

Health & Human Services Transcript 2/2/2022

SPEAKERS

Steve Bulger, Tina Potter, Phil Barrett, Diana Edwards, John Lant, Daniel Kuhles, Michael Prezioso, Several Supervisors, Eric Connolly, Eric Butler, Tom Wood

Phil Barrett

Alright, we'll get started. Welcome to the Health and Human Services Committee of February 2. Therese has taken attendance, I first want to entertain a motion to approve the minutes of November 22.

Tom Wood

Supervisor Wood I make the motion.

Phil Barrett

Thanks Tom.

Eric Butler

I'll second.

Phil Barrett

Second by Mr. Butler. Discussion. All in favor?

Several Supervisors

Aye.

Phil Barrett

Opposed. Motion carries. Appointment of a Vice Chair. I spoke to Supervisor Schopf earlier today and he has accepted the appointment as Vice Chair of the committee. Number four on the agenda I want to welcome Mike, there he is, Prezioso. And is with us and he will go through the items on the agenda.

Michael Prezioso

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, I got a couple of things for you. Starting with a request to amend the contract with RISE housing and support services. Sorry, my glasses are fogging up here a little bit with the mask. Supplement the salary and fringe of our employed Intake Crisis Response Specialist. This is an item that we use to essentially answer the phones, deal with anyone who's calling in crisis, any walk ins to do an initial assessment on their mental status and identify needs, make connections with service providers, or in fact even request pickup orders so that we can get the person to the hospital, if needed. Like the supplement the contract in order to supplement the person's salary and fringe because the work that's done is in many ways significantly similar to the work done by our other licensed clinicians. So I'd like to in the interest of retention and potentially future recruitment, request an increase using

State Aid for this request. So it will be a contract amendment, and there's no budget impact because the money is already in our budget, and it would just involve a re-application of the State Aid.

Phil Barrett

Very good. I'll entertain a motion to approve the request.

Eric Butler

I make that.

Diana Edwards

I'll second.

Phil Barrett

Mr. Butler, Mrs. Edwards. Any discussion on that item? Okay, all in favor?

Several Supervisors

Aye.

Phil Barrett

Opposed? Motion carries. Number two Mike.

Michael Prezioso

Terrific. This is a request to accept additional State Aid and the amount of \$500. There's a requirement by the Office of Alcoholism Addiction Supports and Services that medications be maintained in lockboxes. So this is to secure lock boxes. And we pass through also to RISE for lock boxes that their Hedgerow house residents where medications will be stored, and they'll be stored per the regs with the money that the State is providing. So there's no budget impact for this either. It's just a purchase of the lock boxes.

Phil Barrett

There we go. I'll entertain a motion to approve the small request.

Tom Wood

Supervisor Wood I'll make the motion.

Phil Barrett

Thank you, Tom.

Diana Edwards

I'll second.

Phil Barrett

Second by Mrs. E. I could tell you wanted to, you were ready. Okay, any discussion? All in favor?

Several Supervisors

Aye.

Phil Barrett

Opposed. Motion carries. Number three.

Michael Prezioso

Thank you. This is this is essentially a budget amendment to amend the 2020 budget, it's a request to roll over \$1,200 that was made in the form of a donation for the Saratoga County Suicide Prevention Coalition. There was an event that we were going to sponsor during 2021 that had to be scheduled to 2022. So again, no budget impact, it's just carrying over the same amount of money that \$1,200 donation from last year to this year.

Phil Barrett

Entertain a motion to approve the carryover of 1200.

Eric Butler

I'll move that.

Phil Barrett

Mr. Butler. Do we have a second?

Diana Edwards

Second.

Phil Barrett

Mrs. Edwards. Thank you. Any discussion on that item? All in favor, aye?

Several Supervisors

Aye.

Phil Barrett

Opposed. Motion carries number four.

Michael Prezioso

Thank you. This is a this is a movement of federal dollars through the State OASAS and Office of Mental Hygiene. This is specifically designed for workforce retention and recruitment and workforce stabilization funds. This would apply to all folks that we had on staff as of December 1st 2021, all the staff would receive equal amounts, we've identified an amount that could be given as a bonus, thanks to HR and others who worked with us and the union our union partners to bring this together. There was an MOU signed in support of delivering those funds directly to our staff. And again, no budget impact. This is federal money through the State to us and directly to our staff.

Phil Barrett

Good. I'll entertain a motion for this item as well.

Tom Wood

Supervisor Wood.

Diana Edwards

Second.

Phil Barrett

Second by Mrs. Edwards. Any discussion on this item?

Steve Bulger

Chairman.

Phil Barrett

Yes.

Steve Bulger

I just like to congratulate everybody involved in this. This was a bigger challenge than it looked, took a lot of time to figure this out with HR and the Union, as Dr. Prezioso mentioned. So good job by everybody involved in this. It was it was an involved issue. Thank you.

Phil Barrett

Thank you, Mr. Bulger. Okay. All in favor?

Several Supervisors

Aye.

Phil Barrett

Opposed? Motion carries. And the final item, Mike.

Michael Prezioso

Last item Chairman has to do with block grant funding, again, coming from the State. Will need a budget amendment to accept those funds. There is no budget impact, because those funds are coming through and the re-uses that we propose related to supplies are within the guidelines of the grant money.

Phil Barrett

And for the good of the order, what is the acronym stands for?

Michael Prezioso

SAPT that is a Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment block grant.

Phil Barrett

Very good. I was just testing you.

Michael Prezioso

There you go.

Phil Barrett

No, I'm only kidding. All right. I'll entertain a motion to accept those funds.

Eric Butler

I'll move that.

Diana Edwards

Second.

Phil Barrett

Mr. Butler, second by Mrs. Edwards. Discussion? Okay. All in favor?

Several Supervisors

Aye.

Phil Barrett

Opposed? Motion carries. Thanks, Mike. Tina Potter has a couple of items, Tina.

Tina Potter

Thank you, Chairman Barrett. I just have two items for the Committee today. One is a request for a Resolution to reappropriate funds that were unspent in 2021 for our Emergency Rental Assistance Program. We contracted with the Shelters of Saratoga for ERAP application, outreach and assistance for \$300,000. And as the end of 2021, we still have \$142,128 that I would like to carry over into 2022 to continue to pay them. So again, this was 100% funding from the federal government and it's just a carryover. So resolution for the 120, 142123 into our 2022 budget.

Phil Barrett

Okay, I'll entertain a motion to carry those funds over.

John Lant

Supervisor Wood make the motion.

Phil Barrett

Thank you, Tom.

Diana Edwards

Second.

Phil Barrett

Second by Mrs. Edwards. So, Tina, what's been the, you know, response to the program? Has it tailed off, or is it remaining steady or?

Tina Potter

The applications are still being accepted. The unfortunate part is what we do have over. For our county, we got 1792 applications that have been submitted. The amount that have been paid, though, they paid out on 523 applications to date, with the amount being about \$4,185,000. So we're still waiting on quite a bit of, quite a few payments. There's been quite a lag on that. But the interest in the applications have been very plentiful. And the SOS is still working with a lot of individuals still submitting applications, as well as trying to work with many landlords and individuals to try to obtain information about the status of their application.

Phil Barrett

What's been the lag time of the time from application to receiving, any idea on maybe an average time? Just ballpark.

Tina Potter

Right now they're paying out for October applications. So it's quite a, at least a four month delay than a six month delay.

Phil Barrett

Gee for government that's not bad.

Tina Potter

It's a challenge.

Phil Barrett

Okay. Well, we still have money that's unspent, we want to keep that around and make sure that everybody has an opportunity to submit an application. Any other discussion on this item? Okay, all in favor?

Several Supervisors

Aye.

Phil Barrett

Opposed? Motion carries. Second item, Tina.

Tina Potter

Thank you. The second item is request for a budget amendment to accept an allocation for Adult Protective Services Grant. It's federal funding through grants to enhance services relative to the adult protected population in response to COVID. The amount for our allocation is \$47,846. The funds are intended to improve and enhance and expand our ability to provide services to the Adult Protective population to enhance the ability to do investigations into abuse, neglect and exploitation. So the plan that we would do to utilize these funds is to use a portion to improve our remote work capability by

getting a laptops for Adult Protective so that we have that should we need to go remote again, if necessary. Provide goods and services to the population of Adult Protective clients, things along the lines of cleaning supplies, masks, food, medicine, we've been having to get for them. Also to provide any assistance to assist with housing or payments to family type homes to get them stabilized in housing, and transportation services, because many times we'll get a call from a hospital, that we have to get a person to a motel or to their apartment. So we would use the funds in that manner also. So I would be requesting a budget amendment to accept these 100% federal dollars, both expenditure and revenue of \$47,846. With no budget impact.

Phil Barrett

Okay.

John Lant

I'll make that motion Chairman.

Phil Barrett

Mr. Lant, thank you very much.

Eric Butler

I'll second.

Phil Barrett

Second by Mr. Butler, any discussion on this item? Okay. All in favor.

Several Supervisors

Aye.

Phil Barrett

Opposed. Motion carries. Thank you, Tina.

Tina Potter

Okay. Thank you.

Phil Barrett

Next up Dan. How are we doing today?

Daniel Kuhles

Good afternoon, Chairman. How is everybody today. The first item, first request we have is a partnership with emergency services and Mike McEvoy. It's a request to renew contracts with the various EMS agencies in the County to assist and continue their assistance with COVID mitigation efforts. I think the one that's most common to folks that they're aware of is vaccination of homebound individuals. Our EMS agencies were the first in the State to offer the service, it became a model for all the other EMS agencies in the State and, you know, under Mike McEvoy's leadership, and so we do not know what the future beholds for COVID. And so we'd like to just keep this option open to us and

any costs that would be incurred would be reimbursable, either from FEMA or through one of the various COVID grants that Public Health has from the State Health Department.

Phil Barrett

I was in conference with Dr. McEvoy before the meeting. I did ask him about the continuation of the homebound vaccinations that are, that do continue. And so I don't know how many you've done total, Mike. But it's been a big number. And many, many appreciative people that have that have benefited from your service. So thank you. And please extend our thanks to all the agencies that have been involved.

Daniel Kuhles

They've been simply, you know, I've only been here a short period, but I can see why they've earned the reputation as the best in the State. So we're very grateful for that partnership as well.

Phil Barrett

Yeah, absolutely.

John Lant

Chairman, I'll make that motion.

Phil Barrett

Thank you Sir.

Tom Wood

Second, Supervisor Wood

Phil Barrett

Second by Mr. Wood. Any questions for Dan or Mike discussion? Okay. All in favor?

Several Supervisors

Aye.

Phil Barrett

Opposed? Motion carries. Second item.

Daniel Kuhles

The second item is a request to extend the, we have a contract with Blue Raster, which is a company that provides technical assistance for our Arc GIS, our data dashboard for COVID. It currently expires on February 21st, and we'd like to extend that to the end of the year because there are funds that we can still draw upon. We hope now to enhance some of the dashboard as we shift from case counting to look at other metrics and forms of COVID surveillance to inform our health care providers in our community.

Phil Barrett

Yep, absolutely. So I'm sure we've all benefited, I know residents have from having this information available. And so we want to continue to offer that information. As Dr. Kuhles said, we don't know where COVID is going. But we know where we've been. We know what's worked so far, and what hasn't, and what's been beneficial and what hasn't been beneficial. Certainly this information updated on regular basis has been beneficial. So we should keep it going. I'll entertain a motion to keep it going.

John Lant

I'll make that motion.

Phil Barrett

Ok. Thank you Mr. Lant.

Diana Edwards

I'll second.

Phil Barrett

Second by Mrs. Edwards. Any discussion? Okay. All in favor?

Several Supervisors

Aye.

Phil Barrett

Opposed? Motion carries. Now along that line, Dr. Kuhles, we've seen a continue to see cascading numbers downward, as far as COVID is concerned and active cases, although, you know, based on the metrics, it still shows that it can be dangerous to a lot of people. Can you just give us a brief update as to how you see the situation compared to, you know, two weeks ago or a month ago?

Daniel Kuhles

Sure. So, while transmission remains high, it's certainly much lower than it has been, as you noted, in several weeks, I think the important concepts are, you know, regardless of the case counts, our County because of its high vaccination rate and partnerships, again, we talked about EMS, just a few minutes ago, our hospitalizations have remained very low, relatively speaking to other parts of the state and the country. And so that's allowed us to withstand this Omicron surge better than other jurisdictions have. I think, you know, the key data point remains that the individuals that are hospitalized are overwhelmingly individuals who have not received a booster vaccine either because they were not vaccinated to begin with or chose not to get one or were not eligible to get one for whatever reason. And so we see that vaccination protects, continues to protect against severe illness, hospitalization and death.

Phil Barrett

Thank you, and I appreciate Dr. Kuhles and your team for making sure that we stay on the forefront of all the trends and addressing issues as they arise during the pandemic. Are there any questions for Dr. Kuhles? Just general questions?

John Lant

I got one Chairman.

Phil Barrett

Mr. Lant.

John Lant

I'd like to thank all our doctors, Tina, for your leadership, and your staff for the great job. You've helped people, supervisors in our county, residents get through this COVID and I'm afraid your jobs aren't done yet. So keep up the great work you all do for the residents.

Phil Barrett

Very good.

Diana Edwards

I'll second that.

Phil Barrett

Second by Mrs. Edwards. Any other questions for Dr. Kuhles at this time? Okay. Did we is that on the table? Oh, we don't have anything on the table. No, I'm getting carried away here. Any other business to bring before the committee today? All right, seeing none. I'll entertain a motion to adjourn.

Eric Butler

So moved.

Eric Connolly

Second.

John Lant

You got it.

Phil Barrett

Okay. Mr. Butler, Mr. Connolly. All in favor?

Several Supervisors

Aye.

Phil Barrett

Opposed? Motion carries. Thank you