

Health & Human Services Committee Minutes  
April 6, 2022 – 4:00 p.m.

Present: Chairman Phil Barrett; Committee Members C. Eric Butler, Eric Connolly, Diana Edwards, John Lant, Jonathan Schopf, Tom Wood; Supervisor Tara Gaston and Chairman of the Board Theodore Kusnierz; Steve Bulger, Ridge Harris, Matt Rose, Audra Hedden, Stephanie Hodgson, County Administrator; Michael Hartnett, County Attorney; Judy Dahoda, Rebecca Robarge, Department of Aging & Youth; Tina Potter, Social Services; Daniel Kuhles, Public Health; Michael Prezioso, Mental Health & Addiction; Frank McClement, Veterans; Craig Hayner, County Clerk; Barbara Thomas, League of Women Voters.

Chairman Barrett called the meeting to order and welcomed all in attendance.

**On a motion made by Mr. Schopf, seconded by Mr. Butler, the minutes of the March 2, 2022 meeting were approved unanimously.**

**A motion was made by Mr. Schopf, seconded by Mrs. Edwards, to authorize an agreement with Captain Community Human Services to provide Runaway Homeless Youth Programs & Services. Unanimous.**

Ms. Dahoda-Taylor said that this is an annual housekeeping item. It is 100% pass through money from OCFS and is included in the 2022 budget.

**A motion was made by Mr. Butler, seconded by Mrs. Edwards, to authorize an agreement with Cornell Cooperative Extension for the Youth Development Program. Unanimous.**

Ms. Dahoda-Taylor said that this is an annual housekeeping item. It is mostly funded by the County with \$5,660 reimbursement from OCFS. This provides direct services for education in schools.

**A motion was made by Mrs. Edwards, seconded by Mr. Schopf, to authorize an agreement with Kee to Independent Growth, Inc. to provide Social Adult Day-Care services. Unanimous.**

Ms. Dahoda-Taylor said that Kee to Independent Growth is also known as New Journeys Social Adult Day. The Contract is \$15,000 and is funded through the EISEP program. It provides social adult day program for those 60 and over in the community.

**A motion was made by Mr. Schopf, seconded by Mrs. Edwards, to proclaim April 2022 as Youth Month in Saratoga County. Unanimous.**

Ms. Robarge said that the theme this year is “Readers are Leaders”. Several libraries have volunteered to take part in a program developed by Ms. Robarge. Children can submit a listing of books they read in the month of April, write a book review and receive a small prize for their participation. Mr. Robarge hopes to continue and expand this program annually.

Mr. Barrett said that they have been working with Ms. Robarge on lifeguard training. It has become very difficult for municipalities to hire lifeguards. A class will be hosted in Clifton Park and is open to anyone in the County. Ms. Robarge said that they are still working on the details, they hope to have 10 youth certified in Clifton Park and another 20 in Ballston Spa. A survey has been put out to recreation programs throughout the County and they have realized a huge need for lifeguards throughout the County.

**A motion was made by Mr. Lant, seconded by Mr. Butler, to proclaim May 2022 as Older Americans Month in Saratoga County. Unanimous.**

Ms. Dahoda-Taylor said that this year's theme is "Age my Way". Promoting aging in homes, safely and with dignity.

Mr. Bulger said that Administration and the Office of Aging and Youth have been working on an incentive program for the volunteer drivers for the Meals on Wheels program. The increased cost of gas has put a strain on some of the volunteer drivers. These volunteers do not reimbursed form the County, they do it out of the goodness of their hearts. Mr. Bulger said that the Meals on Wheels program is one of the most critical programs and it needs to be kept running as effectively as possible. The proposal, details are still being worked out, is to take \$10K from contingency fund to purchase gas cards from local gas stations in the County. The Office of Aging and Youth are working with the County Attorney's office to come up with a plan on how to fairly distribute these gas cards to volunteers. No official action is needed at this time, the proposal is just being run by the committee to canvass the opinions of the members. Mr. Lant, Mrs. Butler and Mr. Barrett agreed with the proposal. Mr. Bulger said that he will provide an update at the next meeting.

**A motion was made by Mr. Lant, seconded by Mr. Schopf, to proclaim April 2022 as Child Abuse Prevention Month in Saratoga County. Unanimous.**

Mrs. Potter said that this is an annual observance dedicated to raising the awareness of child abuse prevention. They will be hosting an event on April 12 where they will place a pinwheel garden to signify that children deserve a free lifestyle. Another part of the recognition is to acknowledge the endless hours of dedicated work put in by the Caseworkers to combat child abuse and ensure the children in the community are safe.

Mr. Bulger said that a new security team was supplied by the Sheriff's office to DSS. Mrs. Potter said that have the security team has made a big difference. The staff are very thankful for the increased security.

**A motion was made by Mr. Schopf, seconded by Mr. Butler, to authorize the acceptance of grant funds from the New York State Office of Addiction Services and Supports for the treatment of inmates suffering from opiate use disorders, and amending the 2022 County budget. Unanimous.**

Dr. Prezioso said that this is a rollover of funds from 2021 to 2022 in the amount of approximately \$37K. Funds were earmarked for the medication assisted treatment program at the Jail.

**A motion was made by Mr. Schopf, seconded by Mrs. Edwards, to authorize the acceptance of Federal Medicaid Fee Enhancements for Saratoga County Mental Health and Addiction Services and amending the 2022 County budget. Unanimous.**

Dr. Prezioso said that this is a 10% increase on the amounts billed between November and June for addictions related services.

Dr. Prezioso provided updates on several topics/initiatives:

CRPA services for Veterans (opiate settlement resources)

Dr. Prezioso said that one of the proposed uses of opiate settlement monies would be to attach CRPA to the Dwyer Fund project for the Veterans agency. Veterans who have experience related to addictions providing additional support connections with a veteran. This could also lead to possible incorporation of the Sheriff's Second Chance Program.

Post Critical Incident Seminar for Law Enforcement/Veterans: Peer Network Development

Dr. Prezioso said that the PCIS program is an extension of the FBI program and is an opportunity for a peer led three day seminar for those who are experiencing cumulative career related stress, acute stress, in service in the military and through law enforcement. Extending the peer model to possibly have a PCIS in Saratoga County going forward.

Crisis Intervention Training for Law Enforcement

Dr. Prezioso said that they have partnered with the Sheriff's Office and secured funding for crisis intervention training for law enforcement. This will take place in September and will contain content specific to crisis resolution for law enforcement and dealing with folks who have mental illness. Talk about to talk about the specifics of mental illness, how to engage people with an illness, how to de-escalate and crisis situations.

Critical Incident Stress Debriefing Training for Law Enforcement, EMS, Fire, Dispatch: Peer Network Development

Dr. Prezioso said that he would like to build out a peer system for all first responder agencies to be able to direct responders to appropriate resources.

Universal First Responder Resource Guide

This would be to develop a common centralized list of resources, so that all command staff and agencies have access to it, so they can call on each other to provide support to their members, trying to sustain the focus, improved quality of life, dealing with critical incidents critical stressors.

EMS Embedding: Patient Care, Education/Training and Workforce Resilience-Platform for the Future

Dr. Prezioso said that he is now an EMT and has been able to assist with additional trainings. Has had the opportunity to talk with patients suffering from mental illness while responding to calls, as well as acting as a resource for some of the members of responding agencies. Evaluating what types of services would best meet their needs and trying to develop a peer model.

Mr. Hartnett said that funding from opioid settlement funds should start coming in later this month to early May. Mr. Barrett thanked Dr. Prezioso for bringing the discussions forward.

**A motion was made by Mr. Lant, seconded by Mr. Butler, to authorize a Memorandum of Understanding with School Districts regarding Epidemiology and Lab Capacity Reopening Schools Grants. A vote was not taken.**

Dr. Kuhles said that this would allow for the purchase or reimbursement of eligible costs as delineated in federal guidance based on a per pupil basis of \$85.50. Any expense or reimbursement request would be approved by the State Health Department. Mr. Bulger said that once again Dr. Kuhles and Saratoga County are leading the way in getting this funding out.

Mr. Barrett provided a brief update on the build out of the Environmental Health Department. They have put together priorities working with New York State. They are still actively working on hiring a director, the interview process is a lengthy one but is moving along well. There are approximately two dozen positions that they will be looking to fill in the future. The largest obstacle right now is finding enough staff in a relatively short period of time.

**On a motion made by Mr. Schopf, seconded by Mrs. Edwards, the meeting was adjourned unanimously.**

Respectfully submitted,  
Therese Connolly  
Clerk of the Board