

Saratoga County Reopening Advisory Group Minutes
May 21, 2020 – 3:00 p.m.

Chairman Lawler called the meeting to order and welcomed all in attendance in person and on the phone. Mr. Lawler said that Supervisor Veitch had a conflict this afternoon and was unable to attend. The minutes of the previous meeting were distributed. Mr. Lawler said that this is an advisory meeting and no formal adoption of minutes is needed. Minutes will be provided and published.

Mr. Hellwig gave an update of the Control Room activities. Mr. Hellwig said that on Sunday they were notified on their daily call, that all but one metric had been met. The one that was still a work in progress was the contact tracer metric. After that notification, Mr. Hellwig had a phone call with Sheriff Zurlo, Cathi Duncan and a number of other employees to move forward with filling the gap. By Tuesday, the region as a whole had met the 423 contact tracers number. Mr. Hellwig thanked Ms. Duncan for pulling together another 50 contact tracers in 24 hours and getting most of them trained. On Tuesday the Board of Supervisors approved the contracts needed to get the additional contact tracers on board. Mr. Hellwig said that as of yesterday, region-wide there were 307 businesses who had completed and signed the online affirmation that they had created a safety plan, and were in compliance with the various requirements to re-open. It's a work in progress how businesses in phases 2-4 will have to comply. Mr. Hellwig said that the County Attorney opinion relative to enforcement was sent out yesterday.

Mr. Zurlo gave a brief update on enforcement. Mr. Zurlo said that complaints are filed through NY Pause, the complaint is sent through the Command Center to the Sheriff's Department. First and second visits by the Sheriff to businesses are friendly reminders that they need to be in compliance. Third time, it is sent to the Attorney General's office. Mr. Hellwig said that one big revelation today is from the Insurance Industry, their coverage will not be valid if businesses are not in compliance with the guidelines.

Ms. Duncan gave an update on Public Health. There are 6 new cases since this morning. They currently have 80 contract tracers that have completed their training. The tracers will have the ability to work from home and input information into a universal database system, Com Care. The Department must report nightly to the Governor's office on the number of new cases, how many contacts were made that day, if all were contacted, how many contacts were reached and contacted in 48 hours. NYS have a supply of contract tracers that can be utilized as "surge protection" if needed in the future. Mr. Shimkus said that there was new news today from the CDC concerning the virus on surfaces. Ms. Duncan said that any changes to protocol comes from the NYS Department of Health, regardless of what the CDC says. Mr. Wait asked how stores or businesses have to react to capacity. Ms. Duncan said that she believes it is 50%. Specifics are not given at this point in time as it depends on floor space, how many people can be allowed in and still maintain social distance. Mr. Wait questioned about gym facilities and personal trainers. Ms. Duncan said that she has not heard anything on that matter yet, it is all up to the Governor. They did not expect the change in criteria toward religious services that was announced today.

Mr. Lawler said that the group had been asked by the Chairman of the Board and the County Administrator to offer an opinion as to whether the County should sign on to the eight county regional plan. A copy of the plan was previously distributed and comments were received. While everybody saw something good in the plan, there was some concern that the plan did not adequately address the needs of Saratoga county and was not specific enough. Mr. Shimkus distributed a one page draft resolution. The draft is attached to these minutes. Mr. Shimkus said that a lot of the regional report is helpful but a lot is just a copy of the State plan. The only legal requirement right now is the State plan. The end action of the draft resolution is to guide Saratoga County businesses to the website being developed by this group. Mr. Lawler reminded that this group is purely advisory and does not have any authority.

Ms. Duncan said that the draft resolution distributed by Mr. Shimkus is very simple and cautioned that business owners may underestimate the importance of setting up a solid re-opening safety plan. Mr. Dake agreed and urged that business owners need to be educated and understand the importance of having a good plan. While he has a large business where staff members can be fielded from other stores; smaller stores, with smaller workforces, could end up with much more severe consequences from having a bad plan. Exposure from one employee could end up closing an entire small business. The consensus opinion of the group to the Chairman of the Board and the County Administrator was to not sign onto the eight county regional plan.

Mr. Lawler thanked Nick Mauro and Matt Rose for their hard work on the new webpage. The draft webpage was projected for the committee to view. Discussions took place regarding the placement of information and design of the webpage. It was decided that the webpage would remain as a link from the main Saratoga County website homepage. Mr. Shimkus, Mr. Dake and Mr. Wait offered the services of their website graphic designers to polish up the look of the page. It was decided to go live with a soft launch of the website tomorrow in an effort to get the information out to the public as soon as possible. Updates to graphics etc. can be made later. The page can be found at www.saratogacountyny.gov/county-reopening/.

Mr. Lawler said that he had a conversation with Mr. Hellwig regarding promotion of the website in order to get the word out to businesses. Mr. Lawler has requested an allotment of \$50K from the COVID fund in order to contract with the Chamber of Commerce for this promotion. Similar to their tourism promotions, they already have the media insight, planners and contacts. The funding would be pass through funds, the Chamber not making any money on this service. It would be the quickest way to get the information out to the business community to get the economy up and running as quickly and safely as possible. The group agreed. Mr. Kinowski suggested the website be promoted on the next County Facebook live event, and through the two County economic development agencies. Mr. Shimkus said that they have a meeting every Friday with six different agencies and can come back with a plan and budget. Mr. Lawler said that the contract will need to go through Economic Development, Law and Finance, and the full Board for approval in June. Mr. Lawler said that Mr. Shimkus has graciously agreed however, to get started on this right away. Mr. Shimkus said that their plan would be to deploy the same type of resources that they use to promote tourism. Mr. Dake also suggested working with community bankers, as their lending officers work with the local businesses, to get the word out.

Mr. Lawler thanked the Chamber, Adirondack Trust Bank and Stewarts for their support on the website and the Chamber in particular for taking on the advertising and public relations piece.

Mr. Lawler said that the next steps for the group would be to look at the advertising campaign, the finished product of the website, and opened the discussion up to what other items the group should be looking at. Mr. Lawler said that emails from the website will go to Matt Rose. It was suggested to create an automated response to every email, in order to acknowledge every email, and that someone will get back to them within 48 hours. Mr. Hellwig said that he will be meeting with Mr. Rose regarding emailed questions. Some questions can be responded to immediately, some may need to be brought to the control room by Mr. Hellwig. The questions and answers can also be used to build out the F.A.Q. portion of the page.

Mr. Connolly suggested that if a business is spotted that are doing things really well, social distancing and well thought out plan, that a video could be created to highlight that business and show their set up and how it's working well. This video could be put up on the website to help people improve their policies and learn from each other.

It was decided that the group would continue to meet weekly at this point. The next meeting was scheduled for Wednesday May 27, 2020 at 3pm.

The meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,
Therese Connolly
Deputy Clerk of the Board

**Resolution Designating Saratoga County's Reopening Advisory Group website as the primary source
for Saratoga County businesses seeking reopening information**

May 21, 2020

The Saratoga County Reopening Advisory Group wishes to thank the members of the Capital Region Control group for its work to develop a "Capital Region Forward" plan. This plan is helpful in many respects including:

- Establishing plans for coordination between area health care facilities;
- Regional efforts to secure PPE;
- Increasing access to COVID 19 testing; and
- Creating an army of contact tracers.

We support all of these efforts and will do our part to collaborate with all parties within the region to accomplish these goals and objectives.

But at the time, we believe the State of New York has already created the best path forward for reopening our economy with their www.forward.ny.gov website. This site provides an easy to use and comprehensive industry-specific set of summary guidelines for employers to follow as well as a safety plan template.

Local businesses and employers are already using these guidelines and this template to create their own written plans and through the affirmation provided on this site to pledge that they understand what they must do to reopen safely.

We believe that the best way we can ensure business and employer commitment to reopening safely is to exclusively use the guidelines, affirmation and templates already provided by the State of New York.

Information about these state reopening guidelines and all other relevant information that will help employers and businesses in Saratoga County to reopen will be featured prominently and updated regularly on the Saratoga County's Reopening Advisory Group website.

We, therefore, resolve that this website shall serve as the primary source for support for Saratoga County businesses seeking reopening information.