

Health & Human Services Committee
April 30, 2019
Minutes

Members Present: Committee Chair John Peck, Legislators Allen Drake, James Nabywaniec, Jeremiah Maxon, Robert Ferris, Carolyn Fitzpatrick, Board Chairman Scott Gray

Others Present: Legislators Robert Cantwell, William Johnson, Michael Montigelli and Daniel McBride, County Administrator Robert Hagemann, Deputy Administrator Sarah Baldwin, County Attorney David Paulsen, Conf. Asst. for Fiscal Affairs and Information Technology Director Gregory Hudson, Office for the Aging Interim Director Louis Harackza, Community Services Director Timothy Ruetten, Public Health Director Ginger Hall, Public Health Educator Faith Lustik, Social Services Commissioner Teresa Gaffney, Planning Director Michael Bourcy, Probation Director Martin Morrison, Insurance Director Lisa Jock, Watertown Daily Times Reporter Abraham Kemmore, Confidential Secretary Jill Jones

Chairman Peck called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. and offered privilege of the floor, however no one present wished to speak. The Committee approved the minutes of the March meeting as written.

Chairman Peck introduced a resolution authorizing agreement for provision of services to elderly of Jefferson County and entertained a motion for consideration. A motion was duly made by Legislator Naybwaniec seconded by Legislator Ferris and there being no discussion, the Committee agreed to sponsor the resolution as presented.

Chairman Peck introduced a resolution amending the 2019 County Budget relative to DSRIP funding for Community Services Department and entertained a motion for consideration. A motion was duly made by Legislator Fitzpatrick seconded by Legislator Drake and there being no discussion, the Committee agreed to sponsor the resolution as presented.

Chairman Peck introduced a resolution amending the 2019 County Budget to allocate additional state aid for Community Services and mental health programs and authorizing amended agreements in relation thereto and entertained a motion for consideration. A motion was duly made by Legislator Ferris seconded by Legislator Fitzpatrick and there being no discussion, the Committee agreed to sponsor the resolution as presented.

Chairman Peck introduced a resolution appointing member to the Community Services Board and entertained a motion for consideration. A motion was duly made by Legislator Fitzpatrick seconded by Legislator Ferris and there being no discussion, the Committee agreed to sponsor the resolution as presented.

Chairman Peck introduced a resolution authorizing agreement for Public Health Services participation in the Central New York Epidemiological Alliance and entertained a motion for consideration. A motion was duly made by Legislator Nabywaniec seconded by Legislator Drake and there being no discussion, the Committee agreed to sponsor the resolution as presented.

Chairman Peck introduced a resolution accepting funding and authorizing an agreement in connection with Public Health Emergency Preparedness Program and entertained a motion for consideration. A motion was duly made by Legislator Nabywaniec seconded by Legislator Ferris and there being no discussion, the Committee agreed to sponsor the resolution as presented.

Mr. Hagemann stated that contained within the adopted NYS Budget were provisions that change the format for monitoring lead poisoning in children. The change will require a closer review process for children who are at risk of lead poisoning, and the parties implementing the program will be Public Health and possibly others agencies in the County. The concern is that it may generate a considerable expense on the part of counties.

Legislator Doldo arrived at the meeting.

Public Health Director Ginger Hall advised that children are tested and screened for lead poisoning at 12 and 24 months. She said no lead levels are deemed safe, and the Governor signed a bill on April 12, 2019 that created a new policy to combat childhood lead poisoning. That policy states an elevated blood level means a blood level greater than or equal to 5 micrograms of lead per deciliter of whole blood; the current threshold level is 10 micrograms. All County health departments are fully committed to eliminating/decreasing lead poisoning and feel this is a good action for the health of children. The CDC has already established these guidelines in response to and in compliance with the federal guidelines.

Director Hall said lead poisoning has a serious affect on the heart, lungs, kidneys, teeth, reproductive organs, nervous and immune systems. Children under the age of six are highly sensitive to lead exposure and lead poisoning. It can lead to irreversible mental and physical damage. She said young children absorb lead 4 to 5 times more readily than adults, and because their bodies are in that development stage it is a higher risk. There are concerns statewide about the consequences of this policy and budget decision. The final NYS Budget fails to provide funding levels believed necessary to fully implement the Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program (CLPPP). The CLPPP does a lot of activity that includes education, case management, follow up with physicians, referrals for any resources and includes home visits. Because Jefferson is a partial service agency, the NYS Health Department makes the initial home visit with Health Planner/Lead Program Coordinator Faith Lustick. Public Health's projection for 2019 was that they will have approximately 15 home visits, with this change, they believe that will increase to 175 - 200 visits. She said that this policy change is only one of five different goals set by the State.

Ms. Lustick provided examples of what this change means and went over their concerns and consequences related to it. She related two cases of children with elevated lead levels in their blood; one child started out with a blood lead level of 82 and after 26 months it is down to

25; a second child has been monitored for four years and the blood level was recently down to 9, and over the four years this child had 20 lead tests. She said in owner occupied homes, having home repairs done is problematic as people can't afford it. They work with Neighbors of Watertown and also try to find other grants that are available for these homeowners. There are apartments sitting empty in the City of Watertown because out of town landlords don't want to make repairs to mitigate the lead; she knows of eight such apartments currently in the City of Watertown. She also does evaluations for developmental delays and makes referrals for early intervention resources if delays are found. Children with elevated lead levels in the 5 - 9 category are found to be more often in prison, have school absences, are more often diagnosed with conduct disorders as it really impacts the portion of your brain where you have impulse control. She said many of the children in the program with very high levels also have a diagnosis of Autism, or are later found to have Autism.

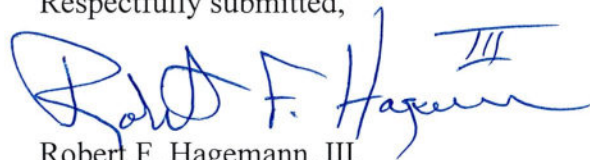
Mr. Hagemann advised that this is new and the departments of Social Services, Community Services and Public Health will all be involved. A plan will need to be in place to implement this program by budget season this fall, what that ultimately means, he wasn't sure. If there is anything more clear provided by the State, it will be shared with the Committee, otherwise it is a work in progress.

There was discussion concerning the source of the lead, which in most cases is older paint, but can also be in the water, and is not necessarily the water itself, but the pipes coming into the house. Ms. Lustick said pipes don't necessarily need to be replaced, but they recommend running the water for at least 30 seconds to flush it out. In response to questions from Legislators:

- Ms. Lustick advised that the City of Watertown received a grant and is replacing lead pipes; Public Health does GIS mapping of the program and cases are intermittent throughout the County, not in any particular area; children should be tested at ages 1 and 2, but Jefferson County's testing rate is only about 50%; the CLPPP program only covers children, testing of any adults in the household is done through the NYS Dept. of Health; she is the only staff member that does home visits.
- Planning Director Bourcy advised that Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) monies for housing rehabilitation aren't specific to repairs needed for high lead content, but it can be a component within the scope of the overall project for a particular home.

There being no further business of the Committee, on a motion by Legislator Nabywaniec seconded by Legislator Ferris and unanimously carried, the meeting was adjourned at 6:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Robert F. Hagemann, III
Clerk of the Board