



MINUTES
HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE
Thursday, May 14, 2020
Live Stream Link: <https://youtu.be/Y6B2FkirpiY>

CALL TO ORDER: By Hon. Elane Daly, Chair called the meeting to order at 6:27PM

MEMBERS: Legislators Michael Didio, Tricia Kerr, Timothy Lattimore, Heidi Nightengale, Hans Pecher, and Charlie Ripley (Vice Chair)

OTHERS: Legislators Chris Petrus, Keith Batman, Ben Vitale, County Attorney Chris Palermo, Assistant County Attorney Richard Graham, Director of Office for the Aging Brenda Wiemann, Public Health Director Kathleen Cuddy, Assistant County Attorney Brittany Massi, Director of Community Services Ray Bizzari and Deputy Clerk of the Legislature Amanda Morgan

MINUTES TO APPROVE: April 9, 2020, Motion by Nightengale, 2nd by Didio, all in favor.

Motion by Didio to approve appointments, 2nd by Nightengale, all in favor.

APPOINTMENTS:

Alcohol and Substance Abuse

Shari Weiss, 2119 West Genesee St., Auburn, NY 13021, Term – 1/1/20 – 12/31/20 (Unexpired term of Soprano)

RESOLUTIONS:

OFA:

- 5-20-HH-1 Authorization to accept additional funding from the NYS Office for Aging (NYSOFA) through the Corona Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act. **Motion by Nightengale, 2nd by Didio, all in favor.**
- 5-20-HH-2 Authorization to accept additional funding from the NYS Office for Aging (NYSOFA) through Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA). **Motion by Nightengale, 2nd by Didio, all in favor.**

HEALTH:

- 5-20-HH-3 Amending resolution 416-16 to reflect recently adjusted increases to the NYSDOH Early Intervention Administration Grant for year 4 (10/1/2019-9/30/2020) and year 5 (10/1/2020-9/30/2021). **Motion by Nightengale, 2nd by Didio, all in favor.**

HUMAN SERVICES:

- 5-20-HH-4 Authorizing the Chairman of the Legislature and the Director of Community Services to enter into a contract with the Fort Hill Cemetery to provide for indigent burials. **Motion by Nightengale, 2nd by Kerr, all in favor.**
- 5-20-HH-5 Authorizing the Chairman of the Legislature and the Director of Community Services to renew the contract with Rescue Mission for Homeless Family and Transitional Housing. **Motion by Nightengale, 2nd by Kerr, all in favor.**

MENTAL HEALTH:

- 5-20-HH-6 Authorizing the Chairman of the Cayuga County Legislature and the Director of Community Services to contract for psychiatrist duties at the Community Mental Health Center. **Motion by Didio, 2nd by Ripley, all in favor.**

DEPARTMENT UPDATES FOR COMMITTEE:

Brenda Wiemann (Office for the Aging) –

OFA remains operational at our main office at COB M-F, 9-5 by phone and e-mail, or drop-off via security. Staff rotate in office 1/day per wk and work from home remainder.

Meals on Wheels program continues M-F for over 350 seniors, with 6 P/T and 2 F/T staff working daily. Verbal health screenings continue for volunteers; they are supplied with masks, hand sanitizer, and bags to leave meals with clients while maintaining a safe distance. We recognized our “Superheros” volunteers in April.

Channel 9 news: <https://www.localsyr.com/news/local-news/a-heroes-send-off-given-to-meals-on-wheels-drivers-in-cayuga-county/>

The Citizen https://auburnpub.com/news/local/cayuga-county-meals-on-wheels-volunteers-hailed-as-superheroes-during-covid-19/article_87c55f4e-fab9-535e-8172-0a90d46cad62.html

Medicare 101 will take place via 8x8 this month. NYConnects recently completed the second edition of a special COVID-19 mini-newsletter for appx 400 clients. Case managers are providing shopping and errands for clients who lack supports. A facemask distribution for seniors is being planned for later in the month.

Kathleen Cuddy (Health) –

- Update on activities in the Health Department
- Update on specific COVID-19 actions and anticipated direction

Cuddy says the health department continues to do the mandatory work through environmental division, early intervention, other communicable diseases and WIC Office. She says at the previous Board of Health where everyone have a great summary of the functions they are performing and how they are doing them differently at this COVID time, but still achieving them. Cuddy hosted a town meeting with supervisors and many of them attended. The questions they had were regarding how to hold a public meeting and also questions about some future public events. They have worked hard to boost testing for essential workers this past week. She says as they move forward they will be continuing to provide some community based testing and had some discussion today about what they will do in regard to ongoing testing. She says Paul Bornemann and the IT staff helped them out with some online registration. They have been providing a lot of education for not only in-county departments, but for other external interested businesses. She continues to host routine calls with city and county leaders at 2:00PM- Monday, Wednesday and Friday. She says it is a lot of questions and updates on the latest stuff that is going on. The most significant change this week was the mandatory COVID testing for all employee of skilled nursing facility/adult homes, which locally could not sustain but the state heard their concerns and are trying to find a realistic manner they can accomplish that requirement. They saw in the last week and a half an uptick in cases and part was related to better weather and people not maintaining their social distancing. They are looking forward to the creative ways businesses that will be open will be enhancing their disinfection practices and distancing. They have great confidence they want to perform well because businesses can stay open as long as case numbers stay down. She discusses new updates in contact tracing and some software. They have had a number of after hour’s telephone calls and have seen an uptick in calls and there are some emergency calls that come to them. She would like to consider looking at whether here is some sort of rate of pay for answering calls that could be for nursing staff that are non-unionized. Daly asks about contact tracing and f the level of testing that happened for phase one has to continue for the rest of the phases. Cuddy says the contact tracing they have used their staff here and have been able to do it and used nurses. They have not gone outside for contact tracing and she is not sure if we will need to. She says if we have a large number or an extensive exposure we will certainly need additional assistance. She says we know it will be these next many months on how well we do with social distancing to limit the exposure. She says they will try to continue testing, but they would not be able to sustain the level that they did this past week. She says as part for the seven criteria that needed to be met there is also a regional amount that has to be met. She says the state is saying there is an average per diem rate of testing that they want to see accomplished that is averaged over a seven day span. Daly asks if they will be able to get a handle of the asymptomatic positives because they are testing people who did not have symptoms. Cuddy says she suspects they will because there are more test it has taken a little longer to get results.

Kerr asks about the support for individuals with mental health or substance abuse issues and what phase f reopening we are looking at for group support services and church services. Cuddy says she will bring that specific question forward because she does not know what phase they are in. Lattimore says he though AA meetings were happening as long as they are less than 10. Bizzari says as far as being able to provide services people are working on strategizes to be able to respect social distancing and public health issues.

Nightengale asks about antibody testing. Cuddy says it is not being performed in the county right now, but here is a survey out that was sent to health care providers, including urgent cares, and pharmacies. She says they know there are the abilities for them to test for the virus, but could also test for antibodies. She says part of the survey is not only asking if they are testing for the virus, but if they plan to test for antibodies and what type of test they will be using. She says the recommendation at this time the recommendation is to use an antibody test that falls under the FDA emergency authorization use. She says right now to the best of her knowledge there is one urgent care that provides that.

Ray Bizzari (Mental Health/Social Services) – No updates

Discussion:

Bizzari discusses the impact on the community in terms of COVID, isolation, and the way traditional treatments and supports have not been available even though they have been replaced with telephonic and telehealth. He says the things they pay attention to in terms of monitoring the system – child protective service complaints, emergency room presentations, overdose, suicide ideation and completed suicides. He says it feels like the lid is starting to come off in terms of the need. He says the need was always great, but has been exacerbated by the response that they have had to put in play. He says the usual eyes that we have on the system are not there anymore and the cases are much more serious. He says a lot of substance abuse and domestic violence driven activity. He discusses the online narcan training and abilities to get narcan. He says their work is trying to adjust and meet the needs of people in real time.

Kerr asks about the homeless population and what is happening right now. Bizzari says kind of holding our own with housing people and some motels that we have not used a lot are needing revenue. They average 65-100 homeless households a month. They have been able to move some people into permanent housing, so the numbers are pretty steady. They have kept the shelter population at Chapel House smaller than typical, so they can social distance and they have done a nice job managing that. He says we do not really know how many people that are out there that landlords will initiate an action against. He says his guess is that it will probably be more than normal because the unemployment rate is a problem. He expects that we will get an influx of homeless people.

Motion by Ripley to adjourn at 7:20PM, 2nd by Nightengale, all in favor.