

TECHNOLOGY & RESILIENCY Transcript

3/25/2021

SPEAKERS

Steve Bulger, John Warnt, Phil Barrett, Joe Grasso, Eileen Bennett, Mike Smith, Tara Gaston, Michael Hartnett, Matt Veitch, Eric Connolly, Several Supervisors, Therese Connolly

Tara Gaston

Okay. Thank you everyone. Now that it's 4:02 we've determined that there is a quorum. Roll call has been taken?

Therese Connolly

I can take roll if you'd like.

Tara Gaston

Yes, please.

Therese Connolly

Supervisor Barrett is not here. Supervisor Connolly.

Eric Connolly

Here

Therese Connolly

Supervisor Grasso

Joe Grasso

Here.

Therese Connolly

Supervisor Peck is excused. Supervisor Smith.

Mike Smith

Here.

Therese Connolly

Supervisor Veitch.

Matt Veitch

Here

Therese Connolly

And Chairwoman Gaston.

Tara Gaston

I'm here. Thank you. So the first item on the agenda today is approval of the minutes from January 28. Those were emailed to all, do I have a motion to approve them?

Joe Grasso

So moved.

Matt Veitch

I'll second.

Tara Gaston

Supervisor Grasso seconded by Supervisor Veitch, any discussion? All in favor?

Several Supervisors

Aye.

Tara Gaston

Any opposed? Minutes have been approved. I guess the third item on the agenda is just boardroom upgrades update. I know that Supervisor Veitch previously with the Buildings and Grounds committee, also continuing along with the Tech and other committees are working on some improvements in the boardroom. And Director Warnt is on the line as well. Correct?

Therese Connolly

He's on the public line.

Tara Gaston

Okay. All right. So Supervisor Veitch, do you want to talk a little bit about what has taken place thus far and I know that going forward we're going to be opening accepting some bids for some changes.

Matt Veitch

Yeah, so far we've had a couple of meetings of some of the County staff from the Buildings and Grounds, from Board of Supervisors, County Administrator and the Director of Purchasing and IT and we've talked about some ideas about the solution that we're looking for the boardrooms, as well as the main committee room. And basically, it's really to enhance and improve our connection to the public using video, using better audio in here, although we've had some improvements in that these days. But just kind of getting a system that will work with both virtual software, it can be live streamed, basically improving the technology to that level as well as the display of our projectors, computers, updating some of that stuff in here as well. And I believe an RFP has gone out on that. I don't know if Director

Warmt can hear me, but that should be due shortly. And then we're going to have a meeting with some of our bidders and probably in the next couple of months have something ready I think.

Tara Gaston

So while the Director is switching over, if anybody has any particular questions, I think that's a pretty good rundown. I know, consideration of the upgrades have been in the works for a while to make sure that meetings are more accessible. I think COVID certainly showed us where we can improve a little bit on that. And I'm looking forward to that. I know there are a lot of different ideas. Director Bennett, do you want to talk about any of it from your perspective? Or you don't have to? I'm just saying, I know that you've been a part of the meetings.

Eileen Bennett

I think that we will entertain the discussion and the quotes that the vendors offer us because we're not AV specialists. So we're taking their expertise and reviewing that. And I think John's going to let you know, there's so many things coming up and that sort of thing for those bids. John are you in?

John Warmt

I am in. Can you hear me?

Tara Gaston

Yes, we can. Is there anything that you would like to say about the upgrade process?

John Warmt

Well, the RFP did go out, we made a couple of last minute changes, thanks to you and adding the time of the meeting to the actual document. We also added some language about public work and prevailing rate. We've had 25 plus vendors grab the documents off bid net, we do have a meeting next Tuesday at 10am to handle that pre-bid conference with those vendors that are going to attend. That's where we stand.

Tara Gaston

Great, thank you. And for clarification for the public or for anyone who may not be involved, this is primarily a tech and AV solution, as the Director indicated. These are not a lot of structural changes in the boardroom or anything like that. Do any Supervisors have any questions?

Joe Grasso

So just in terms of the scope with the RFP, is it just evaluation or is it like design build or design bid build? What was the approach to the RFP?

John Warmt

The RFP was designed as a turnkey solution for the boardroom and the committee room. Design and build.

Joe Grasso

Okay, thanks.

Tara Gaston

Any other questions? Anyone on the phone? Okay, thank you for that update, I think it's going to be really helpful, and I'm looking forward to get that done as soon as we can. Alright, the next item on the agenda is the Saratoga County website. And first, I want to make it very clear, this is a discussion of what we might want to see in our web, there's been a lot of discussion about, I use the word improvements in quotes, changes that people want to see to our website, particularly Supervisors. And I'd like to have just a brief discussion of that. One, to see whether it's something that can be done relatively easily and quickly right now; Two, if it's something that IT or our current provider, what do we need to look at to make any additional changes? Because I don't want IT to work with our vendor and make changes and then that's not really what we're looking for. So it's just sort of a brief discussion of if there's any functionality or whether it's just color. I know, there are a lot of people with different ideas. So if anybody has any particular suggestions. I know one of my big things, one that I'd like to see integrated, I don't know if it's website specifically, but I'd love to see more automation and delivery of documents, minutes, agendas, that sort of thing. Both for ease of our staff, but also just ease of use on the website. What else? Supervisors? Any animated construction, GIF's or?

Matt Veitch

So, I guess as the responsible party for starting this website back in 2012, or 13 or so, when we did our contract with Kilakwa. I just think really from my perspective, it's just it's more of a refresh upgrade feel more than, I mean, maybe that means a redesign of some extent of it, but to me, it just feels kind of stale and old and hasn't been really updated much since we put it together. Although we haven't really asked for any of that since then. So I just think we still kind of have the same header photos that we had from the beginning, the arrangement of the site is still kind of the same way that it was. And as technology moves on, those kinds of design updates and changes happen over time, to different websites for ease of access for different kinds of upgrades, occur within the background code that can make things more efficient. And it's just really kind of I think looking at it from a more of a design perspective for me than anything else. It just kind of needs a refresh that that's all. And I in our I think our vendor has done a great job. It's just that we've, just kind of not kept it up really in terms of refreshing it. That's really it.

Tara Gaston

Yeah, I mean, this is definitely nothing to speak or, or even expected discussion about the vendor. It's just like, what are we looking for in the website? Like you're saying, if it's a refresh, do we want to consider colors, pictures? I know some people like flashy pictures on website, some people don't? I do not. But I kept hearing that we wanted to see upgrades or changes and kind of something more specific, because then talking to Director Bennett, it's hard to say, can you talk to our vendor about making things look better? If we're not giving a definition of what that means? So at least to some extent. Supervisor Connolly, are you?

Eric Connolly

Yes, I'd like to chime in.

Tara Gaston

Okay, go ahead.

Eric Connolly

The Town of Ballston right now is working with a different vendor than Saratoga County uses. We're working with Civics Plus, it's going very well. It is not a cheap product, but we also invested into software that Pam and Therese might want to look into called Civic Clerk, they have a number of products and I'll start with civic and Civic clerk allows the Clerks to not only make agendas very quickly and efficiently, but also can take real time minutes, get those posted actually during the meeting. It also allows for word searches on the website, and you can scan in all of the old agendas, and it recognizes the characters and everything becomes highly searchable. They also have a tool called Civics engage that would be really good in engaging people in the municipality getting information about various topics or concerns. So I just encourage the committee to take a look at that product, and see do you want to continue on with the same vendor or do we want to do a true rebuild, with improved usability, improved search ability and improved engagement?

Tara Gaston

Alright, thank you. I think sort of what you just mentioned, readability, search ability and engagement, those are the kinds of things that are the more specifics, because I don't know, as Supervisor Veitch referenced, to my knowledge, no one has gone to our current vendor and said, Could you please make all of these changes? So I'd like to see what those changes are that we're looking for? Maybe they can do it, maybe they can't maybe we need new software, maybe we don't. But right now, I think we have a setup, we need to know what we're looking for, and then I'm going to rely on the expertise of our IT Department to tell us what the best step is after that, to make sure, maybe it is a different vendor, maybe it's not. But I think what would be most helpful, especially after talking to Director Bennett is having those kind of specifics, okay, so we want people to be able to search more easily than they can now. All right? We want people to, when you say readability, do you mean busyness, more graphics? Is there a specific there or easier to use?

Eric Connolly

I don't think I mentioned readability. I mentioned search ability, the ability to engage the public.

Tara Gaston

Okay, apologies. When you say engage the public, one thing that I think of when I think about engaging is in an ideal world, we would use some more GIS, and people be able to report issues with roads or something else on our website. Is that the kind of thing or do you mean just searching and inputting things, taking payments, any specific parts of that?

Eric Connolly

I have a different vision of what engagement would be. We have constituency, right? And we have all of these funds and we have all these programs, what do our people in the County want to see happen? What do they care about? And to be able to quickly and easily gather information from our public right on our website I think you'd be valuable.

Tara Gaston

All right. Gotcha. Thank you for that. County Attorney, did you have something?

Michael Hartnett

Thank you, Supervisor, if I may, from my perspective, one thing that I would ask the Committee to take a look at with the website, if it's a usability thing, is from a FOIL perspective, there are certain documents that there are routine requests for. Things like contracts, and if there was a mechanism on the website to make on the front end, when we have those documents come in to the County Attorney's office, redact them as appropriate, proprietary information, social security numbers, things like that, then have them in a publicly searchable format on the County website. Right now, the FOIL request comes in and it's ad hoc, as the request comes in, it's responded to, I think it could end up being a cost savings in the long run, to have those documents accessible to the public. I don't know, I'm not an IT guy necessarily, how that would exactly look, but something where there was a drop down menu. Right now, it's I think, a little bit cumbersome. When something's uploaded to the website or a link is created for it individually, if there was some way to have a repository on there that was searchable, I think for what is after the 1st going to be my Department, the County Attorney's office, that would be extremely helpful for us and with the Public Access Officer, who is inundated with FOILS on a daily basis, and it may be able to save some costs in the long run. Thank you.

Tara Gaston

Is there any way that you could collect some information you or the Clerks on about how many of those you get or how many documents you think might need to be stored? Because I think that might impact?

Eileen Bennett

We don't have a limit, we can add those right away.

Tara Gaston

Okay, easy peasy. But for my purposes, at least, that would be interesting. If like, how many and if there are certain types, or Departments that find the most of them, obviously, like you said, contracts are going to be a major one. And that would be useful, at least going on even if we can get, which is awesome.

Michael Hartnett

There would have to be some systems and processes developed for appropriate redactions and things like that, where they were public facing. But I can interface with Eileen afterwards. But if there is going to be a refresh of the website, perhaps that could be something that could be added to that refresh from my perspective. I appreciate the time. Thank you.

Tara Gaston

Oh, great. I definitely want to ease the time when responding to that. County Administrator?

Steve Bulger

I just want to follow up on what the Chairwoman said about payments. And I apologize, I probably should know this. Do we have capability on our site for any of our Departments, take online payments via credit card right now? Some Departments do.

Eileen Bennett

Some departments do have that capability. They don't do it from our website, there's a link on our website to get to like Govpay or one of those third party vendors that the County contracts with to accept payments on our behalf.

Steve Bulger

Okay, thank you,

Eric Connolly

Madam Chair.

Tara Gaston

Yes Supervisor Connolly.

Eric Connolly

I'm on our website right now. And I just went into the search. And I typed two words, Zim Smith, which has certainly been mentioned at many meetings and absolutely nothing comes up. So to me that's not a website that's really working very well. One of the reasons that we did purchase that Civics Clerk software was because we could enter forms, agendas, any information we wanted, and the optical character recognition would automatically be picked up in the search. If the public can search things very effectively, like the Attorney mentioned, it will result in a reduction of FOIL requests.

Tara Gaston

Thank you also, Supervisor Veitch?

Matt Veitch

So I think along those same lines, as Supervisor Connolly was mentioning is that I think is what we're, when we say like we are looking for a refresh. I think that's kind of like what we're kind of getting at right? It's a little, like for the Zim Smith example, it's a great example, because a lot of people probably want to find information about that out when they go to our County website. But the problem with that is that the information about that is kind of not in a very straightforward way to find even if you knew how to find it. I think it's under the Planning Department, and it's in like a documents link that you go down into like a third or fourth click before you get to it. And so, that might have worked pretty well back in 12, 13, or 2011, when we built the website, but today, people aren't really, the functionality of it isn't what people are looking for, they want to get there immediately, and if they don't find it within one or two clicks, they're done with the website, they go somewhere else. And so it's not serving today's modern kind of web browser. I mean a lot of people don't really use websites even that much anymore. So that's what I'm, I guess what I'm trying to get at, and I'm not sure what the best way to tackle this is for this Committee. Whether it's to develop or have some of us look at it and come up with some ideas about what we'd like to see in a website. And whether that is something our vendor can do or whether we'd have to do an RFP for that. I guess I'm not sure, I'm wondering what the next best way to tackle this would be. Whether we have some staff look at it and come back with some suggestions or, because we kind of need a framework of what we're looking for, or what we want to see on the website.

Eric Connolly

Can I make a correction as well please, this is Supervisor Connolly. When you search Zim Smith, it does come up, but it's eight bullet points down. So it's not, like Matt said, super user friendly.

Tara Gaston

Okay, yeah. So part of this discussion is to find those things that we're looking for, so that we can figure out. Like if putting documents up and searching them right now, we can do that right now. Whether anything else happens, we can go ahead and make improvements, and then continue it further on. In addition to having this discussion here, I think it's important to have some public engagement on it. Because we also know where things are. Like I can find meetings and agendas and information quickly because I'm familiar with it. So getting some information from the public about how they expect to use our website, if they expect to use our website, and what they would like to see there. Maybe people who use it, don't want to make payments through it. I don't think that that's true, but it's possible. Maybe we find most people are looking at it for trails, or real property. That may end up with a different result than if most people are looking at it are looking at it for Social Services, or Heap benefits and that sort of thing. And so I definitely, in addition to what we are looking at, which I think, thus far, I'm not seeing anything, it's mostly we want things to be searchable. Some of that's probably going to be a product of the documents that we're providing to IT in order to be put up there in any case, format, and then being able to host documents. With regards to public input. Any ideas or thoughts on the best way to get it? I think part of our problem is that we are not engaging the public as best we can. So I don't know that putting out something on our website saying please tell us about the website is going to work very well. I see a lot of laughing so I'm guessing that may be accurate.

Matt Veitch

Well, this could be eight clicks down on the..... Just kidding.

Tara Gaston

I do, like for the 15th time I think I've said this a couple of times. This is nothing against our IT Department. The board has not asked them to do any different, I would not expect, changes need to be made but IT has done an incredible job of responding to the demands already. We're now asking for something else again. So when we make jokes about it, please note that Supervisor Veitch did that and not me. (laughter)

Matt Veitch

So this record will be verbatim as well as all the rest of them at the end of the day. And I would say that I don't know how you engage the public directly. I mean, I was thinking survey, but that may not be a great way to do it. Have a series of questions like when you visit SaratogaCounty.gov, what would you, what are the top three things you would do there? Or try to figure out where they go? Because I guess we can count hits on pages, right? You see how many hits you get on certain pages on the website? That that we track I know, it's on the pages. But, what else are they looking for when they get there? I mean, to be frank, they did a study, I don't know, six or seven years ago, maybe five or six years ago, on websites for towns and cities and counties in the capital region, we actually scored really well for the stuff that we had on there. So we do a pretty good job with our website already. But, it just

feels kind of outdated and needs an improvement. So, but again, I know what I go to the website for. Usually minutes, or agendas or the budget, or things like that, but I'm not there for trails, because I know where the trails are, and I just go to them, but other folks may need to know that.

Tara Gaston

Supervisor Grasso?

Joe Grasso

So we talked about getting the feedback from the public. I would not overlook the opportunity just to put a suggestion box on the homepage. I mean, I think to what Matt was saying, people will, if they can find what they are looking for within 20 seconds, they'll stay on, if not, they get frustrated, and then they drop off. But they may take an extra 10 seconds and let us know why they're going to drop off because they can't find it. And I think that's a great way, because you need the information from the user right then, that's when we're going to get the most valuable feedback. And you talked about the Department's. I assume that the County doesn't use like an intranet base system that every private organization or large private organizations have. Do we use an intranet for our staff and departments that is separate from the website? Or are we using the website to find information? Our staff, our departments?

Eileen Bennett

Oh, we have an intranet as well.

Joe Grasso

Okay. So we do have that.

Eileen Bennett

We do, and any department can ask us to add information through that. There's management forms....

Joe Grasso

Right. So there's two separate platforms going okay. All right. And we're really only talking today about the external facing website then.

Tara Gaston

Yes.

Joe Grasso

Okay, good. Good to know.

Tara Gaston

And just for everyone, Supervisor Barrett has joined, he was in another meeting, and now he's come back.

Eileen Bennett

Occasionally, just as an FYI, we do occasionally get public comments in regards to the website. Under contacts, there are all the departments as well as a general inquiry. General inquiry comes to my email for me to address those things. And so there is a quick access to them.

Joe Grasso

Okay. Great. Thanks, Eileen. And then Matt mentioned about the data on where people are going to? I mean, I would love to see that data in terms of the things that are being used. I think that's a good starting point as well.

Tara Gaston

Can we get some utilization data for those pages?

Eileen Bennett

Yes.

Tara Gaston

And yes, I will say, I know that the contact and the help works, because when the interest list, vaccine interest list opened up. There were a lot of people who if they had an issue or a question, we're sending them along. So there are definitely people who are utilizing that, but I think we could encourage that as well.

Steve Bulger

Just one question for Eileen. As Matt mentioned, a couple of people mentioned, you can track or it says right on the bottom, how many people visited total and today? Is that reset every night at midnight? Or how does that work? Because sometimes the numbers it seems there's an awful lot. And I'm thinking wow, a lot of people have gone on and it's only like eight o'clock in the morning.

Eileen Bennett

The views for today, that would be reset whenever the servers are and I don't know that specific for you, but I could find that out depending on where those servers reside. It could probably be in a different time zone even but I can find that information out.

Steve Bulger

It's not urgent. It's just a question I have because I've seen that over the years and it's like, wow, it can be interesting data. How many people visit. Okay, thank you.

Tara Gaston

Supervisor Connolly. I'm sorry, I think you said something and I completely skipped. Are you still there?

Eric Connolly

Yeah, I'm just going to bring up a simple point that getting the information from the public is going to be very challenging because you have so many degrees of people's skill sets with the internet. One of the things that we could do is look at other counties in other states, and just study their websites, and what

do they have that seems to be working really well, or seems to be a good part of their website that you can begin to assess kind of a watch list that way.

Tara Gaston

Okay, so, homework for the Tech and Resiliency committee. Oh, sorry. Yes, Attorney Hartnett?

Michael Hartnett

Thank you, Madam Chairwoman, I appreciate your time. I just wanted to comment on a follow up to Supervisor Connolly's comment. In working on the Executive Order 203 group, I had the opportunity to search other municipalities and what they were doing in that process. And so there was a wide range of other municipalities and what their websites look like. I would just encourage the group to look at Westchester County's website. It was fantastic and it sticks out in my mind now, months later, how usable it was, how searchable it was, and it was just a wealth of information. So seeing what other counties and municipalities do, take a look at Westchester. I appreciate it. Thank you.

Tara Gaston

So now, I will give homework, and no one can cheat off of Attorney Hartnett.

Matt Veitch

I just have one more comment before we get my homework assignment. I did want to mention that, because we were kind of going around talking about the modernness of our website. And the truth is, that if you go if you go to the Public Health pages, right? And you go to some of those, the ones have been created most recently, they seem to be the most easy to use, right? So like going to find your vaccine site and all the reopening guidelines and all that kind of stuff. That's all very well done. Because it's done the most modern. So I think if again, it's one to two clicks to get to where you've got to go, right? And you can navigate that really well. I got to the vaccination list site to find that very easily. So you can tell, and again, if a page hasn't been updated in a long time, it's not that way. So again, just to make that point again, so alright, hit me with some homework.

Tara Gaston

Well, I should hope that you got to the vaccine interest list very quickly, because I know that they worked to put that on the very front page at the very top. So if it is taking you more than two clicks, we are going to have some reeducation classes. But thank you. Okay, so the homework that I am suggesting, at least from us, from this Committee, is that for our next meeting, everybody go look, and no one can go look and bring Westchester County as an example, because Attorney Hartnett has already suggested that, but if there are certain County websites or certain functionalities, as an example, if you can bring them and let's make sure that we get them a week before our next meeting. That way, I can compile a list and then send it out to everybody, and we can all kind of look at it, and see are there common out, like if everybody brings back websites, and they all have a certain ability, that seems like a consensus that we all want this one thing on our website. If some people bring back things that everybody else is going eer.. then you know, maybe that's something that we need to have a discussion about. But maybe the visual part of it may be better than, we're talking about readability and access, I know what that means Supervisor Connolly has a different idea. Everybody may not, and staff who are here or throughout the County, if they have any suggestions or preferences for how they

would like it, please, Administrator make sure that those are also passed so that we can get those out and that the Committee can review what's going on. Our next meeting is April 29. So if everyone could just get those, Therese is it okay if they send them, do you want to send them to me or is it okay if they send them to you?

Therese Connolly

Whatever is easier for you.

Tara Gaston

Okay, ideally, if you could send them to Pam or Therese please just so that they're all condensed in one and then you can just send out a list with everything. And that goes for everyone, IT department, if there's something that you would like to see particularly or like us to consider in that, that may require some more of our support. Let us know. Because I agree, I think in general, we have a lot of good stuff up there, we're getting out some good information. Let's just shine it up a little bit. And maybe that will give us a better idea of what exactly we're looking for. Any other comments on the website? Okay, so the next item on the agenda is resiliency plan. So there were two links that were put on there, I asked for only one part of it to be included, because obviously, these plans are generally pretty lengthy. But when I think about the resiliency part of this committee, and some of the things that we can do. Developing a resiliency plan, has been really helpful in a lot of counties and getting some funding, engaging the community in planning and processing and helping to find where there may be holes that we have to consider in the future. One of ours that we're working with, with this committee, and through some other committees, including Government Reform is in the event of a crisis, how do we respond? But part of resiliency planning is what crises are we responding to? Or are we preparing for all of them? Because obviously, there are some that are different than others. And more likely, in our area, we are less likely, if not, not zero, but less likely to have a tornado hit us than in other areas, I said less likely. And so this was one example of a resiliency plan playbook that comes from US government, the National Institute of Standards and Technology is kind of the playbook for how to develop a resiliency plan, and what you should consider as a part of it, step one is forming a collaborative planning team, which I think at least part of this Committee is the collaborative planning team. I think at the County, we actually have a lot of supervisory committees and other committees that deal with this general topic in some aspects. We've obviously got Buildings and Grounds, we've got Public Works, they're going to be dealing with a lot of the issue of resiliency, this Committee through the Technology, and then Public Health, and they're planning for looking forward and Public Safety with OES, which does obviously a lot of planning and responding to emergencies. The difference between the resiliency plan and an emergency plan is a resiliency plan is not looking at how you react to, it's how you minimize the impact of an emergency on your government, your business or your community, and how you recover from it. So a resiliency plan is more of the before and after, whereas emergency planning is the during and the immediate after of any sort of crises. And obviously, this was just part of it. There are lots of templates on how to move forward how to make a consideration. What does the committee think about, obviously, this is a long term plan. This is not a homework item that someone is going to get for the next meeting, or for the next three meetings. But what are the thoughts from this Committee of sort of developing a plan working with our various departments to develop a plan like this, I know that Government Reform is looking at records management, which is definitely a part of resiliency. Public Works can be a part of

that, all the different departments. But I'd like to see us head drive, some sort of planning like this. So I will toss it out for thoughts. Supervisor Veitch?

Matt Veitch

I didn't really get a whole heck of a lot of time to look at this before the meeting. But I mean, I'm wondering if the step one and forming a team. And again, I don't know how much authority we have here at this Committee. But I'm wondering if this should include more than just internal County folks, or whether there's some of our outside Committees that we have, or generally a member of the public or a few of them to kind of look at this as well with us and do it as a bigger kind of a bigger program.

Tara Gaston

Do you think it's a good idea for us to move forward and this sort of idea?

Matt Veitch

Oh, yeah.

Tara Gaston

Okay. Good. Yeah, I mean, I think there's got to be, I agree, I think the public, there are some like Saratoga Plan. I know we have outdoors groups and that sort of thing. I definitely think..

Matt Veitch

And some of the social services agencies and things like that. Yeah.

Tara Gaston

Anyone else to Supervisor Barrett, Supervisor Grasso? Any thoughts? This is a lot of pieces of paper. So there's no test. But the packet that's attached to the agenda is basically the steps in developing a plan. And it's pretty detailed and obviously can be modified however. Any other thoughts on it?

Joe Grasso

So just in terms of the scope of the resiliency planning, though, I'm still trying to wrap my arms around it. This isn't just government function, resiliency planning. So it's not internal, it's looking at the County as a whole, all of our various systems, populations. You know, just what's the scope of our review?

Tara Gaston

Well, that could be as narrow as broad as we would like.

Joe Grasso

I mean, I think that's something that we need to come to grips with. Are we looking at this in terms of the County infrastructure, say, I would think our Sewer Department would have its own resiliency plan for all of our sewer systems, the plant and all distribution. Water would have its own resiliency plan, the airport may have its own resiliency plan. Are we talking about that or are we talking about more of a social, like, hey, alright, when we're dealing with these possible catastrophes, manmade or natural disasters. Are we looking at the impacts on the whole County, all of our populations and towns,

villages? I'm just trying to wrap my arms around what the scope of our Committee is trying to look at? I would like to know that so when I read through this, I could at least put it in the right context?

Tara Gaston

Well, I would say this particular outline is for community resilience. So that's going to be more broad, that's going to be how Saratoga County in general is. What is our resilience? What is our ability to respond to things? Are there weak links? Are there strengths? And where do we need to share. Part of that is because the County, we handle so many aspects of the public, but there are also ways that the public and other agencies and communities can work with us. I know, in the floods in Texas, it was not in fact, the government that responded to individuals when there was, sorry flood, the ice and the snow. It was not the government that was respondent, they couldn't get there because nobody could, because there were no snowplows there. It was smaller community groups that had been trained to respond to these sorts of things. So is that a useful effort here? Is that something, I know there is the cert team through emergency planning? Is there a benefit to expanding that and providing maybe some more resources and getting some more training? I have not looked into it at all, I just saw that the governor announced there's a Public Health Citizen Program that the State is now releasing to train people in responding to public health, identifying crises and that sort of thing. I don't know much about that, so I wouldn't necessarily advocate that or not. But that sort of thing. Where are our weak links, and where are they not? One of the things that really concerned to me in the beginning of COVID, is that we have this resource in the special needs registry, that was significantly underutilized. And that is a resource that can really be used in the event of emergencies, in the event of illness, that there were not as many people on there as I would have expected, given the needs that we're now seeing arise. So that's something that then as a part of our resiliency, we need to work to plan to build that so that in the event of a crisis, we can respond faster, having that list there. And that's sort of what the resiliency plan is. How do we need to work as a government and with our community to better prepare and then to bounce back? That was a lot of lecture. And, Administrator?

Steve Bulger

You brought up a great point regarding this crisis we're in right now, and what we thought we may have had and didn't have, or did have and didn't realize we had. So would it make sense, this is obviously the biggest overall crisis we've faced in our lifetimes as a County, right? Would it make sense to focus on the lessons learned from, that we're learning right now, and how we can address some of those things based on what we've just been through. Kind of to Joe's point, about how do we focus this because it's such a broad topic. So I'm just throwing that out there for the Supervisors consideration. Because we're living through it right now and there is a lot of lessons we're going to have to learn and improve on.

Tara Gaston

I agree. Absolutely lessons learned, and assuming, not assuming, whenever we get to the other side of this, there needs to be a lot of after action, discussion, and reporting, that would definitely be part of that. So it sounds Supervisor Grasso, and possibly the Administrator, your interest is in focusing on the resiliency of government itself at this time? Of Saratoga County government? There's no wrong or right answer. I'm just asking.

Joe Grasso

I would think that's the easier place to get to quantifiable results, is the focus on that. I'm just thinking that's a good place to start.

Tara Gaston

Okay, Supervisor Connolly?

Eric Connolly

When I think of resiliency, and I listened carefully to what you were saying, Supervisor Gaston, and I just think where are our weaknesses? Are we prone to any major problems occurring within how we do business? And the one that always jumps off the page at me is the software that the Treasurer's office using and how antiquated, outdated it is. And then probably two people who are near retirement that know how to code it for changes. To me that like a glaring weakness and does not speak of resiliency in any way.

Matt Veitch

Madam Chair?

Tara Gaston

Supervisor Veitch.

Matt Veitch

From what it sounds like, I think we should look maybe internally first, and I think there are, like you say several committees that kind of touch this, whether it's Government Review, or Buildings and Grounds or DPW or whatever, there's more than just that. It sounds like they think that's probably the focus first, maybe a more narrow focus into the county and its own resiliency first? And then maybe look at the broader view of community wide resiliency as a as a second step. I keep thinking that when it comes to things that maybe are bigger than the County, and I think one of the challenges we have here in this Committee is that this is kind of really new ground for the County, and we don't have any experience in this. And so we're not really comfortable with knowing or understanding how to take the next step. I was almost thinking is there a consultant that we could talk to? Or somebody who kind of does this on a more professional level? Because I you know that we have, everybody knows our department really well. But, are we going to be able to do a comprehensive resiliency plan in the County without help? I don't know. So. but just a thought, but maybe focus internally first.

Tara Gaston

Okay, so it sounds like the interest is primarily internal, at least with this Committee. I will say, I would like to see some external looking as well. However, if the focus of this Committee, the preference is focusing internal then I think that should be the focus of this Committee. However, I will consider perhaps developing an ad hoc Committee for the purpose of looking outside of that, and then this Committee can be focused on the internal and then we will look at the other as well. Part of that, I think, is probably a cross reference with the Public Health Committee and Mental Health, obviously, there's a lot of resilience there. And I think that the community needs to be involved in part of that. But I definitely want to keep this more narrow as the preference of the Committee because if the Committee wants to

stay that way, if we go any broader, that's going to make it more difficult for us to do our work. Supervisor Barrett, did you have any thoughts about it?

Phil Barrett

No, not at the moment.

Tara Gaston

All right, thank you. Alright, and as for consultants nor, I think it's possible to do with or do without, that's something to be discussed. But part of it was definitely I wanted to look at whether we wanted the broader focus or the more narrow focus, and right now, it sounds like we're going to be looking internally. So we will start doing that then because I do think that that's pretty important for us to start considering. Any other thoughts on resiliency plans at this time. Any other business? Any member of the committee? Any staff, anybody have anything? All right, hearing nothing do I have a motion to adjourn?

Joe Grasso

So moved.

Tara Gaston

Supervisor Grasso.

Matt Veitch

Second.

Tara Gaston

Supervisor Veitch again. All right all in favor?

Several Supervisors

Aye.

Tara Gaston

Any opposed to adjourning? All right. We are adjourned. Thank you.