

Health & Human Services Committee Minutes  
June 30, 2021 – 4:00 p.m.

Present: Chairwoman Tara Gaston; Committee Members Phil Barrett, Eric Connolly, Joe Grasso, John Lant, Darren O'Connor; Supervisors and Chairman of the Board Todd Kusnierz; Steve Bulger, Matt Rose, County Administrator; Michael Hartnett, Michelle Granger, Nick Martin, County Attorney; Wes Carr; Rebecca Robarge, Youth Bureau; Daniel Kuhles, Public Health, Michael Prezioso, Mental Health, Tina Potter, Social Services; Sybil Newell.

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

**On a motion made by Mr. O'Connor, seconded by Mr. Grasso, the minutes of the May 26, 2021 meeting were approved unanimously.**

**A motion was made by Mr. Lant, seconded by Mr. Barrett, to authorize the acceptance of a Public Health Emergency Preparedness Grant (PHEP) from Health Research Inc. (HRI) in the amount of \$1,186,140 for use in the event of a public health emergency. Unanimous.**

Dr. Kuhles said the annual grant is higher than last year's award because \$1 million of the amount is restricted for use, if needed, by New York State DOH. These funds are used to three pay staff members, in full or in part.

**A motion was made by Mr. Grasso, seconded by Mr. Lant, to authorize a contract renewal with Berkshire Farms for operation of the Enhanced Stepping Stones Program (ESSP) relative to the NYS Raise-the-age (RTA) legislation until June 30, 2022 for \$100,608. Unanimous.**

Mrs. Potter said the contract with Berkshire Farms is for intensive home based treatment to provide youth who have committed nonviolent crimes an intervention to prevent out of home placement. In the past year, the program was 100% effective as each youth they referred to Berkshire Farms avoided out of home placement. State funding is available for this program.

**A motion was made by Mr. O'Connor, seconded by Mr. Grasso, to authorize payment of \$125,148 to the New York State Office of Medicaid Inspector General for reimbursement of Medicaid over-billing. Unanimous.**

Mrs. Robarge said this repayment is for an accounting correction to return revenue that we were not eligible to receive. The cause of the error was due to a default billing code in the software system that has since been corrected. Ms. Gaston appreciated that the error was caught in a review, an investigation took place, and corrective action was taken, and that all of the information is available to the public and the committee.

### *RISE – Ballston Project*

Mr. Connolly said that RISE plans to build sixty units of affordable housing in the Town of Ballston, thirty of which would be assisted living for those with mental health illnesses, and the Town of Ballston is considering contributing \$100,000 of American Rescue Plan Act funds to this project. Ms. Gaston said the project costs increased due to an increase in material costs and RISE is asking the County to commit funds to narrow the shortfall. Ms. Newell said the project is shovel ready but they are short \$1.5 million and would like Saratoga County to commit \$400,000. Discussion took place on having a process in place for non-profits to submit applications for funding to the County in order to allocate funds fairly. Discussion took place on having the Board decide as a whole how the relief funds would be used before earmarking funds for specific projects.

### *COVID Update*

Dr. Kuhles said that we have the third highest vaccination coverage in New York State outside of New York City with 67.5% of our total population with at least one dose of vaccine and 92.4% of seniors have at least one dose of vaccine. Town camps are no longer under the requirements of the emergency powers and the County Public Health Department has offered to come onsite to camps to vaccinate any staff, counselors or campers with parental permission.

### *Department of Health Expansion*

Mr. Barrett said things are moving along well. They're trying to understand the positions within the organizational chart and how many of each position they will need. They plan on hiring a Director of Environmental Health and giving them leeway to build out the department as they see fit based on their experience. Discussion took place on funding for the costs associated with developing a full services department.

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

Respectfully submitted,  
Bridget Rider  
Deputy Clerk of the Board