

Health & Human Services Committee Minutes
May 26, 2021 – 4:00 p.m.

Present: Chairwoman Tara Gaston; Committee Members Phil Barrett, Eric Connolly, Joe Grasso, John Lant, Darren O'Connor, Tom Wood; Supervisor Dick Lucia and Chairman of the Board Todd Kusnierz; Matt Rose, Audra Hedden, County Administrator; Michael Hartnett, Michelle Granger, Bridget Rider, County Attorney; Jason Kemper, Planning; Mike McEvoy, Emergency Services; Sandi Cross, Office for the Aging; Tina Potter, Social Services; Daniel Kuhles, Public Health.

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

On a motion made by Mr. Wood, seconded by Mr. O'Connor, the minutes of the April 28, 2021 meeting were approved unanimously.

A motion was made by Mr. Lant, seconded by Mr. Barrett, to authorize major contracts with 11 different ambulance services throughout Saratoga County to facilitate continuation of COVID vaccination for homebound, vulnerable, or under-served residents. Unanimous.

Mr. McEvoy said that this began in March under minor contracts and some of the agencies have reached the cap of the minor contract. It is expected that the process will continue through the summer time, they are unsure if they will be doing boosters in the fall. They anticipate reimbursement of costs by FEMA. Mr. McEvoy said that both the EMS organizations and County Public Health are both keeping lists, most referrals to EMS are from Public Health. Mr. Barrett confirmed with Mr. McEvoy that EMS organizations will vaccinate anyone currently eligible for the vaccine. Mr. Lant thanked Mr. McEvoy and all of the Ambulance Corps. for the service provided to homebound people during COVID.

A motion was made by Mr. Barrett, seconded by Mr. Grasso, to authorize the acceptance of a contribution to the Office of the Aging in the amount of \$500 from Gerald and Carolyn Crawmer. Unanimous.

Ms. Cross said that the funds will go towards the meal program.

A motion was made by Ms. Gaston, seconded by Mr. Barrett, to authorize the Chairman of the Board to sign annual updates to the 2020-2024 four year service plan from the Office for the Aging. Unanimous.

Ms. Cross said that in November the annual contracts were brought forward for approval under Resolution 227-2020. The updated four year plan was submitted in November also. At that time, the State Office for the Aging indicated that the Chairman's signature was not needed on the four year plan, however, since then, the State is now requiring the signature. The four year plan was initially approved under Resolution 235-2019.

A motion was made by Mr. Barrett, seconded by Mr. Wood, to authorize the acceptance of Expanding Access to COVID-19 Vaccines via the Aging Network (VAC5) funding in the amount of \$25,333. Unanimous.

A motion was made by Mr. O'Connor, seconded by Mr. Grasso, to authorize the acceptance of Aging and Disability Resource Centers Program/No Wrong Door (ADRC/NWD) Vaccine Access Supplemental Funding through the Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations act of 2021 in the amount of \$22,037. Unanimous.

A motion was made by Mr. Lant, seconded by Mr. O'Connor, to authorize the acceptance of \$697,838 in funding under the American Rescue Plan Act (ARP) of 2021. Unanimous.

Ms. Cross said that all three items pertain to funding from the American Rescue Act. The final item's funding will be used towards meals, transportation and some community services. Mr. Lant thanked Ms. Cross and her staff for the good job done through COVID.

Mrs. Potter gave a brief update on Emergency Rental Assistance. The NYS Portal is scheduled to open on June 1 at 9am. The program will be administered by the NYS Office of Temporary Disability Assistance. The first round of funding for Saratoga County is \$6.8M. Shelters of Saratoga have been contracted with for community research. SOS and DSS staff have completed training from the webinars provided to date. The website for additional information is odta.ny.gov/erap and a link to this can also be found under the DSS website. The NYS call center will be operated 7 days a week from 8am to 7pm. Ms. Gaston requested that a link to the informational page be put on the front page of the County website and encouraged Supervisors to share the information via their municipalities.

Commissioner Kuhles gave a brief update on the vaccination effort. To date 60.5% of Saratoga County's population has received at least one dose and almost 53% with the series completed. This is a continuing pattern of those numbers being stronger than statewide and national averages. For the senior population, 84.1% has at least one dose, and 78.3% with a completed series. Dr. Kuhles said that the actual numbers are higher as these figures do not include seniors that have temporarily moved to warmer climates, or veterans that have been vaccinated through the Federal Government such as VA hospital or clinic. The clinics providing vaccines to youth aged 12 and up have been filling up quickly. They are also seeing more pediatric providers offering the vaccine. Dr. Kuhles said that since this became available, they have been breaking down large shipments of vaccines into smaller quantities which is preferable to providers. Ms. Gaston said that the numbers are a testament to the work of Public Health, the Office for the Aging, EMS and County staff. Making sure that people had access and knew where to go, even though they were not receiving, in her opinion, the appropriate share of vaccine throughout this. Dr. Kuhles thanked his team, County Administration, Board of Supervisors, Department heads, and the EMS team for all of their support in the effort. Mr. Lant thanked Dr. Kuhles for his leadership. Ms. Gaston encouraged all to get their children vaccinated also.

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

Respectfully submitted,
Therese Connolly
Deputy Clerk of the Board