

Health & Human Services Committee Minutes  
March 31, 2021 – 4:00 p.m.

Present: Chairwoman Tara Gaston ; Committee Members Phil Barrett, Eric Connolly, John Lant, Darren O'Connor, Tom Wood; Steve Bulger, County Administrator; Michael Hartnett, Michelle Granger, County Attorney; Jason Kemper, Planning; Pamela Wright, Clerk of the Board; Michael Prezioso, Mental Health & Addiction; Daniel Kuhles, Public Health; Sandi Cross, Office for the Aging; Tina Potter, Pat Maxwell, Social Services; J. Wes Carr, Rebecca Robarge, Youth Bureau; Eileen Bennett, IT; Duane Vaughn, Shelters of Saratoga; Sybil Newell, Paula Tancredi Penman, RISE Housing & Support Services.

Chairwoman Gaston called the meeting to order and welcomed all in attendance.

**On a motion made by Mr. Wood, seconded by Mr. Barrett, the minutes of the February 24, 2021 meeting were approved unanimously.**

**A motion was made by Mr. O'Connor, seconded by Mr. Barrett, to authorize an inter-municipal agreement with Warren County for the oversight and monitoring of Assertive Community Treatment Services on behalf of Saratoga County. Unanimous.**

Dr. Prezioso said that this will add assertive community treatment services to services that are already operating in conjunction with Warren and Washington Counties. The services are already being provided, this is just to reflect an update of the MOU to include the new service.

**A motion was made by Mr. Wood, seconded by Mr. O'Connor, to authorize the acceptance of increases in State aid in the amount of \$11,400 from the New York State Office of Mental Health. Unanimous.**

Dr. Prezioso said that the stipend for senior housing beds was increased to beneficiaries. RISE provides the community based beds with various kinds of support, counseling and connection with other services to help sustain people who are vulnerable in the community.

**A motion was made by Mr. Barrett, seconded by Mr. Lant, to authorize the acceptance of an additional \$91,165 from the New York State Office of Mental Health for the Veteran's Peer to Peer program. Unanimous.**

Dr. Prezioso said that is to accept the release of funds previously allocated through 2020 to December 31, 2022 for the operation of the Joseph P. Dwyer Veterans Peer to Peer program.

**A motion was made by Mr. Barrett, seconded by Mr. Wood, to authorize the acceptance of restoration funding from the New York State 2020 budget in the amount of \$230,127 from the New York State Office of Mental Health, Office of Addiction Services and Supports, and Office for People with Developmental Disabilities into the 2021 budget. Unanimous.**

Dr. Prezioso said that this is to accept funding that had been withheld during the third and fourth quarters of 2020 when there was much uncertainty around the State budget. This allows the County to accept the funds that have been released that had previously been withheld into the 2021 budget.

**A motion was made by Mr. O'Connor, seconded by Mr. Connolly, to authorize the acceptance of a \$13,000 incentive payment from New York E-Health Collaborative. Unanimous.**

Dr. Prezioso said that the E-Health Collaborative is under the umbrella of the State Office of Mental Health. Dr. Prezioso said that the new electronic health record was introduced and now has established the last of the communication links with the Health Information Exchange for New York, earning this incentive payment.

**A motion was made by Mr. Lant, seconded by Mr. Barrett, to authorize major contracts for contact tracing services with: Ashley Hubbard in an amount not to exceed \$52,000; Caroline Regales in an amount not to exceed \$39,000; and Matthew Prock in an amount not to exceed \$45,500. Unanimous.**

Dr. Kuhles said that these contact tracers are currently under minor contracts which are approaching their limit. All three are doing a great job and are needed for the immediate future.

**A motion was made by Mr. Connolly, seconded by Mr. Barrett, to authorize an amendment to the major contract with DiRAD Technologies. Unanimous.**

Dr. Kuhles said that DiRAD is the company the County partners with to assist with vaccination efforts. They take inbound calls to help residents register from the interest list, and also help schedule appointments. Beginning next week, eligibility for vaccine is for every individual in New York State 16 years of age and older, therefore it is anticipated that the demand is going to increase. Having this contract allows County staff to focus on getting vaccines into arms rather than doing scheduling work. Mr. Kemper said that this amendment will remove the \$50K cap on the contract. Projecting out to this week, it is anticipated that the current bill with DiRAD will be approximately \$43K. The amendment will also end the contract as of December 31, 2021. Mrs. Bennett said that the interest list has approximately 26K applicants, of which 16K have been selected for outreach. DiRAD will allow for outreach to a large number of people if a large amount of vaccines become available. Ms. Gaston said that she would like to see a report at each meeting on the status of the agreement and how much has been expended.

**A motion was made by Mr. Barrett, seconded by Mr. O'Connor, to proclaim May as Older American's Month in Saratoga County. Unanimous.**

Ms. Cross said that the theme is communities of strength, focus on power of connection, engagement and building stronger communities. This is an annual item.

**A motion was made by Mr. Lant, seconded by Mr. Wood, to authorize the acceptance of federal stimulus funding under the Consolidated Appropriations Act, Title III-C2**

**administered and released by the New York State Office for the Aging in the amount of \$85,315. Unanimous.**

Ms. Cross said that the Consolidated Appropriations Act Title 3C2 provides supplemental funding for senior nutrition. These funds are designated for the senior nutrition program.

Mrs. Potter gave an informational update on the Emergency Rental Assistance program. This is a Federal program that is in place to assist households to pay for their rent or utilities, because of them being impacted by the Covid 19 pandemic. Mrs. Potter said that she completed an application to the United States Treasury, and Saratoga County will receive \$6,818,000. 10% of the funds can be used for administrative expenses. Mrs. Potter said that this item will be going through Law & Finance to accept the funds and set up the corresponding budget accounts. Mrs. Potter said that she expects the need for additional staff in the Temporary Assistance Unit to help with the application process. Mrs. Potter anticipates doing an RFP for a non-profit in the community to do outreach and application assistance, to ensure landlords and tenants in need of aid are reached. At this time the State is in negotiations with the Legislature and are very close to completing the parameters regarding eligibility. Once the State portal is open the County will need to be ready to go.

Mr. Duane Vaughn gave an update on Code Blue program. The navigation center at 31 Woodlawn was open from December 9th until March 10th. This is where they had an opportunity to open Woodlawn during the day as not only a warming station, but serving lunch and coffee daily and building relationships with other agencies in the community such as RISE, Salvation Army and Captain. In the 67 days of service, the duplicated number of people served was 1,411. The average was approximately 22 people daily. Code Blue as a whole between 4 Adelphi Street and 31 Woodlawn, has had 145 nights so far, with average guests nightly 33.25. A pop up clothing drive hosted by Captain was held on March 24-25. Police calls were down by 95%, total incident reports were 10, 7 police calls and 3 medical emergencies. People were fed every night at no cost to the County. Mr. Vaughn thanked Public Health for getting their staff and guests vaccinated. There were no COVID cases at Code Blue the entire season. Code Blue opened at 4pm in the evening and closed at 8am, except for Woodlawn when it was open during the day. Mr. Barrett thanked Supervisors Gaston and Veitch for bringing the plan forward. Ms. Gaston said that she appreciates how much Shelters and the County Departments have worked together.

Ms. Sybil Newell, Executive Director of RISE addressed the Committee. RISE was formerly Transitional Services and have been in Saratoga County for 40 years providing primarily residential services for mental health and substance use. They also provide housing and support services for individuals who are experiencing homelessness, as well as those with chronic medical issues. Programs range from group homes, to apartment treatment, to supportive housing, which are more independent apartments. Ms. Newell said that they have residential substance abuse treatment, which is the only residential substance use treatment in Saratoga County. They have a large care management program as well as rental subsidy programs for those who qualify income wise. Ms. Newell said that they are building two affordable housing projects, one in the Town of Ballston and one in Corinth. Ms. Newell referred to the handout that was provided with the agenda. The proposal is to renovate the space that they currently have into a drop in center to provide space for socialization, skill building classes, pre-vocational classes. Ms. Newell said that they have

community partners that are interested in working with them such as the Prosperity Partnership, Create Studios and Pitney Meadows. Ms. Newell said that the funding request for the first year is \$75K however the need for the first operating year would be \$250K. They are hoping to supplement with fundraising from the community and are expecting strong community support. Ms. Gaston said that her plan is to work with RISE and the County Attorney to draft a resolution for presentation at the next committee meeting.

**On a motion made by Mr. O'Connor, seconded by Mr. Connolly, the meeting was adjourned unanimously.**

Respectfully submitted,  
Therese Connolly  
Deputy Clerk of the Board