

Health & Human Services Committee Minutes
February 24, 2021 – 4:00 p.m.

Present: Chairwoman Tara Gaston ; Committee Members Phil Barrett, Eric Connolly, Joe Grasso, John Lant, Darren O'Connor, Tom Wood; Supervisors Mike Smith, Mo Wright; Steve Bulger, Matt Rose, Audra Hedden, County Administrator; Mike Hartnett, County Attorney; Pamela Wright, Clerk of the Board; Jason Kemper, Planning; Daniel Kuhles, Public Health; Michael Prezioso, Mental Health & Addiction; Sandi Cross, Office for the Aging; Tina Potter, Social Services; J. Wes Carr, Rebecca Robarge, Youth Bureau.

Vice Chairman O'Connor called the meeting to order and welcomed all in attendance. Mr. O'Connor said that Ms. Gaston is briefly delayed and will take over once she arrives.

On a motion made by Mr. Grasso, seconded by Mr. Barrett, the minutes of the January 27, 2021 meeting were approved unanimously.

A motion was made by Mr. Lant, seconded by Mr. Wood, to authorize major contracts for contact tracing services with Alana Martin in an amount not to exceed \$45,500, Deidre Hughes in an amount not to exceed \$39,000, and Kaitlyn Ellis in an amount not to exceed \$52,000. Unanimous.

Dr. Kuhles said that these three contact tracers have hit the limit on their minor contracts.

A motion was made by Mr. Grasso, seconded by Mr. Lant, to authorize the acceptance of \$9,133 in state aid from the Office of Mental Health (OMH) and the Office of Addiction Services and Supports (OASAS) for Cost of Living Adjustments provided to staff with contracted local agencies. Unanimous.

Dr. Prezioso said that this is accepting cost of living increases from the State for downstream providers.

A motion was made by Mr. Wood, seconded by Mr. Barrett, to authorize renewal agreements with 5 separate home care agencies that provide Expanded In-Home Services for the Elderly (EISEP) for the same rates previously agreed to in 2020 and effective from April 1st, 2021 until March 31st, 2022. Unanimous.

Ms. Cross said that the resolution and the rate is the same as last year. This is a housekeeping item.

A two minute break was taken.

Mr. Bulger said that Chairwoman Gaston wanted to bring COVID allocation up for discussion. There is currently approximately \$224K remaining in the funds. Ms. Gaston said that based on discussions with the Commissioner and Administrator, the funding is currently good and no action

is needed today. Last month they had discussed adding additional funds this month, but she would rather come forward with a solid number at a later date.

Mr. Bulger said that two proposals from DiRAD company were received. DiRAD is a call center company based in Halfmoon. There are currently over 8K names on the interest list. A call center line will be set up for residents that do not have access to a computer to call in and get registered on the list. The contract with DiRAD is designed for this. Ms. Gaston said that this will also allow Public Health personnel to engage in more field work or other activities. Ms. Gaston said that if this minor contract works out, they can then bring it to the full Board as a longer term agreement, larger contract. Mrs. Bennett said that they were able to obtain a county phone number which can be kept by the County after the call center agreement is completed. Discussion took place regarding having this number available 7 days a week vs. 5 days. Mr. Grasso said that he believes it should be 7 days a week for now and possibly roll it back as necessary. Mr. O'Connor agreed. Dr. Kuhles said that operators will do training, follow a script and pathway. Customer service is very important to Dr. Kuhles. Mr. Barrett said that he supports the initiative and said that it's important to state, as part of the messaging, that calling to get a name on the list is not a first come first serve basis, it may offset the rush a little. Mrs. Gaston said that getting the message out will be via media and can be included in a County press conference. Mrs. Gaston said that anyone can sign up on the interest list, and when the County receives vaccines limited to a certain category, the list can be sorted based on the priorities and the requirements of the vaccine. Mr. Smith said that he supports this call center initiative and also agrees that a resolution should come to the Board in March for a longer term agreement. Ms. Gaston said that a special Health & Human Services meeting may need to be held, or bring the item directly to Law & Finance.

Mr. Wright and Mr. Smith both expressed concerns over ensuring that the County and the Town message is the same message, consistent within the whole county. Mr. Bulger said that they are also working with the Office for the Aging team to communicate to seniors.

Mr. Grasso said that there are currently approximately 8K names on the interest list and asked if the list has resulted in people getting vaccinated. Dr. Kuhles said that there has been a national delay in vaccine shipments due to storms in the southern part of the Country. Within days the list will be used to not only vaccinate individuals in a County clinic but also link them to other locations where vaccines are available.

Mrs. Potter gave a brief update on the Emergency Rental Assistance Program which is part of the Federal Cares Act. The United States Treasury passed the bill for \$25B. Saratoga County submitted an application in January and have been allocated \$6,818,000 to help with this program for assisting households who were negatively financially impacted because of COVID. Currently the State is working on developing a portal which will be a centralized application process for these applications. The Senate Bill is working out some of the parameters for eligibility, and as soon as that Bill gets passed, hopefully in March, the portal will be open. Saratoga County can then do outreach and education to help with applications. Ms. Gaston thanked Mrs. Potter for her work on this program.

A brief discussion took place regarding what groups have already been vaccinated and at what rate. Dr. Kuhles said that they are almost complete with Fire, EMS and Law Enforcement. Very good progress has been done for schools and teachers. Ms. Gaston said that frontline grocery

workers has been difficult, they are working with some companies in the area. If anyone is aware of essential grocery store workers, please direct them to the interest list.

On a motion made by Mr. Grasso, seconded by Mr. Connolly, the meeting was adjourned unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,
Therese Connolly
Deputy Clerk of the Board