

# Health & Human Services 5-26-2021

## **SPEAKERS**

Tina Potter, Darren O'Connor, Phil Barrett, Tara Gaston, John Lant, Michael Hartnett, Jason Kemper, Sandi Cross, Eric Connolly, Joe Grasso, Mike McEvoy, Several Supervisors, Therese Connolly, Tom Wood, Daniel Kuhles

### **Tara Gaston**

Welcome to the May 26 meeting of the Saratoga County Health and Human Services Committee. Attendance has been taken?

### **Therese Connolly**

Correct. You have a full quorum.

### **Tara Gaston**

Okay, for anybody on the public line, and for the Supervisors on the line, we are having some fun weather. Should the system go down again, we will be reaching out and contacting each Supervisor on the line to make sure that they can listen in and call and then we will post a recording of this meeting as soon as available after the meeting so that the public can have it. We apologize for any problems that may cause but none of us control the weather. Alright. Second item on the agenda approval the minutes from the April 28 meeting. Do I have a motion?

### **Tom Wood**

Supervisor Wood, I make the motion.

### **Tara Gaston**

Thank you, Supervisor Wood, do I have a second?

### **Darren O'Connor**

Second.

### **Tara Gaston**

Second Supervisor O'Connor. Any discussion? All those in favor say aye.

### **Several Supervisors**

Aye.

### **Tara Gaston**

Any opposed? That passes, minutes are adopted. Third item on the agenda is an agreement with Ambulant services with regards to COVID vaccination. Mike McEvoy? Thank you.

**Mike McEvoy**

So we're asking for the Chairman of the Board to be able to enter into a major contract with the 11 ambulant service agencies that have been doing homebound vaccination. We started in March, actually using minor contracts with each one of those agencies. Some of them have reached the cap of the \$15,000 worth of minor contracts. But we expect that this process is going to continue on probably at least through the summertime. We're not sure if we're going to be doing boosters again in the fall, so rather than keep playing with minor contracts., we would like to do one major one that would cover the expenses that we see that taking place at the end of the year. This money is all funds that we anticipate will be reimbursed by FEMA, as part of the assistance program that we're turning monies for the rest of the expenses that the County has incurred.

**Tara Gaston**

Just for clarification, is this one major contract or major contract with each of the services?

**Mike McEvoy**

It would be one major contract, similar to what we did with the contact tracers.

**John Lant**

Supervisor Lant, I make a motion to approve it.

**Phil Barrett**

I'll second.

**Tara Gaston**

Okay, it's been moved and seconded. Attorney Hartnett, can you speak to the contracts?

**Michael Hartnett**

It would be one resolution but 11 individual contracts.

**Tara Gaston**

Okay. Thank you. That was a clarification. I think that's where the distinction was, I wanted to make sure.

**Michael Hartnett**

All as one resolution.

**Tara Gaston**

It would be nice if they would all play in the sandbox nicely and we could just do one contract to follow but okay. And these are all funds that were part of the allocation that we've already done for the COVID fund. Is that correct?

**Jason Kemper**

Yes, Chairwoman, all these funds were last month and the COVID allocation was made by the Board of Supervisors.

**Tara Gaston**

Thank you. That was my understanding, I just want to make sure it's there. And I know that our people have been doing an incredible job. And thank you, Mike for helping lead that. I know the state is now pushing on it, it's great to see them catch on the tail end of our bandwagon.

**Mike McEvoy**

Yes the state was our biggest obstacle when we started and now they are saying you have to do it, which a little behind the eight ball there.

**Tara Gaston**

Well, proof if you continue to do things well, everybody will get on board eventually. Because of that, though, I do know that the state has put some information out publicly about homebound vaccinations. So even though you guys have run through a lot of people in the list, we may still end up getting requests. So I do think this is important, and I appreciate you bringing it forward. Any other questions or discussion Supervisor Barrett?

**Michael Hartnett**

Yes. So if somebody wants to receive a vaccination, they can contact the EMS organization directly right?

**Mike McEvoy**

Yes, the EMS organizations are keeping lists and the County Public Health is actually keeping a more active list than the EMS organizations are. I think most of our referrals are actually coming directly through Public Health.

**Phil Barrett**

Okay.

**Tara Gaston**

The preference would be to have them come through the Public Health system just so that they're all, I know that Public Health is keeping a track of how many people want to express interest, they actually get vaccinated, etc. There are people who express interest and then decline once they've been called. So I think the preference would be that they all go through Public Health. But I know that Mike has been working closely with the commissioner and with all the EMS services to make sure they get done.

**Phil Barrett**

Will they vaccinate people of all ages at this point? I mean, I know there's three categories here. But if a 16 year old calls and wants to receive a vaccination, will they do it?

**Mike McEvoy**

We have had some people are primarily using the Johnson and Johnson vaccine, which has a cut off right now of 18. We have had so much younger people where we've worked with Dr. Kuhles and got Pfizer and brought that to them. Yes.

**Phil Barrett**

Okay.

**Mike McEvoy**

So we could do all the way down to 12 at this point. Do you have someone in mind Supervisor?

**Phil Barrett**

No, I'm vaccinated. But if anybody does come up, I'll send them your way. I'll give them your cell number. (laughter)

**Mike McEvoy**

Okay.

**Tara Gaston**

Yeah, I think the state's requirements for homebound vaccination are a bit more broad to put it lightly, than we would say. So we'd prefer that if you have the ability to get out and obtain a vaccine on your own that you do, but any eligible person can be vaccinated through this. Supervisor Lant?

**John Lant**

Mike I'd like to personally thank you and all the ambulance corps during this COVID doing all these homebound people. I think you all went above and beyond the call of duty, and I think I speak for the rest of the Supervisors. And thank you and thank them all very much for what they all did.

**Phil Barrett**

Here here.

**Mike McEvoy**

Thank you. All of you have been a great help to us.

**Eric Connolly**

Madam Chairperson

**Tara Gaston**

Yes, who is that?

**Eric Connolly**

Supervisor Connolly. We can barely hear Supervisor Lant and Supervisor Barrett, or if their mics are dead or not being used.

**Tara Gaston**

Apologies for that. We'll try and speak up a little bit more. We are experiencing our own technical difficulties as a result of the weather and I believe we're on generator power.

**Jason Kemper**

We've been off and on a couple times.

**Tara Gaston**

Yeah, we're not really sure. So apologies. We'll try and do our best but thank you for letting us know.

Any other comments? Okay, Supervisor Barrett wants to test it.

**Phil Barrett**

Testing testing 123123. Is that better?

**John Lant**

Why dont you sing them a song? (laughter)

**Phil Barrett**

Someday.

**Tara Gaston**

I do believe that theater is more appropriate for the Economic Development committee.

**Several Supervisors**

(inaudible, several Supervisors speaking at once)

**Tara Gaston**

All right. Any other germane comments? Okay, hearing none, all in favor say aye.

**Several Supervisors**

Aye.

**Tara Gaston**

Any opposed? Matter passes. Thank you. Apologies for the show in the middle. Try and keep it lively.

Fourth item on the agenda, several items from the Office for the Aging.

**Sandi Cross**

Good afternoon. Thank you. I have a number of resolutions today. I'll start with the first one which was a gift of \$500 from Carolyn Crawmer and her husband Gerald. They gave the Office for Aging \$500 to be used towards the meal program. So the resolution is to authorize the Chairman to accept the \$500 and to put it in the expenditures and revenues.

**Tara Gaston**

Do we have a motion?

**Phil Barrett**

I'll move it.

**Tara Gaston**

Supervisor Barrett, second?

**Joe Grasso**

I'll second.

**Tara Gaston**

Supervisor Grasso. Any discussion? Just want to say thank you. There, there is a letter that came along with it of appreciation and referenced the COVID vaccines and the work that your office has done. So which thank you, I appreciate that as well. So then that will be included. It's included in the background materials. So members of the public can read that too. Right? Any other questions or discussions on that one? All in favor say aye.

**Several Supervisors**

Aye.

**Tara Gaston**

Any opposed? Okay, Supervisor Connolly. Can you hear?

**Eric Connolly**

Yes I can.

**Tara Gaston**

Could you hear when I called for the votes?

**Eric Connolly**

Yes I did.

**Tara Gaston**

Did you vote?

**Eric Connolly**

Yes, in favor.

**Tara Gaston**

Okay, thank you. We couldn't hear you, we are again working it out, I just want to make sure that you were recorded thank you.

**Eric Connolly**

You're welcome.

**Tara Gaston**

Alright. Go ahead, Director Cross, thank you.

**Sandi Cross**

Next day is a resolution authorizing the Chairman to sign my four year plan. I brought that to the committee in November with all my contracts for this year. And at that time, the State Office for Aging said we did not need the Chairman signature. Now, they changed their mind, and I need a signature on our four year plan, which was brought forward in November. So I think it is, Mike is it amending the previous resolution? Is that?

**Michael Hartnett**

It can be.

**Sandi Cross**

Okay. I think that's the easiest just to amend previous resolution from November, allowing the Chairman to sign, he signs every single year, this is housekeeping. But in the midst of COVID, in November, the State Office for Aging was a little unsure of what they wanted to do.

**Tara Gaston**

So what's the resolution that we're amending?

**Jason Kemper**

227.

**Tara Gaston**

There it, sorry, I saw the 2019.

**Jason Kemper**

So just another whereas reference, allowing the Chairman to sign?

**Michael Hartnett**

If you do amend it to add into the resolved, allowing the chairman to execute any documentation necessary to accept that funding.

**Tara Gaston**

So it looks like pursuant to resolution 235 of 2019, which is attached here, we already authorized him to sign.

**Sandi Cross**

Sorry for the confusion here. It would have been the resolution brought in 2020, which had all my contracts for the year. So there was actually a resolution in November that allowed us to do the contracts for this year.

**Tara Gaston**

I don't have a problem with it, I'm just wondering, in the 2020 it also says the Chair of the Board is authorized to execute. Would that not?

**Jason Kemper**

He's executing the subcontracts.

**Tara Gaston**

All right.

**Michael Hartnett**

My understanding and correct me if I'm wrong, Director Cross. This is Attorney Hartnett, that this allows the Chairman of the Board to distribute the money, but not to accept the money coming in. Is that correct?

**Sandi Cross**

No, it allows him to accept the money and release the money. I mean, they're done every year. So we can, I'm sorry for this confusion. I didn't, if that's my mistake, but it's done every year.

**Tara Gaston**

I understand that and I don't have a problem with it. I figured that I would hate for us to have to, for your office to have to go through things that you didn't have to. So I want to make sure, at least going forward that we use whatever words are necessary, because obviously, if we're approving a contract, I would assume most of the Board is approving the necessary signatures.

**Sandi Cross**

Right.

**Tara Gaston**

So hopefully, all right. Do we have? So a motion to amend resolution 227 of 2020? Just in the resolved, I'm trying to make sure which resolved, so just add in the resolved, the Chair of the Board is hereby authorized to sign and execute. Does that work Attorney Hartnett? Oh, that's the look of I accidentally sent the County Attorney down a rabbit hole.

**Michael Hartnett**

Just as a point of clarification, and perhaps Director Cross can, in the details and it was to authorize the Chairman to sign the annual update of the four year plan.

**Sandi Cross**

Exactly.

**Michael Hartnett**

Because so it's actually execution of the plan, not necessarily the subcontracts in the plan. Is that fair?

**Sandi Cross**

Right.



**Michael Hartnett**

So that would be what the resolved is, is to amend that to add the ability of the Chair of the Board to sign the plan that gets submitted to the State.

**Tara Gaston**

Which is what's referenced in 235?

**Michael Hartnett**

227. I'm looking at is just the subcontracts.

**Tara Gaston**

But 235 is the four year plan.

**Michael Hartnett**

So this is the annual update to that plan. So, as I understand it, a four year plan goes in and then each year the Chairman, through the Office for the Aging, submits an update to that plan as it goes on. Is that correct?

**Sandi Cross**

Exactly. So the last resolved would just be, that would be added, and it would be to sign the annual update for 2021.

**Tara Gaston**

All right, County Attorney Hartnett, what language do you recommend?

**Michael Hartnett**

I'm recommending that 235 be amended to add and resolve that the Chair of the Board is authorized.

**Tara Gaston**

235 or 227?

**Michael Hartnett**

235, the subsequent approval of the four year plan, the amended to indicate - resolved that the Chair of the Board is authorized to execute the annual update for 2021 to 2022. In addition to what's already.

**Tara Gaston**

Okay. Now that I know that amending 235 is an option? How would it be - resolved the Chair of the Board is authorized and directed to sign the 2020 to 2024 four year service plan, and any annual updates pursuant to this plan? That way we're not also having to do this.

**Sandi Cross**

And I'm not bringing it to you every year either.

**Tara Gaston**

Is that okay?

**Michael Hartnett**

I don't have any issue with it. I would defer to the Department head that's requesting it as to what she would need to effectuate.

**Tara Gaston**

I mean, the subcontracts would still have to be brought forward.

**Sandi Cross**

Yeah. Every year, the sub contracts are going to be brought forward in November as a basic housekeeping. But you could amend 235 and just add that bottom line to say he's authorized and directed to sign the annual update, which would marry into the contracts for the same time.

**Tara Gaston**

Right. I mean, the contracts will still come before us. Does any other Supervisors, do you have any particular thoughts on that one? That way, the Chairman can sign the thing, and we still have to approve and review the subcontracts before they go before the Board and out anyhow.

**Phil Barrett**

I have no concerns.

**Michael Hartnett**

From my perspective, that would be fine for purposes of implementing that directive of the Board.

**Tara Gaston**

Okay. All right. Then I will move since I suggested it. I may regret this, that the last line the last resolved in resolution 235-2019 be resolved that the Chair of the Board is authorized and directed to sign the 2022-2024 four year service plan and all annual updates pursuant to this plan, or pursuant to the 2020-2024 plan. I move that.

**Phil Barrett**

Second.

**Tara Gaston**

Supervisor Barrett seconds. Do we have any other questions or discussions? I think the lawyer brain just broke some of these. Sorry, everyone. Okay. All in favor?

**Several Supervisors**

Aye.

**Tara Gaston**

Any opposed? The matter passes, apologize for that being a little bit more sticky than we thought. All right, next item.

**Sandi Cross**

The next three items are all money that came from the American Rescue Act and money that's coming out of the vaccine network and the Department of Health. So I'll read each one of them and the amount of money and where it came from.

**Tara Gaston**

And are these individual resolutions?

**Sandi Cross**

Yes.

**Tara Gaston**

Okay. So after you read each one, we'll just, hopefully quickly.

**Sandi Cross**

So the first one is authorizing the acceptance of expanding access to COVID-19 vaccines via the Aging Network funding. This is for \$25,333.

**Tara Gaston**

Do I have a motion?

**Phil Barrett**

So moved.

**Tara Gaston**

Supervisor Barrett.

**Tom Wood**

Supervisor Wood I'll make the motion.

**Tara Gaston**

Second, any questions or concerns? All in favor say aye.

**Several Supervisors**

Aye.

**Tara Gaston**

Any opposed? Matter passes. Next item.

**Sandi Cross**

Okay. The next one is authorizing the Chairman the acceptance of an ADRC which is Aging Disability Resource Centers and No Wrong Door COVID-19 vaccine access supplemental funding through the Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Act of 21 and that is for \$22,037.

**Tara Gaston**

Do we have a motion?

**Darren O'Connor**

So moved Supervisor O'Connor.

**Tara Gaston**

Do we have a second?

**Joe Grasso**

I'll second.

**Tara Gaston**

Supervisor Grasso. Any questions? All in favor say aye.

**Several Supervisors**

Aye.

**Tara Gaston**

Any opposed? Matter passes. Next item.

**Sandi Cross**

Okay, the next item is authorizing the Chairman to accept funds under the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021, and the amount of \$697,832.

**Tara Gaston**

Do we have a motion?

**John Lant**

I'll make that motion Supervisor Lant.

**Tara Gaston**

Second?

**Darren O'Connor**

Second.

**Tara Gaston**

Supervisor O'Connor. Any questions or comments? It looks like it's gonna be used for meals and transportation.

**Tara Gaston**

Yeah. Meals, transportation and some of the community services money.

**Tara Gaston**

All in favor?

**Several Supervisors**

Aye.

**Tara Gaston**

Any opposed? The matter passes. All good.

**Sandi Cross**

Thank you.

**Tara Gaston**

Sorry, Supervisor Lant?

**John Lant**

Sandi, I also would like to thank you and your staff for a great job you do mainly through this COVID, because I know it was a headache for everybody but thank you.

**Sandi Cross**

Thank you Supervisor.

**Tara Gaston**

Thank you. Two quick things. Commissioner Potter I know sent out an email yesterday just to give an update on the emergency rental assistance, since we finally got word to the portal is opening.

**Tina Potter**

Yes, thank you. As Supervisor Gaston mentioned, I did send out an email yesterday that had some information. But she asked me if I could provide an update and see if there's any questions. So as you're aware that yesterday, late afternoon, the Governor did announce that the portal for the Emergency Rental Assistance Program is going to open January 1.

**Tara Gaston**

June.

**Tina Potter**

I've been waiting so many months, June 1st. June 1 on Tuesday at 9am. And so the program is going to be administered by New York State Office of Temporary Disability Assistance. And the State has 2.7 billion. And as you probably recall, our amount for our first round for our County is 6.8 million that we'll have for this Rental Assistance Program. Locally, we're contracting with Shelters of Saratoga to help us with application outreach, and application assistance in the community. The Shelters of Saratoga have already hired the staff. And they have completed training as well as my staff, from the webinars that have been provided to date, we have a couple more before the end of this week, also from the State. We've also updated our websites where we have any questions, all the information is on there. And the two other things that I think are really important. On our website, we have that information where people could sign up so that when the program open, we could reach out to them. And we had about 118 people who did sign up. And we're in the process of reaching out to all of them just to let them know, the portal is going to be open on June 1. And they can go apply. If you go to the website, the New York State website, or you can off of our website also you can go right to this link, but it's OTDA and I did put it in the email that I sent, [otda.ny.gov/erap](http://otda.ny.gov/erap) , that has all the information about what a tenant would need to have for the application process. It has income guidelines, but also has the information that a landlord would have to be providing in order to do the application. So it's pretty comprehensive. That's also where an individual would go to submit their application effective Tuesday, June 1. The State is also going to have a call center that they're going to operate seven days a week starting on Tuesday as well. And the phone number I have if you need that, that was in the email also. But they're going to head that up operational 8am to 7pm, seven days a week so that if people have questions or challenges. So overall, it's gonna provide a really significant relief to our families who were financially impacted by COVID, and to the landlords as well. So we're glad to finally get this open and hopefully it goes well.

**Tara Gaston**

I know that you've been waiting patiently for them to determine when it would be open. I think the first date was early mid-April. So eventually we get there. I would like either you or Jason, if you can assist? Can we put a link to the to the County page, the Social Services page that's going to have that link and all that number on it on the front page of the website? I think that's going to be pretty helpful for people. I know a lot of people have been looking forward to it. And they can just link to whatever your preference is for where the information is on your page. So we have it. Anybody have any questions? I think it'll be really helpful to a lot of the people in our community, landlords and renters like. So thank you. I appreciate it.

**Tina Potter**

Thank you.

**John Lant**

Thank you for taking care of that Tina.

**Tara Gaston**

I also think Supervisors should make sure that it's shared in their Towns as well, because this is going to be the central portal. So if you have any newsletters or websites or whatnot, you should share the

information to make sure that the people in your community have access to it. And hopefully nobody loses their housing or their home. The last thing is, I had asked the Commissioner, Commissioner Kuhles. I guess we're in other business technically, Commissioner Kuhles just to give us a brief update on the vaccination. If you don't mind, we are doing awesome.

**Daniel Kuhles**

Thank you. So just a quick update with the overall population, everybody eligible for a vaccine or not, we have 60.5% of the population with at least one dose and just short of 53% with the series completed. And the continuing pattern of those numbers being stronger than statewide and national average continues. When we look at our senior population, 84.1% with at least one dose and 78.3% with series completed. I would point out that those numbers are actually a little higher, because the data set does not include at this point anybody that were snowbird and went to Florida or Arizona. They wouldn't be captured in this dataset, or any of the veterans that are vaccinated through the federal government, like a VA hospital or clinic, are not yet part of that data set. And again, the same pattern where our coverage levels are among the best in the state. Ahead of both the state level and the national level. We continue to see very good demand in both in the 15 and up and now with the 12. And our clinics have filled very quickly. We're going to be doing another one this Thursday. That's a great sign. We're also seeing more and more pediatric providers, whether pediatricians or family doctors coming online and offering vaccine. Since it became available, we've been breaking down the large shipments of vaccine into smaller quantities, which is what the providers are really asking for. So that continues to do very well.

**Tara Gaston**

And you said 60.5%?

**Daniel Kuhles**

60.5% with at least one dose of vaccine.

**Tara Gaston**

I think that number right there is an incredible testament to the work of Public Health and of Office of the Aging and EMS and everyone. Albany released today that they have 60.9 with one dose, we have had a fraction of the vaccines come to our Department, and the fact that you were able to deliver vaccines and get the information out so that people could obtain them elsewhere. That is an absolute testament to the work of our County Staff in making sure that people had access and knew where to go even when we were not receiving, I will editorialize and say what I believe is our appropriate share of vaccine throughout this. That is incredible work and you should all be very proud. And I know as a County, we should all be very proud of you, because the only way we're going to get through this and return to anything approximating normal, whatever that is, is through this. And that's incredible work. And thank you all for that.

**Daniel Kuhles**

I'm blessed with a wonderful team and the support that the County Administration, the Board of Supervisors, and Department Heads and the EMS team has really contributed to this effort. It was all in, and it's no doubt saving lives.

**John Lant**

Doc, you know I pat you on the back and thank you all the time. But thank you for your great leadership.

**Daniel Kuhles**

Thank you very much.

**Tara Gaston**

Yep, we're good to go. And I would encourage everyone to get their children vaccinated too, because I know final school guidance isn't out for next year. But I would love for my children to be in person all the time and not have to do the chaos, and we're only going to get that way if we can get as vaccinated as possible. Any other questions or comments from any Supervisors? All right, do we have a motion to adjourn?

**Darren O'Connor**

So moved.

**Tara Gaston**

Supervisor O'Connor. Do we have a second?

**Joe Grasso**

Second.

**Tara Gaston**

Supervisor Grasso. All in favor?

**Several Supervisors**

Aye.

**Tara Gaston**

Any opposed? Thank you.