

HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES Transcript

4/28/2021

SPEAKERS

Ed Kinowski, Steve Bulger, Darren O'Connor, Phil Barrett, Tara Gaston, John Lant, Michael Hartnett, Eric Connolly, Daniel Kuhles, Sybil Newell, Several Supervisors, Therese Connolly, Joe Grasso, Tom Wood

Tara Gaston

All right. Thank you everyone for being here at the April 28 meeting of the Health and Human Services Committee, attendance has been taken?

Therese Connolly

Yes.

Tara Gaston

Thank you. I'm Supervisor Gaston. I've had some questions from people calling in, if you could please say your name at the beginning of it. I think it just helps our Clerks but also helps anybody who's listening in so they know who they're responding to. Alright, so second item on the agenda after attendance is approval of the minutes of the March 31 2021 meeting. Do I have a motion?

Tom Wood

So moved Supervisor Woo, I'll make the motion.

Eric Connolly

Second Supervisor Connolly.

Tara Gaston

Thank you. All in favor?

Several Supervisors

Aye.

Tara Gaston

Any opposed? Minutes are approved. Third item on the agenda is from Dr. Kuhles and Public Health is our one year contracts for contact tracers. I believe these are just, they're similar to what we've done before. These are people who have rolled over from a minor contract, and now we're keeping them on longer. Is that correct?

Daniel Kuhles

Yes, thank you. Supervisor Gaston. These are three of the contract tracers that are in that same situation as the others and we believe it's important to keep out, even though cases have gone down and plateaued a bit, it's important to keep the infrastructure in place to be prepared for another surge.

Tara Gaston

Okay, I sincerely hope that we do not need them for that.

Daniel Kuhles

Likewise.

Tara Gaston

But each of these items, one of them the request is, so they would be paid for the time that they work, but the contract would not exceed that. Okay, do we need three different or is one okay?

Michael Hartnett

It can be all one motion.

Tara Gaston

Okay. Thank you, Supervisor Lant?

John Lant

I'll make a motion to appoint all three of them.

Tara Gaston

Thank you. Is there a second?

Phil Barrett

Second

Darren O'Connor

O'Connor, Second.

Tara Gaston

All right. Any further discussion?

Joe Grasso

Supervisor Grasso, If I could just ask a couple questions to Doctors. Appreciate the information, and I'm supportive of the of the move. Just a couple questions. So their salaries are different or hourly rates are different because college graduate versus non college graduate?

Daniel Kuhles

Some of them... I'm so sorry.

Joe Grasso

The differences in the hourly rates and annual salaries is that based on degreed or not degreed? What would cause a difference in the compensation for different contact tracers?

Daniel Kuhles

Some of them have more expanded refined functions. So it's a different level of contact tracer.

Tara Gaston

Doctor, apologies for interrupting, their hourly rates are actually the same. It looks like one of them is authorized for more work per week.

Joe Grasso

Oh okay.

Tara Gaston

One of them was able to work 35 hours per week and the other two were 30 hours per week, so I think that's the difference in the cap for them.

Daniel Kuhles

I'm sorry, I thought you were talking globally about the contact tracers as opposed to these three particular ones. But yes, these three, as Supervisor noted, but we do have, I think back in December we hired some contact tracers that were more team leaders and things like that. So some of them do make a different wage, but not these three particularly.

Joe Grasso

Great I'm all set.

Tara Gaston

Any other discussion? I would like to say, I know, at least I won't mention by name, but I've heard of at least one of these by name, and then some others who have been excellent, especially in particularly sticky or sensitive contact tracing. So I think it's important to keep giving Public Health those people to help solve it because they keep us all safer. Okay, so it's been moved, second. Any further discussion? All in favor?

Several Supervisors

Aye.

Tara Gaston

Any opposed? All right, it's approved. Matter passes. Alright, item four on the agenda, a transfer from fund balance to the Public Health operating budget. So this item is regarding the COVID relief funds and Full Service funds?

Steve Bulger

Just the COVID relief funds for today. We thought, in looking at it, we decided the expansion of Public Health, that should be under a separate appropriation.

Tara Gaston

Okay, I agree with that, although I thought that was going to be under line item number five in here. But what I'll say is, it is my request as Chair that we not act on this right now, we will act on it at the Law and Finance meeting. I've already spoken to Dr. Kuhles about this. I do not have sufficient background information that I think the Committee needs to determine how we've spent the money previously, and what we're doing going forward. This is a large sum of money that is absolutely warranted to spend. But we owe it to the public and to our fellow Supervisors to be able to give a better explanation. I think that we have that. It's being built, I guess, and we will have it at the Law and Finance meeting. But I think that that's important to have it there. As opposed to here. I am, however, open to any discussion or questions that anyone wants, as is the Health Committee. I know we do have some general information. Do you want to provide some of that Administrator Bulger?

Steve Bulger

Sure, I'd be happy to. So currently, out of the original million dollars, that was appropriated last year, all told a million dollars for last year, and this year from fund balance. We're basically down to about \$15,000 left in unencumbered funds. So we have been using this, and it's a big number that we've gone through. However, we have also submitted well over a half a million dollars to FEMA and some other potential reimbursable, Federal or State reimbursable entities, and we're waiting for that money. No idea when it's gonna come. FEMA is overwhelmed with these requests. As you can imagine, nationally, every county, and major cities are sending these requests in, we don't know when that's going to come. So it's our belief, and we can get into a little bit more details if you'd like Chairwoman. But it's our belief that we don't have time, we're going to have to move some more money over to the COVID Relief Fund. To just cover costs, what we're doing, we're building and I apologize, it's not ready for today's meeting, that's my responsibility. We'll make sure it's ready for Law and Finance. We're going to try and build this out and working with Dr. Kuhles and his team, and the entire team here, through the end of July. That's our goal. Because beyond that, it's real hard to predict what's going to be happening with COVID and vaccines and all that. So we have some records here of what we've spent. We're anticipating, in a rough ballpark estimate between now and July, roughly another \$600,000 in expenses and we can if you want, we could get into it, or we can wait until Law and Finance till we really break it down.

Tara Gaston

I think it's appropriate to wait until Law and Finance because that's when we're gonna have the details, and I would also like to say I recognize that this is a timely issue and by putting it to Law and Finance, but making sure it's there, we're not actually pushing the time out any for members of the public, it can't be approved fully until the full Board meeting. Although if either you as the Administrator or Commissioner Kuhles, have a concern that there's insufficient cash on hand, to make it that far, I would like to be advised, because then we will make sure that there's a special Board meeting called prior to that time. But I just want to make it clear by pushing it to Law and Finance, we're not extending the

amount of time, we're not delaying any transfer of funds, we're just not going to look at it here, we're going to look at it at the Law and Finance meeting, so that we can discuss particulars.

Steve Bulger

And to that point, I've already discussed this with Brian O'Connor our Director of Finance, we're good through May to get us to the May meeting, but by the May meeting, we will need to make a transfer. So but in terms of funds available, we'll be okay. Unless there's any other questions that you have right now?

Tara Gaston

I think that's it for the COVID relief funds. So the preference from you and Commissioner Kuhles is not to do a transfer? Or you don't you don't want to do that Public Health expansion? We discussed that a little bit in the next item and why, but you don't want to do that. You don't want to act on that right now?

Steve Bulger

Originally, we thought that it would be good just to do one transfer from fund balance to cover both the COVID expenses, and the expenses for converting to a full service Public Health Department, which those expenses are already starting, and they're only going to grow too. But then in looking at it, and I think our finance team agrees, it'd be cleaner to do it separately. So it would be two separate transfers. If the Board agrees.

Tara Gaston

Okay, but do we feel comfortable bringing that up? Okay, so I think we're just gonna assume item number four was just for the COVID response. We'll discuss in item number five, the expansion generally, and then the potential for transfer of funds. Will that work for you? Okay, thank you both. I agree. It is cleaner to separate it that way. So, alright, so item five, well, does anybody have any other discussions on the COVID Relief Funds? Yes, Supervisor Grasso.

Joe Grasso

So just in terms of the City Center contract that expires in the end of April? Is that going to expire? Or are we going to extend that or don't need to extend it? What's the...

Tara Gaston

Regrettably, I don't anticipate that being used as a mass vaccination site.

Joe Grasso

Yeah, that's why I was asking.

Steve Bulger

Yeah, the current contract expires at the end of this week, I guess. And we have no plans to re-up it for the \$2,000 per week rental. Doesn't look like we're gonna need to.

Joe Grasso

Okay, I'm all set.

Tara Gaston

Any other discussion on the COVID Relief Funds? Okay, I know Administrator Bulger, they did indicate that they would have that ready, I'll make sure that this Committee gets copies of that detailed information as well before Law and Finance. And if you are here, and not on Law and Finance, I would appreciate it if you came and gave your opinion as members of the Committee as well, or provided it ahead of time. Alright, so item number five, the Public Health Department expansion. So we're expanding the Public Health Department. This is something New York State Department of Health has been requesting a little bit and it has become less of a request, and more of a this is being done right now. Dr. Kuhles, do you want to talk any about the difference or the process? You guys are getting a lot more people and a lot more responsibilities. But we're basically looking, the potential is that we're going to be doing it in smaller chunks, like in steps, building blocks, instead of just in one fell swoop. So Doctor Kuhles?

Daniel Kuhles

Yes, thank you. So when we refer to a full service Health Department the main difference between a Partial Service Health Department which we are now, and a Full Service Health Department, the main difference is the provision of Environmental Health Services. Currently the State Health Department provides those in Saratoga County and other partial service counties across the State. Environmental Health Services, the one that I think most people are probably familiar with are restaurant inspections, but it includes a tremendous swath of programs, public water supply, realty subdivisions, looking at connections of water and things like that, looking at x-ray equipment, swimming pools, you name it. It's kind of part of that and so the State Health Department as Supervisor Gaston mentioned, this has been on their agenda for about a decade really or more. And we're now in a process, working with them collaboratively to try to identify how many permitted entities across these whole array of environmental health services are there in the count, and how many staff, basically full time equivalent is the State devoting to programs in the county. And, you can't just turn that expertise on and off. So I believe there's an understanding that this is going to be an iterative process, where we take a chunk at one time, get that personnel going and get that program up and running, and work on the next one. And so some of those programs I'm very familiar with, because my background, for example, restaurant inspections, doing Infectious Disease Control, there's a lot of overlap. And some of those, that I've run in other local health departments like lead poisoning prevention, some of those really are a different level of expertise, like engineering when you're talking about realty subdivisions and water supply connections. And so it really needs to be an iterative process. But this will bring us in line with other counties that are as populous or more populous than we are here in Saratoga

Tara Gaston

It will also allow the Commissioner to get out of the epidemiology dark dungeon that he's been in during COVID, because it will provide additional support for those sorts of activities. So at the last Board meeting, we discussed and we passed a resolution authorizing a contract with a law firm. I'm hearing three different pronunciations. So I'm going to not. With a law firm who has experience and expertise in regulatory issues, which is important, especially because the people who have done this are generally not in State government anymore, because it hasn't been done at a county for 20 years, approximately.

Daniel Kuhles

Yeah.

Tara Gaston

So the Chairman is going to be appointing an advisory committee to help oversee this, because it's going to need much more frequent and in depth touches than our regular Committee meetings. At this time, my understanding, I'm not the Chairman, I cannot make this appointment. But my understanding is it's going to be me as the Chair of this committee, Commissioner Kuhles as the Commissioner, Supervisor Schopf as the Chair of Law and Finance, and then we have graciously accepted the expertise of two individuals who have participated in this sort of transfer before, who will be working on that with us. That said, there are going to be costs accompanied with a lot of this. And so it was a recommendation to provide a line for Public Health, for the Public Health expansion costs, specifically. One to keep it separate from the rest of the budget, but also so that we can further track these and I believe the recommendation was \$200,000. So does anyone, I will move that. Does anyone want to second it for discussion? And then we can talk about.

Phil Barrett

Second.

Tara Gaston

Alright, thank you, Supervisor Barrett. And so this would be separate, and only the costs from the Public Health expansion or are tied to it would come from this. Are there any questions or concerns? I think this would pay the cost of consultants, which will be necessary. Presumably. I am not an expert in this, are any of you an expert? If you are we will take you, we will take your free work. But it'll pay for consultants and that sort of thing potentially travel if the Commissioner or Administrator, someone else needs to go and see a site and what's taking place and learn more about it. That sort of thing. Supervisor Barrett?

Phil Barrett

Well, I know we're behind the eight ball as far as the timeframe the State is expecting this to happen very quickly, because it hasn't occurred yet. So I think we need to move with expediency and get this process in gear quickly, and move towards finalizing an expanded Health Department, I have the utmost confidence, Dr. Kuhles and for him to oversee that expanded operation, look forward to supporting him in that effort. And so putting this money aside is a good move. So thank you, Chairman.

Tara Gaston

I do want to say that we have been taking some steps along the way, there have been good faith efforts, there have been discussions, I've taken part in some with the Department of Health as well, and the law firm to talk about what's needed. What are the next steps? So we are not at the very beginning. Okay. Supervisor Lant, I can't tell if your light's on or not. Any other questions?

Tara Gaston

Madam Chair?

Tara Gaston

Is that Supervisor Kinowski?

Ed Kinowski

Yes, it is.

Tara Gaston

Go ahead.

Ed Kinowski

Thank you. I wonder if Dr. Kuhles could provide, during this process moving forward, guidance for the local Health Districts that exist in the townships, because I understand that once the County level goes to this direction, we are supposed to disband our Health District. So if you could respond to that, or later on provide the necessary guidance, it would be appreciated.

Tara Gaston

So given the fact I have two people gesturing at each other, I'm just gonna say, that is definitely a part of it. There's both an operational and a functional part of this, and also the small p political. So like how the towns and different districts work together. We have already tasked I know, Administrator Bulger and County Attorney Hartnett have asked the law firm to look into some of the structural tax etc. issues so that we can present that to all the Supervisors so that we're aware of what will be taking place. But if either of you have any specifics? I just don't want to put you on the spot, because I know that we're very...

Daniel Kuhles

The process that you're referring to is becoming what's called a 340 District and establishing a Board of Health and there are certain rules and regulations that that need to be followed. And, Mike?

Michael Hartnett

Thank you, Madam Chairwoman, Mike Hartnett here, I would agree with Dr. Kuhles statement, transitioning to a 340 district, it's kind of a two pronged approach with this transition, the Environmental Health Services, and also the 340 District, and that does involve notification to the townships and cities, and some implications there, which is part of that process.

Ed Kinowski

Alright, that's important to know, simply because we submit budgets every year (inaudible) for residents to support a local health. Not going to be if we're going to (inaudible) then I don't want to submit a budget for next year.

Tara Gaston

Supervisor Kinowski. We're cutting in and out a little bit, but I think I got the gist of it. But yes, that's one of the, that's why it was one of the requests that we very quickly, even before the advisory committee began to get at least that specific information so that we could provide that because there will be action

needed by the Board. And we want to make sure that people have appropriate notice, for both the County budget and our municipal budgets.

Ed Kinowski

Thank you.

Tara Gaston

Anyone else on the phone have any other questions or comments? Okay, so I moved for the separate item for \$200,000, specifically for Public Health expansion. Is there any other language that specifically needs to be included in that motion? Okay. All in favor?

Several Supervisors

Aye.

Tara Gaston

Any opposed? The matter passes. All right, item six on the agenda is regarding the RISE Social Club. This is something that I brought up last month, and received generally favorable comments about it. And so my request is that we consider now authorizing \$75,000, I guess I'll move that, authorize \$75,000 for the beginning stages that were discussed last time, the development director, etc. And we've discussed previously that any larger amounts that we had discussed would go through the normal budget process. But I think that's appropriate for us to do to go ahead and get them started, at least, especially since we're outside of the budget process. And additionally, I know I don't see Dr. P here now, but I know last month, he spoke in favor of expanding Mental Health programs and noted that this particular social club would provide opportunities that do not currently exist in Mental Health. So Sybil is here. Do you want to, Is there anything else that you would like to say regarding it, or does any Supervisor on the Committee have any questions? Oh, sorry. Thank you. This is why we have clerks. I moved it, but we don't have a second. Will anyone second it?

Eric Connolly

Second.

Tara Gaston

Thank you. Supervisor Connolly. All right. Thank you.

Sybil Newell

Hi, I'm Sybil Newell from RISE. I'm happy to take any questions about the Social Center if anyone has any. Last month, we presented a proposal, just to get us started on the Social Club. It's a service that is conspicuously absent right now for people who have mental health concerns in our county and the surrounding areas. So I've been working with Supervisor Gaston and Supervisor Veitch on coming up with a proposal for this. And does anyone have any further questions for me?

Tara Gaston

Supervisor Grasso?

Joe Grasso

Supervisor Grasso. So just I'm unfamiliar with this RISE? I've read some information on it. Is this a County owned and operated facility or organization or part of the County or?

Tara Gaston

No, it does work closely with the Office of Mental Health. And I think Sybil can probably speak more to that, and I know at our last meeting, Dr. Prezioso spoke about it and the work that they've done.

Joe Grasso

So this is a not for profit, that operates in the County?

Tara Gaston

Yes, but I think any technical or specific should go to Sybil and not to me.

Joe Grasso

Alright, you're a not for profit?

Sybil Newell

Yes, we're a nonprofit agency. We've been in Saratoga County for 40 years, you've probably heard of us in the past as Transitional Services Association, or maybe TSA. We recently changed our name to RISE. And we are licensed by the Office of Mental Health by the Office of Substance Abuse Services, and we do work very closely with Saratoga County Mental Health.

Joe Grasso

Alright, so just a follow up question. Supervisor Grasso, just, how do these requests, where do they start from? Are they starting from a Supervisor that's got an affiliation or relationship? Or is a Supervisor approached by an organization? And then a Supervisor brings it to a committee for funding request is that?

Tara Gaston

I mean, I think they request can come any of a number of ways.

Joe Grasso

How did this one begin, just so I know the process?

Tara Gaston

Well, I would say for this, I know that both Supervisor Veitch and myself have both been very interested in the work that now RISE, I'm sorry, I'll probably trip and say TSA, has done, that we've been engaged. I know that RISE has done projects across the County, particularly with affordable housing, mental health resources, etc. And this was one of the discussions that we started to have, especially as I was kind of reaching out, as was Supervisor Veitch, out to other Supervisors concerned about the mental health resources, especially as we start looking at COVID. And then looking at what's available and what's not. And this provides an opportunity for individuals who can't quite do the structured PROS programming that Mental Health offers right now. And Dr. P seems pretty supportive of it. I think

expanding our Office of Mental Health Programs to encompass this would cost far more than is on this piece of paper, in addition to the fact that that building is out of room, so there are no more people that could go there. And I just thought it was a good and important way to expand our services and support our community. And so we discussed that, and I was happy to bring it forward. And I know, that's one of the reasons I bought it last month to discuss any concerns or questions, so that any additional information that needed to be provided could be provided. But that's kind of how it worked in this process. RISE has also been really engaged with the navigation center with Shelters of Saratoga, and helping to do Rapid Rehousing and that sort of thing. And so I know that they are both familiar with and integrated into the community that's going to most need these services. Is that?

Joe Grasso

I'm good.

Tara Gaston

Supervisor Connolly?

Eric Connolly

And Supervisor Grasso, they have a location in the Town of Ballston that's been very successful, helping folks and they're also expanding behind their current location in Ballston. So very familiar with them and their work.

Tara Gaston

Yes, they also have some locations that they're working on in housing as far as Corinth As far as Corinth, we're running out of Saratoga at that point. And part of the discussion when we brought this last month, but in other discussions is I wanted to make very certain that this was not only going to be for residents of Saratoga Springs, and part of their planning and their process was to make sure that there was transportation and opportunity so that individuals from around the county who would benefit from these would have the ability to get there, because obviously, that's going to be of most benefit to the County. Supervisor, Barrett?

Phil Barrett

Thank you. So is the thought that if \$75,000 were awarded now that in the budget process, that would be an additional request of 275. And then, I guess in future budget years, 253 and 253, as it's estimated here, is that the case?

Tara Gaston

I think that's certainly a potential. I think that it would be worth the funding if the County were able to do that and if the Board would support that. I also know that RISE has been working and will continue to be working on obtaining funds other ways, I know that they're working with Dr. Prezioso, on being able to obtain payment for some of the services offered, and get some grants, etc., which would also cut down on the amount of funding necessary from other sources, including the County.

Phil Barrett

And the reason I asked that is obviously, that's a significant amount of money, especially from an outside agency. And typically, those requests are done through the budget process. However, I think based on the streams of money that might be made available to the County in 2021, as well as every other governmental entity, that perhaps there's an opportunity to have a separate application process for outside agencies with regard to funds that might be available. Personally, I'd like to, I know we did talk about this to some extent last month. But, if we say, if we approve \$75,000 today, for instance, it's gonna be real hard to say no to 250 when it's requested in a couple of months. So I think if we approve any money today, it's with the mind that there's obviously going to be a request in a couple of months for 250. And that it's going to be hard for this group to say no, at that point, because it sounds like a partnership is being formed through the discussion that I'm hearing at the Committee and I think before we get into that kind of an in depth partnership, I think we should look for other funding sources and talk about this, consider it a little more, before we make that commitment. It sounds like a pretty large commitment. I mean, over the, from the numbers that are provided, we're looking at 675, and so that would be the commitment through 2024. I personally would rather not vote against this, because I think there is a lot of positive attributes for a prospective partnership, and I appreciate Chairman Gaston bringing it forward. But so, I'd rather not vote no, but I don't think I'm ready to make this large commitment at this time.

Tara Gaston

Administrator Bulger?

Steve Bulger

So I apologize. I was in quarantine the last time this was discussed at the Committee. So I guess my question, I really haven't seen much other than some of the paperwork. How will this be structured? Is this a, basically just we're gonna just give them the money? Is it a grant program that we're setting up? Is it a contract that we're setting up with them? I mean, I think for these types of things, we need to know exactly what the money is going to be used for, and then if it is a contract or grant that's got to be tracked, and there's got to be reporting requirements. I haven't seen anything maybe that exists? And I apologize. Like I said, I wasn't involved in the original discussion on this but just from a finance perspective in talking about it with the County Attorney and in our Finance team, we would want to know, I think, exactly what the money is going for, how it's going to be tracked, especially if we're looking at setting up a multi-year relationship here. That would just be my concern right now just to try and get more information. Thank you.

Tara Gaston

So I would say, for my perspective, one, as the Board, as the Committee where it's coming now, but as the Board, we can make a decision on how that is structured. And so I would not presume to say it would be in any certain format, we can choose that. And if there is a format that we are comfortable with, we can present that to RISE and say, is this something that can be done? Or is this not going to actually be helpful? I mean, I think that's the discussion that we would have as a Committee and then presumably as a Board. That is why I brought it up last month for discussion prior to now. I will say, I don't like saying it, but I will regret saying that I do not enjoy the fact that I am now being presented with some of these concerns from the Administrator's Office and the Attorney's Office that if there were

those questions regarding something that was presented a month ago, it would have been my preference that we could sort that out so that I have that information at this meeting. Being blindsided as a Chair with those concerns is not particularly helpful with that. But I would say as opposed to the setup, whatever setup there is, that would be a decision that we make, if we are going to authorize such funds. I would say it is a large sum of money. I would also say that if you look at our Law Enforcement Budget, our Corner budget, and other related services, the County is spending far more than \$200,000, in responding to crises such as this. So with respect to the amount of money, that would be where my argument is, is that we are already spending, what I would consider an obscene amount of money, responding to things, where programs like this and others throughout the County could work to prevent them, which is where I would rather see money spent, but obviously, I am only one member of both this Committee and the Board. Supervisors Grasso?

Joe Grasso

Yeah, so my concerns are about these things that we're committing ourselves to that are residual, and obviously there's going to be a budget impact, and I hate to just kick everything up the Law and Finance to look at without understanding ourselves how it fits into our budget. I obviously think it's a worthwhile cause. But, it just looks like we're subsidizing or funding in possibly great extent, a not for profit, that we aren't going to have control over the operations of. And I just wonder, not knowing too much about the organization, is the funding that they are going to require from the County going to be required in order for them to be viable in the future? Because that would affect my comfortableness with funding, the quarter million dollars next year.

Tara Gaston

What was discussed previously was that it was primarily for the first year, a couple years, maybe to three. Ideally, not that entire amount, but as they get up and they get the additional funding streams going. So that is my understanding is my expectation correct Sybil? I don't want to speak for RISE.

Sybil Newell

Yes, we're hoping for the first few years of operational funding to be put up front so that we can put some other mechanisms in place. We're looking into some Medicaid billable funding that could help us support it, as well as private donations. And we are looking into a number of grants, we've already applied for several. I do know that Dr. Prezioso in the past has looked at transporting individuals from our community to take advantage of this exact service that exists in Warren County. So I know that the County was already willing to put in a significant chunk of money to take individuals from Saratoga and bring them all the way up to Warren County to take advantage of a service very similar to this. There's just a large portion of the mental health community that can't participate in the kinds of day programming that's available currently. And as a result, as Supervisor Gaston mentioned, many people are left with nowhere to spend their time, a lot of people are out on the streets, wandering around, getting into other sorts of activities where it takes a lot more community policing to oversee. Where if we can give people a place where they can go, they can feel welcomed, we can support them in ways we can kind of keep an eye on what's going on, teach them skills and provide alternative recreations. It will really save us money in the long run. In addition, we won't have to be outsourcing that to another County.

Tara Gaston

Supervisor Grasso, does that? Okay. Supervisor Barrett?

Phil Barrett

Is that something, I don't know, if there's situations where obviously, the identity of people needs to be protected. But this place that you're talking about in Warren County, is that a place that we're allowed to visit and see how they operate, and talk to the folks that operate the facility, and get a get a sense of exactly who they're serving? And who, why, when and where type of questions?

Sybil Newell

Yeah, absolutely. It's overseen by the Association for Mental Health Warren and Washington County. I've gone up there to do a tour, I know Dr. Prezioso has gone up there to tour the facility, I'm sure their Executive Director would be happy to walk people through. You know, there would definitely, it's not open to the public, there wouldn't need to be something set up. But I'm pretty sure that most of their funding does come through the County, up in Warren County.

Tara Gaston

That is accurate. I would also say that, as I mentioned, again, last month, RISE is also open to people touring and seeing, obviously, they're up and running with this program, but the facility, which happens to be right across the street from Mental Health, our County Mental Health, so...

Phil Barrett

Well, I for one would like to take a look at the facility that you're describing, no matter what happens today, or whatever, if that's something that you can coordinate?

Tara Gaston

I love field trips.

Phil Barrett

All right, cool.

Tara Gaston

Supervisor Connolly?

Eric Connolly

Is your program in Saratoga going to be modeled specifically after the one in Warren County?

Sybil Newell

I really like their model, I think they're doing great things up there, specifically the commercial kitchen aspect of it, which is what we're asking for some money for this year, a skill building sort of facility, providing meals, providing volunteer opportunities that particularly is interesting to me. But this is a model that has existed in the past. For many years, the social club model did exist even in Saratoga County. And several years ago, probably a decade ago, funding was shifted from the social club model to the PROS model, which is what we have now in Saratoga County Mental Health. And what we found

over time, is that it really just misses a group of people who can't participate in that kind of programming.

Eric Connolly

Thank you.

John Lant

Tara does the City fund this any? The City of Saratoga?

Tara Gaston

Fund the program?

John Lant

RISE.

Tara Gaston

RISE, you probably get CDBG.

Sybil Newell

We don't get CDBG. We do have a contract with the County, we get a good deal of County money. We are funded primarily through Medicaid billing, and the client fees associated with our programs.

Tara Gaston

Do you get any funding from the City?

Sybil Newell

No. Not currently.

Tara Gaston

I regret that's probably going to continue for a half a minute or so. But is that it Supervisor Lant? Okay. Administrator Bulger?

Steve Bulger

Yeah. Speaking of CDBG, it's recently been brought to our attention that it looks like the County will be applying for CDBG CV COVID relief funds, we can apply for up to a million dollars on the County's behalf. There's a lot of different programs that we could apply for. But in talking with Chairman Kusnierz, he was, and he's been beating this drum pretty loudly. He would like, one of the categories is Mental Health Support and Services. So I know Matt Rose and I just had a discussion yesterday about this. It's something that, just another option we may want to consider is, as we move forward with that, that this program is the recipient of, or the focus of our application. Not saying it's gonna replace anything else, but it's just another potential source of funds that we're going to be going after. And we'll be working with Dr. Prezioso's team on that, because it is mental health, they'll be putting the application together, could do it in partnership, potentially, with what you're doing. So it's just something I wanted to throw out there as another option moving forward.

Tara Gaston

What is the timeline on that process?

Steve Bulger

We have till August to apply. But we want to get it in next month, June at the latest.

Tara Gaston

Is that a rolling decision?

Steve Bulger

I don't know. We haven't really investigated it that much. It is CDBG, so it is a Federal Government decision.

Tara Gaston

Any other questions or discussions?

Darren O'Connor

Supervisor O'Connor. Just a couple of comments. I'm looking at the documents and it seems that the thing scheduled for this year is the commercial kitchen renovation. So I guess one question to Steve is, is that specific enough to justify or account for the \$75,000 for 2021?

Steve Bulger

Well, it could be. I don't know, we haven't seen any of that, of the specifics on it, and how we want to set this up, we'd have to get with the County Attorney's office on that, to drill into that a little bit more and see, depending on how the Board wants to set it up, as the Chairwoman said, if they want to go with either a contract or grant or an outright, just gift to the agency, that would be the Board's decision. So we'd have to look at the different options, and see if that would be enough to justify whatever version of the \$75,000 the Board wants to approve.

Tara Gaston

Supervisor O'Connor, can you clarify what you meant by is it specific enough, or I'm not sure I completely understood.

Darren O'Connor

I got the impression that there was concern in terms of just an accounting point of view that just handing over the 75,000 without any kind of direction as to how it was going to be used might be a problem just from a comptroller, kind of financial point of view. And then that got me thinking that the 75,000, it seems, might be directed to the commercial kitchen renovation, which is what they have planned for this calendar year. And so I was just, that seems to be specific, and maybe that would be enough to satisfy a need for specificity. That was the comment. And the other point is that this is obviously a great program and can do very beneficial things for some of our community. I would just point out, to Phil Barrett's point that I think the players should be alert to the fact that we don't know what the Board of Supervisors is going to do for the next three years, assuming it passes this resolution

for the 75. So I think we need to be alert to the possibility that funds in the future might not be there. And so we really have to work on getting private grant funding type of thing.

Tara Gaston

I absolutely agree. And I do think that part of the 75,000 is actually for not just the kitchen, but also Development Coordinator whose purpose would be that. Sybil it looked like you were going to say something?

Sybil Newell

No, that was exactly what I was going to say was \$40,000 we were anticipating to go toward the kitchen, and the rest would be toward a development person to help us figure out how we're going to support this program going forward, and get us any licensure we need and anything like that, in order to support of the kinds of funding streams that we're looking for in the future.

Tara Gaston

And I think having already received County funding before, you're aware of the sometimes fickle nature of funding. So I think that is, from last month to this month, the fickle nature of things. So Supervisor O'Connor does that answer?

Darren O'Connor

Yes. Thank you very much. It does.

Tara Gaston

Anyone else on the phone have any questions or comments? Okay, anybody else here? All right. All in favor?

Several Supervisors

Aye.

Tara Gaston

All right. So are you?

Therese Connolly

Did you want me to do a roll call?

Tara Gaston

Yes, can you do roll call please?

Joe Grasso

Madam Chair? Could you just explain exactly what we're, are we voting on the 75,000?

Tara Gaston

At this time, we are voting on 75,000. And we are authorizing that. Any additional funding would, it is a large enough fund and the purpose of it, it should go through the budget process. So any additional that

would also allow them to put that to work. And perhaps by budget time, we have different numbers and different ideas on what we're looking for.

Joe Grasso

Alright, I'd like to ask for a roll call vote please.

Joe Grasso

Yes, There was going to do that. But so right now the motion is just for authorizing the 75,000 for this purpose which would cover or go to the renovation of a commercial kitchen and a development coordinator for the Social Club.

Therese Connolly

Supervisor Barrett?

Phil Barrett

No, but like I said, I didn't want to vote no. But I would like to take a trip up to the other facility and see how it operates and learn more about where this money and proposed partnership might be going.

Therese Connolly

Supervisor Connolly?

Eric Connolly

Yes.

Therese Connolly

Grasso?

Joe Grasso

Aye, yes.

Therese Connolly

Lant?

John Lant

No.

Therese Connolly

O'Connor?

Darren O'Connor

Yes.

Therese Connolly

Wood?

Tom Wood

Yes.

Therese Connolly

Gaston?

Tara Gaston

Yes.

Therese Connolly

Motion passes.

Tara Gaston

Thank you. I appreciate this. I understand that this proposal does need to go before the full Board. I would request from any Committee members, other Supervisors listening or here in attendance or any staff who have any particular questions that they would like answered prior to that meeting, that you advise me, so that we can make sure that those answers are provided as necessary. I agree, it is important for all of us to know exactly what's going on so that we know what we're voting on. We are fiduciaries of the County but if we do not know what those questions are, it becomes very difficult to find the answers for them. So I would just request that please. Thank you. Thank you Sybil, I understand you have another meeting. Nine minutes.

Tara Gaston

Alright, so the next item on the agenda is item seven, the Emergency Rental Assistance Program. It was really just going to be an update. Everybody it's naptime. I think the gist of it, I'll just give it just as I understand it Administrator Bulger and you let me know if there are any changes. New York State in their budget process passed legislation that basically removes all ability to distribute the money ourselves, unless we want to take over all of the aspects, including the liability concerns, etc. as we do not wish to. We are, it was just authorized accepting and then sending it to New York State in the last meeting. We did authorize after an RFP, a contract with Shelters of Saratoga, who was going to help get that information out to the individuals who need it the most. They're going to be doing a lot of promotion, connecting people, and whatnot. Do we have any update on the timeline for that? I know the hope for the Portal was April, but I fear that that is not going to happen.

Steve Bulger

Yes, Madam Chair. I talked with Tina Potter this afternoon, Commissioner Potter and got an update from her. She's the spearhead on this. So just following up on what you said, all of the actions that the Board took, approving the contract, accepting the money, sending the money to the State, all of that has been done. State signed off on everything, they said, you guys are good, you've signed a contract with the State, we've got your money. Now we're just basically waiting for the program to open. In terms of when the program may open, they're talking May. That's all they want to say right now. The date of May 15 is a goal, whether the State will be able to get the portal up and running and accepting applications by May 15, we can only hope at this point. But that's the latest word we have. A contract

with Shelters of Saratoga has been signed. They've already hired a coordinator. They've hired staff, they are reaching out to other agencies within the County to identify groups and landlords that may benefit from this. The first 30 days, this is important to note, the first 30 days of the program, the State under the State law that the Chairwoman mentioned, they have to focus on under 50% of average median income, any renters or basically renters who fall under that guideline of less than 50% of average median income. So for the first 30 days, there's going to be some type of restriction, supposedly, on the program handled through the State portal. We'll see how that works out.

Tara Gaston

Do you have an approximate amount for that? I know it differs based on family size but like family of four does anybody?

Steve Bulger

I don't know that, in this County, I don't have that number. We can get it though. We'll make sure to have it.

Tara Gaston

I think that would be handy for people, landlords and renters both as they're preparing for it to open.

Steve Bulger

Yep. So also on the DSS website at the County website, the DSS, if you click on that, there's a whole bunch of information they've already posted, on how the program is going to work. It's good information. It takes you through the program, how its structured, etc. So DSS is ready to go. Shelters of Saratoga are ready to go. And I think that as far as the County is concerned, we've done all we can, at this point, once the State took this program over from us, we're now depending on them. So that's the report from Commissioner Potter. And we're hoping to, as soon as we get the word that the portal is open, certainly not only all the Supervisors, but all the Department Heads, we will let everybody know that the system has gone live, and you can start submitting applications.

Tara Gaston

Okay, a couple of things. One, is there a contact at Shelters if there is a landlord, let's say who's interested in being on the list to get more information etc.? Is there a designated contact at this time?

Steve Bulger

That I do not know. I can find out from Commissioner Potter.

Tara Gaston

Okay. Two can we either as the County or along with Shelters, however, it's appropriate for the contract, etc. I would like some public messaging with regards to what is available right now, because I know that I have gotten a lot of questions about this. And I know other Supervisors have in assisting the landlords and the renters in their municipalities. So at a bare minimum, if we can say, we're waiting for the State, this is where we're hoping, here's the information you can get at this time, I think that would be helpful. If that's covered by the Shelter's contract, that's fine, or if it's something that the County can put out a release or any information, all of the above.

Steve Bulger

Very good.

Tara Gaston

Anyone else have any questions or comments on this? Anyone on the phone? Do we know when the evictions law ends?

Eric Connolly

April 1, but they just extended it to August 31 I believe?

Eric Connolly

Okay, I was going to say, April 1, that happened. Okay. They extended it today?

Eric Connolly

Yes, it was originally supposed to expire May 1.

Tara Gaston

That was Supervisor Connolly coming in clutch with the information. All right. Any other questions about the rental program? All right. Any other business to be brought forward? Or is it nap time for everyone? All right. Do I have a motion to adjourn?

Eric Connolly

So moved.

Phil Barrett

So moved.

Tara Gaston

We have a competition for a motion. I think Supervisor Connolly was loudest. Supervisor Barrett, will you take the second on that one?

Phil Barrett

I didn't have my microphone on, that's why.

Tara Gaston

Will you take the second on the motion to adjourn?

Phil Barrett

Sure, absolutely.

Tara Gaston

Okay. All in favor?

Several Supervisors

Aye.

Tara Gaston

Any opposed? All right. We're done. Thank you.