

STEUBEN COUNTY HUMAN SERVICES, HEALTH & EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Wednesday, October 7, 2020

9:00 a.m.

*Legislative Chambers, 3rd Floor, Annex Building
Bath, New York*

****MINUTES****

COMMITTEE: Carol A. Ferratella, Chair Hilda T. Lando, Vice Chair K. Michael Hanna
Paul E. Van Caesele Scott J. Van Etten

STAFF: Jack K. Wheeler Christopher Brewer Jennifer Prossick
Hank Chapman Patty Baroody Kathy Muller
Andy Morse Brenda Scotchmer Yvonne Erway
Tammy Hurd-Harvey Darlene Smith

LEGISLATORS: Robin K. Lattimer Kelly H. Fitzpatrick Steven Maio
John V. Malter Aaron I. Mullen Robert V. Nichols
Frederick G. Potter Thomas J. Ryan Gary B. Roush
Gary D. Swackhamer

OTHERS: Tess McKinley, Executive Director, Cornell Cooperative Extension
Mary Perham

I. CALL TO ORDER

Mrs. Ferratella called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. and asked Mr. Van Caesele to lead the Pledge of Allegiance.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

MOTION: APPROVING THE MINUTES OF THE SEPTEMBER 2, 2020, MEETING MADE BY MRS. LANDO. SECONDED BY MR. HANNA. ALL BEING IN FAVOR. MOTION CARRIES 5-0.

Secretary's Note: Chairman Van Etten sat in as a member of this committee as Legislator Maio has temporarily been removed from this committee assignment.

III. DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS

A. Department of Community Services

1. **Accepting NYS Office of Mental Health COLA Funding** – Dr. Chapman requested authorization to accept \$6,703 in COLA funds from the NYS Office of Mental Health. This funding is to be used for salary and fringe benefit expenses.

MOTION: AUTHORIZING THE DIRECTOR OF THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY SERVICES TO ACCEPT A NEW YORK STATE OFFICE OF MENTAL HEALTH COLA ADJUSTMENT IN THE AMOUNT OF \$6,703, SAID AMOUNT TO BE USED TO COVER SALARY AND FRINGE BENEFIT INCREASES MADE BY MR. VAN ETTEN. SECONDED BY MR. VAN CAESELE FOR DISCUSSION.

Mr. Van Etten asked is this an annual thing? Dr. Chapman replied yes. It does not totally cover the salary and fringe benefit increases, but it helps.

VOTE ON PREVIOUS MOTION: ALL BEING IN FAVOR. MOTION CARRIES 5-0. Resolution Required.

Ms. Fitzpatrick asked have you seen an increase in requests for mental health help with the shutdown restrictions and how is it going? Dr. Chapman replied we have seen an increase, especially with our crisis outreach services. At the early onset of the pandemic we had a lot of people calling after-hours with questions regarding COVID. There has been a lot of added stress to families coping with the changes to school, etc. People have really adjusted to our new way of providing services. The State relaxed the requirements so that allows us to do counseling over the phone and/or with video conferencing. We are seeing 20 – 25 percent of our clients on-site. For the individuals without the technology capability we do see them onsite on a regular basis. Overall, there has been an increased need and it has been a challenge to keep pace.

Mr. Swackhamer asked for the people that have cell phones, do you Facetime with them? Dr. Chapman replied yes and we do that. There are still some areas in the county where people do not have cell reception and we are targeting those individuals and seeing them on-site.

B. Department of Social Services

1. **Request for Proposals for HEAP Furnace Component** – Ms. Muller requested authorization to request proposals for the HEAP furnace component. This is for the repair/replacement of furnaces for the upcoming HEAP season.

MOTION: AUTHORIZING THE COMMISSIONER OF SOCIAL SERVICES, IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE PURCHASING DEPARTMENT, TO REQUEST PROPOSALS FOR THE HEAP FURNANCE COMPONENT MADE BY MRS. LANDO. SECONDED BY MR. VAN CAESELE FOR DISCUSSION.

Mr. Van Etten asked why wait so late in the season? Ms. Muller replied I believe the terms of our current contract expire in August or September so we are timely.

VOTE ON PREVIOUS MOTION: ALL BEING IN FAVOR. MOTION CARRIES 5-0.

C. Public Health

1. **Preschool Contract** – Mrs. Smith requested authorization to enter into a contract with Anthony Cerneskie, Speech Language Pathologist, to provide Preschool Related Services. The rate is \$70.00 per session and \$35.00 per group session.

MOTION: AUTHORIZING THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC HEALTH TO ENTER INTO A CONTRACT WITH ANTHONY CERNESKIE, SPEECH LANGUAGE PATHOLOGIST, TO PROVIDE PRESCHOOL RELATED SERVICES AT A RATE OF \$70.00 PER SESSION AND \$35.00 PER GROUP SESSION MADE BY MR. VAN ETTEN. SECONDED BY MR. VAN CAESELE. ALL BEING IN FAVOR. MOTION CARRIES 5-0.

2. **New Contracts** – Mrs. Smith stated she is looking to enter into contracts for contact tracing and to increase staff capacity. We have received funding from the State for the purpose of increasing capacity to assist with COVID work. She requested authorization to enter into a contract with Adecco Medical & Science Staffing for data entry for COVID along with LPN and RN services. We do not have a rate for the nursing staff, but the rate for data entry is \$25.20 per hour.

MOTION: AUTHORIZING THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC HEALTH TO ENTER INTO A NEW CONTRACT WITH ADECCO MEDICAL & SCIENCE STAFFING FOR DATA ENTRY FOR COVID AT A RATE OF \$25.20 PER HOUR, ALONG WITH LPN AND RN SERVICES AT A RATE TO BE DETERMINED MADE BY MRS. LANDO. SECONDED BY MR. HANNA. ALL BEING IN FAVOR. MOTION CARRIES 5-0.

Mrs. Smith requested authorization to enter into a contract AMN Health Care, Inc. (Nursefinders) for RN at a rate of \$82.00 per hour, LPN at a rate of \$55.00 per hour and Medical Assistant at a rate of \$40.00 per hour.

MOTION: AUTHORIZING THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC HEALTH TO ENTER INTO A NEW CONTRACT WITH AMN HEALTH CARE, INC. (NURSEFINDERS) FOR RN AT A RATE OF \$82.00 PER HOUR, LPN AT A RATE OF \$55.00 PER HOUR AND MEDICAL ASSISTANT AT A RATE OF \$40.00 PER HOUR MADE BY MR. VAN ETTEN. SECONDED BY MR. HANNA FOR DISCUSSION.

Mrs. Lando asked will we be able to get people? Mrs. Smith replied that is a good question. So far, no. Distance is a little bit of a problem as these agencies are located more in the Rochester area and outlying areas. We will keep trying.

Mr. Van Caesele asked will the funding from the State cover all of these services? Mrs. Smith replied it will cover a lot of it, maybe all of it.

Mr. Van Etten asked would the staffing from Adecco amount to three full-time equivalents? Mr. Wheeler replied yes. If we are able to and when we are able to stand up a joint testing with Chemung County, we will need that. They would be the equivalent of two full-time equivalents, but they would not necessarily be 40 hours per week.

VOTE ON PREVIOUS MOTION: ALL BEING IN FAVOR. MOTION CARRIES 5-0.

Mrs. Smith requested authorization to enter into a contract with Reliant Staffing Systems, Inc. for RN at a rate of \$49.98 per hour and LPN at a rate of \$38.73 per hour.

MOTION: AUTHORIZING THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC HEALTH TO ENTER INTO A CONTRACT WITH RELIANT STAFFING SYSTEMS, INC. FOR RN AT A RATE OF \$49.98 PER HOUR AND LPN AT A RATE OF \$38.73 PER HOUR MADE BY MR. VAN ETTEN. SECONDED BY MR. VAN CAESELE. ALL BEING IN FAVOR. MOTION CARRIES 5-0.

Mrs. Smith stated she also would like to amend their current contract with Pathways. Mrs. Congdon explained we currently have a contract with Pathways for two full-time RNs. We would like to amend the contract to add an additional full-time RN, 2 part-time contact tracers for COVID and 1 part-time Clerk. She commented one of our Clerks resigned and this part-time Clerk would be helping us out until we can fill that position. The original contract was \$170,000. With these additional staff, that would increase the contract \$195,000 for a total contract amount of \$365,000. Mr. Wheeler commented we were notified yesterday of the clerical position that is resigning and we are recruiting for that position now. This contracted part-time Clerk is just for the interim.

MOTION: AUTHORIZING THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC HEALTH TO AMEND THE CONTRACT WITH PATHWAYS TO INCLUDE THE ADDITION OF 1 FULL-TIME RN; 2 PART-TIME CONTACT TRACERS FOR COVID; AND 1 PART-TIME CLERK FOR AN ADDITIONAL COST OF \$195,000, BRINGING THE TOTAL CONTRACT AMOUNT TO \$365,000 MADE BY MRS. LANDO. SECONDED BY MR. HANNA. ALL BEING IN FAVOR. MOTION CARRIES 5-0.

2. **COVID Update** – Mrs. Lando asked Mrs. Smith to provide an update on where we are at with COVID. Mrs. Smith stated the numbers as of this morning are 604 have tested positive since the start of the pandemic. We currently have 227 active positive cases. There are 325 cases that are recovered. We currently have 17 hospitalized and there have been 52 deaths since the start of the pandemic. The number that is shocking to me is that we have 834 in isolation/quarantine right now. At our peak we hovered around 300 in March. Within a few weeks, starting in September, we have tripled that number.

Mr. Maio asked do you have a theory as to why we are seeing the high numbers? Mrs. Smith replied it is community spread. People are not following the regulations and the emergency orders as set forth. The executive orders state that we are not to have more than 50 people at non-essential gatherings. Additionally, people are not wearing masks and not social distancing. That leads to clusters, which lead to community spread. We have four different clusters now that we are aware of. We are fervently trying to contain the spread and are actively working on ramping up the testing to get the clusters tested and in isolation/quarantine.

Mrs. Ferratella commented there have been some issues in Chemung and Broome counties. Mrs. Smith stated yes, they have clusters which have led to striking numbers for them. We are working as fast as we can to partner with Chemung to use the rapid testing kits. There will be training tomorrow for the nurses and then we can start nailing down the locations and logistics.

Ms. Fitzpatrick stated you said there are 800 in isolation/quarantine; what percentage of those are waiting for tests to come back? Also what percent of those have not bothered to get tested and how do we determine that? Some of the individuals are from schools I assume. She stated I appreciate the numbers in quarantine, but there has to be a certain percentage that have not tested positive for COVID. Mrs. Smith stated that is correct. The majority of them are not positive and are contacts to a positive. That is the reason the numbers are high; because of the schools as they are a congregate setting. With a positive in a school, we contact trace the classroom and the bus. We have to determine if they switched classrooms and do that contact tracing, etc. The 834 in isolation/quarantine is everyone and includes the 227 positive cases. The rest are contacts to the positives or have been tested for an elective procedure, or went to a drive-thru testing site. It is a combination. However, the majority of that isolation/quarantine number is due to being a contact.

Ms. Fitzpatrick stated it is impressive then, given the number you are putting into isolation/quarantine that the majority in that process are working. So if someone on that list gets a test result back, are they allowed to go back to their normal activities and how long before they get their test back? Mrs. Smith replied if an individual is in quarantine, that is because they had a test for an elective procedure, and then yes, if they have a negative test they come out of quarantine. If an individual is in quarantine because they are a contact of a positive and they test negative, that does not let them out of quarantine early because of the incubation period.

Mr. Wheeler stated most of these in isolation/quarantine are contacts. We have seen a number of individuals who are a close contact to a positive and they are under quarantine and then by day 11 or 12 they have symptoms and by day 13 they are positive. That is why people abiding by the quarantine is important.

Mr. Van Caesele asked is the increase in numbers because there are better ways of identifying the virus and tracking since May? Mrs. Smith replied testing has increased since May. The hospitals have solidified their plans and testing sites are available. The consistent emphasis on being tested has led to an increase in the numbers as well.

Mr. Hanna asked with regard to people coming in from other states, is there any way to keep track of that? Mrs. Smith replied they are supposed to complete a traveler form online if their State is on the list. Some do, but a lot do not. We will never know those who did not fill out the form. It is easier to capture the data from those who fly because there is someone at the airports to take the forms as they disembark. Those that drive, there is no way to know. There is an untold number of people who do not fill out the traveler form.

Mr. Mullen stated to follow-up on the conversation regarding people in quarantine. You are saying that some people are testing positive after having been in quarantine close to the two week period. What kind of numbers are you seeing on that? Also what about those individuals in a household where one member has tested positive and are trying to stay separated within that household? Mr. Wheeler replied we have seen both and there have been many multiple cases. We don't tackle that as a metric. The more likely scenario is the wife is positive and they separate from the rest of the household. We have seen many of those. We have also seen where people have been quarantined for 13 days and then test positive.

Mr. Mullen stated with the hospitalizations, I'm just wondering about the data we have on the metrics of the people hospitalized. Do we have the breakdown of the severity of symptoms, etc. so that we can better understand? Mrs. Smith replied I don't know that we could track the severity of symptoms. We know who is in the hospital and the majority of the 17 that are hospitalized are elderly. This is primarily hitting the elderly and nursing home residents hard.

Mr. Mullen stated there has been a low percentage of cases for younger people who have COVID. Of those who have tested positive, have you seen severe symptoms from your observations? Mrs. Smith replied I would be able to give you a breakdown of the 17 that are hospitalized, however, we don't necessarily know what their symptoms are. The nurses anecdotally feel like, especially with some of the younger ones, that the symptoms are more severe this time around and that is leading to some of the younger patients needing to be hospitalized. The second wave has been worse and the symptoms are worse.

Mr. Van Etten asked do we have a feel of the 237 positive cases; what percentage are symptomatic? Also, of those that are symptomatic, is that different from the positive cases that we saw in April and May? Mrs. Smith replied we have 227 active positive cases right now. I think a good number of those are symptomatic. A lot of them, from what the nurses are reporting, are quite sick.

Mr. Wheeler commented right now, with the number of cases, the time to do a lot of deep data diving is a little limited. Mr. Van Etten stated I am not asking for extra work. Mr. Wheeler stated in all of the conversations, we were seeing a lot of asymptomatic cases over the summer and those were getting caught by testing. This feels different. Now with the schools and other things open, we are seeing something that is a little different.

3. **Accreditation** – Mrs. Ferratella stated she received a letter from the Public Health Accreditation Board. It states in part “The Public Health Accreditation Board (PHAB) is extremely pleased to inform you that Steuben County Public Health was awarded the designation of national accreditation through PHAB on September 1, 2020. To receive this national accreditation through PHAB, Steuben County Public Health underwent a rigorous, multi-faceted, peer-reviewed assessment process to ensure it met nationally established public health quality standards and measures.” Mrs. Ferratella stated I think Public Health deserves a lot of credit and also the other counties that were involved. This is a real milestone for us and I want to recognize Public Health for that.

Mr. Potter stated going back to the COVID discussion, related to the schools; I have two educators in my family and teachers' worlds have been turned topsy-turvy by COVID-19. All of the changes they had to make in their classrooms and in their teaching has created a lot of stress for them. Protections and precautions have been put in place, but a lot of districts did not implement them as they should have. Not knowing what is in their classrooms is a big concern to them. When they received the county's guidelines of what to do if failing any of the screening questions, it created additional stress as now they are required to get a COVID test, resulting in them being out of the classroom for up to a week while waiting for the test results. This is compounded by the lack of available substitute teachers this year. This is why they are reluctant to be honest about the self-screening and why they felt the County was trying to shut down the schools. This was partly because of a lack of communication and explanation from administrators when the guidelines were distributed. I assured them that this is not the case and explained the reasons for the guidelines which helped to put it into perspective for them.

Mr. Van Caesele commented something seems ironic to me. Through this whole thing, in the department stores and grocery stores, not one case was tracked back to Walmart or Wegmans. It just seems like they skate out of this somehow. Mrs. Smith stated we have certainly had a number of people who were positive go to those places.

MOTION: TO ADJOURN MADE BY MR. HANNA. SECONDED BY MR. VAN ETTEN. ALL BEING IN FAVOR. MOTION CARRIES 5-0.

Respectfully Submitted by Amanda L. Chapman, Deputy Clerk, Steuben County Legislature

****NEXT MEETING SCHEDULED FOR****

Wednesday, November 4, 2020

9:00 a.m.

Please send agenda items to the Clerk of the Legislature's Office

NO LATER THAN NOON

Wednesday, October 28, 2020