

MINUTES
Saratoga County Community Services Board Meeting
March 25, 2021

Present via Zoom due to COVID-19: Edmond Amyot, M.D., Wes Carr, Erin Christopher-Sisk, Ph.D., James Colamaria, Amy Hughes, Katie Lewis, Ph.D., Maureen Lewsey, Lillian McCarthy, Paul Morcone, Captain Dan Morley. Also present: Michael Prezioso, Ph.D. and Cari Abatemarco from the Mental Health Center.

Absent: RJ Stutzman

I. CALL TO ORDER

Ms. Hughes called the meeting to order at 4:05 p.m.

II. ROLL CALL

Roll call was taken. A quorum was established.

III. MINUTES

A motion to accept the minutes from 1/28/21 was made by Ms. McCarthy, seconded by Ms. Hughes. Motion carried.

IV. PUBLIC TO BE HEARD

None present.

V. DIRECTOR'S REPORT/OLD BUSINESS

- A. COVID-19 Response Update – All staff members interested in receiving the vaccine have been fully vaccinated. Patients are being seen onsite based on acuity while others continue with telehealth services. Discussions around bringing more patients onsite are underway as vaccinations increase. Approximately 30% of patients have had at least one vaccine. Public Health encourages us to continue daily screenings for all staff members.

- B. State and Local Budget Updates – Dr. Prezioso indicates budget negotiations are underway regarding monies being restored. The last two quarters of 2020 and the first quarter of 2021 indicated there would be a 20% withhold. Those were fully restored. The final three quarters of the current year will impose a 5% permanent reduction.

The Community Services Board (CSB) is entirely independent. However, the elected Board of Supervisors (BOS) has the responsibility for oversight as it relates to money allocated to the department. The CSB can decide what we spend and the BOS can decide whether they will release the funds for such spending.

Per article 41 of the Mental Hygiene Law, the CSB is absolutely an independent policy making group. The BOS are composed of elected supervisors from each individual township and they come together and sit together. If it was a centrally elected countywide legislature, the CSB would be advisory only and the county would retain that authority. The new Chair of the BOS is Todd Kusnierz from Moreau and there is a new committee chair, Tara Gaston, from Saratoga Springs. That committee is the county's Health and Human Services Committee. They have oversight of Mental Health, DSS, Office for the Aging, Youth Bureau and Public Health.

VI. NEW BUSINESS

- A. TSA Name Change – TSA has changed its name to RISE Housing and Support Services.
- B. Social Club Initiative – Ms. Newell, the Executive Director at RISE, and Dr. Prezioso have had conversations over time about the benefits of a social club type of program for some of the more severe mental illness population downtown. A moderately to highly structured, low demand, interpersonal, socialization, managing symptoms program for people would be ideal. This has been a service gap for the county and it was a loss when OMH discontinued their support for these types of programs. Ms. Newell and Supervisor Gaston have had discussions about the county providing some start-up or seed money for a similar program. This will be discussed at this weeks' Health and Human Services Committee meeting and Dr. Prezioso will speak in support of it. This program will not be OMH funded.

There is now a Homeless Court in Saratoga Springs and we have had some contact regarding 730 violations. Ms. Hughes is on the Board for Shelters of Saratoga (SOS).

- C. Miscellaneous – There is much advocacy and support around restoration of money to the Joseph Dwyer Fund for the Veterans Peer-to-Peer Program. Dr. Prezioso is extremely optimistic about the funding support. Meaningful contacts and relationships are developed through this program.

Mr. Morcone indicates challenging times ahead with students and parents experiencing increased anxiety about returning to school. There has also been a huge impact with regard to remote learning and it has been a very challenging year. There are definitely some gaps with students, emotionally and academically. COVID-19 restrictions continue to be dictated by the county.

VII NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be May 27, 2021 at 4:00 p.m.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Ms. Hughes, seconded by Ms. McCarthy. Motion passed. The meeting was adjourned at 4:44 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by: Cheryle Ellsworth