) It came directly from Drew.

Mr. Lawler: I just remember getting something that spelled out everything you answered to Supervisor Kusnierz' question. I just wanted to make sure I wasn't imagining that I had already read it.

Mr. Hellwig: Yes, the treasurer sent a separate spreadsheet out with sales tax scenario's out.

Mr. Lawler: Thank you.

Mr. Kusnierz: Mr. Chairman. Just to be clear the specific questions I had answered were not contained in that document.

Mr. Pemrick: You ready to go home now.

Mr. Wright: Yes. Motion to adjourn.

Mr. Pemrick: Mr. Wright. Is there a second. Kevin. All in favor.

Several: Ayes.

Mr. Pemrick: And it's carried. Have a good evening everybody.

Respectfully submitted,
Pamela Wright, Clerk of the Board