

Health & Social Services Committee Minutes  
October 7, 2020 – 2:30 p.m.

Present: Chairman Dick Lucia; Committee Members Todd Kusnierz, Darren O'Connor, Sandra Winney, Tom Wood, Benny Zlotnick; Supervisor Tara Gaston and Chairman of the Board Preston Allen; Chad Cooke, Matt Rose, County Administrator; Steve Dorsey, County Attorney; J. Wes Carr, Youth Bureau; Michael Prezioso, Mental Health and Addiction; Cathy Medick, Public Health.

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

**On a motion made by Mr. Wood, seconded by Mrs. Winney, the minutes of the September 2, 2020 meeting were approved unanimously.**

**A motion was made by Mr. Wood, seconded by Mr. Zlotnick, to authorize an amendment to Resolution 163 of 2020 to revise rate of pay for transportation services with Rejha Group from per child to per bus. Unanimous.**

Mr. Carr said that in August the County entered into an agreement with Rejha Group to provide transportation for preschool children. As reported in August, they did not know at that time the effect Covid-19 would have on transportation. The bids that were sent out were developed using the standard use for the past 25 years. Now they have a better understanding on the limits and restrictions of Covid, and the greatest factor is the number of children allowed on the buses at one time. Currently the contract calls for payment on a per child per day basis at a rate of \$69.25 per day. The amendment will be to allow for a payment per bus basis. The bus rate would be \$390 per day and works out at this point to approximately \$90 per child. Normally a bus can hold up to double that amount. Currently there are approximately 125 children being transported. Regarding budget impact, there was no transportation provided for these children from mid-March, therefore there is funding available in the current 2020 budget. Additionally, fewer children are traveling. Schools used to be open 5 days a week, some are now only going 4 days a week. Parent transportation has also increased from an average of approximately 12% to 37% in September.

**A motion was made by Mrs. Winney, seconded by Mr. O'Connor, authorize Community Mental Health renewal contracts for 2021. Unanimous.**

Dr. Prezioso said that this is an annual approval of agreements with a number of service providers for whom the County acts as a pass through. Therefore, there is no budget impact, this is all State Aid pass through funding.

**A motion was made by Mr. Wood, seconded by Mr. Zlotnick, to authorize the acceptance of a grant from Health Research, Inc. in the amount of \$1,520,735 for enhanced COVID detection and amending the budget in relation thereto. Unanimous.**

Ms. Medick said that the grant is part of EPP funding for enhanced detection of non-lab Covid activities. Of the grant total, \$500K is available, and of the \$500K, \$390,551 is immediately

available, for reimbursement. 25% will be reimbursed after the initial 75% is used up. The \$1M is restricted by the NYS DOH and can be used at a later date if the funds are released. Most of the funding will be used for paying contact tracers, some will be used for additional equipment such as computers and software, and PPE. The grant will run through June 30<sup>th</sup> of 2022.

**A motion was made by Mr. O'Connor, seconded by Mr. Kusnierz, to authorize an amendment to Resolution 109 of 2018 to accept additional NYSDOH funding in the amount of \$49,601 for Year 3 of the 5-year grant funding agreement to enhance influenza outreach, promotion and vaccination activities for the 2020-2021 flu season. Unanimous.**

Ms. Medick said that this is part of the Immunization Action Plan. The funds will be used towards increasing education for influenza via advertising, outreach and promotion.

A short video was played for the committee. Dr. Prezioso said that this video is a public service announcement put together by the Saratoga County Suicide Prevention Coalition. Grant support came from the Suicide Prevention Center of New York. They targeted the Veteran population as part of the State wide effort to prevent suicide. Dr. Prezioso said that originally the plan was to stream the video at local movie theaters as part of the lead into upcoming movie attractions. Dr. Prezioso said that they are now looking at different ways to get it out to people such as social media and via networks of human service providers in the County. Mr. Zlotnick suggested that the link be sent to Supervisors for placement on their Town websites and Facebook pages.

**A motion was made by Mr. Kusnierz, seconded by Mr. O'Connor, to authorize advance funding in the amount of \$20,000 to the Shelters of Saratoga to be used for the provision of shelter and shelter services to the homeless during inclement winter weather conditions. Motion Passed. Ms. Winney abstained from voting until the Full Board.**

Mr. O'Connor said that he sent an email out shortly before the meeting today. He said that he understands there may be a problem with doing a minor contract with Shelters of Saratoga and because of this, the committee might want to consider a resolution to authorize a contract providing for funding for Shelters of Saratoga. Mr. O'Connor said that since it would be a Resolution and not a minor contract, the funding amount could be increased from \$15K to \$20K. Copies of suggested language of the Resolution were distributed. A copy of the handout is attached to these minutes. Mr. Kusnierz said that the State has provided funding to DSS for this program and as a result of the unique circumstances caused by the pandemic; increased spacing, staffing and other expenditures necessary to meet the public health needs, and due to the fact that this funding is typically reimbursed by the State, he would support offering this resolution. Mr. Cooke said that he discussed this with Supervisors Gaston and Veitch in the past. Ms. Winney asked if this was an increase from \$15K to \$20K. Mr. Kusnierz said that it is his understanding that the \$15K was agreed to, and it became an issue when there were discussions about a minor contract. It is his understanding that the Administration has expressed an unwillingness to move forward with minor contracts unless it directly benefits the County, so they thought it appropriate to bring it to the Committee this afternoon. Mr. Kusnierz said that typically this is reimbursed by the State. Mr. Kusnierz said that he cannot assure that the funding would be reimbursed due to the \$16B hole in the budget, however typically it would be reimbursed. Mr. O'Connor agreed. Ms. Winney said that CHIPS was cut 20% and she is not so sure that this would be fully reimbursed either. Ms.

Gaston said that the reason for the change is that \$15K was discussed previously with Shelters of Saratoga and discussions had been made they would receive it in order to prepare for this upcoming winter. Since they have not received that yet, they have to pay a premium in hiring staff and working on getting supplies they would have been able to get a little cheaper. Additionally Ms. Gaston said that it's only a little bit of a bump in order for them to supply the staffing and supplies for two facilities, which were based on the advice of the Public Health Department. Ms. Gaston thanked the Public Health Department for checking on both facilities, making sure there would be sufficient distance and also advising them on cleaning etc. Ms. Gaston said that this funding is as reimbursable as any other monies that come through for Code Blue. Ms. Winney asked how much the City of Saratoga Springs contribute. Ms. Gaston said that the City has cut their budget for any non-profits by 50% however, they also do not have access to reimbursement that the County has regarding Code Blue services. Therefore all of the funding that the City has provided comes directly out of their budget. Mr. Kusnierz read the proposed language of the Resolution (attached). Mr. Cooke said that it may be beneficial to include a whereas statement directing the Commissioner of Social Services to amend the Code Blue Plan submitted in September to include the additional services for reimbursement. Ms. Gaston said that she drafted the proposed resolution and recognizes the fact that it may need to be reviewed by the County Attorney to make sure it meets all the current requirements, she has no problem with the additional language. Mr. Kusnierz agreed to amend the proposed language of the resolution to include the whereas that the Commissioner of the County Office for Social Services is directed to amend the Code Blue Plan that has been previously adopted.

**On a motion made by Mr. Zlotnick, seconded by Mr. Wood, the meeting was adjourned unanimously.**

Respectfully submitted,  
Therese Connolly  
Deputy Clerk of the Board

WHEREAS, for at least the past four years the New York State Office of Temporary and Disability Services (OTDA) has provided funding to our County Department of Social Services for the provision of shelter and shelter services to the homeless during inclement winter weather conditions; and

WHEREAS, it is anticipated that ODTA grant funding will again be available this year for the provision of shelter and shelter services to the homeless during inclement winter weather, but the amount of said grant funds has yet to be determined by the State; and

WHEREAS, for at least the past four years Saratoga County has entered into a contract with Shelters of Saratoga, Inc. (SOS) for the provision of such shelter and shelter services to be paid for with said ODTA grant funds; and

WHEREAS, the unique circumstances of the provision of such shelter and shelter services in the course of the COVID-19 pandemic require additional space, staffing, and expenditures necessary to meet public health requirements for the population served through shelter and shelter services; and

WHEREAS, on September 15, 2020 the Saratoga County Board of Supervisors did, through Resolution 191-2020, enter into an agreement for the short-term lease of a portion of the County's office building at 31 Woodlawn Avenue in the City of Saratoga Springs for the provision of the shelter and shelter services; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Chair of the Board is authorized to execute any and all documents necessary to provide SOS with immediate advance funding in the amount of \$20,000, to be provided to SOS immediately after approval by the full Board of Supervisors and to be used as necessary by SOS for the purposes described above.