

Health & Human Services Committee
August 25, 2020
Minutes

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

Others Present: Legislators Robert Cantwell, William Johnson, Michael Montigelli, and Frances Calarco, County Administrator Robert Hagemann, Deputy Administrator Sarah Baldwin, County Attorney David Paulsen, Information Technology Director and Conf. Asst. For Fiscal Affairs Gregory Hudson, Office for the Aging Director Chris Ingersoll, Community Services Director Tim Ruetten, Public Health Director Ginger Hall, Public Health Planner Stephen Jennings, Watertown Daily Times Reporter Alex Gault, 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 July meeting, as written.

Administrator Hagemann advised that the Public Health Department has been extremely busy lately and has three presentations this evening: 1. Overdose Activity in the County, 2. Aerial Fly Over Spraying for Eastern Equine Encephalitis, and 3. Inspection of Gym Facilities.

Public Health Planner Jennings said fatal overdoses have risen steadily in Jefferson County this year with the worst month being June with 8 fatalities. He provided the Committee with a 6 page powerpoint presentation report (copy attached for file reference). On August 21st they had to do another public warning because there were 4 overdoses in a 24 hour period, this same warning was necessary on June 8th and June 22nd. He explained how highly beneficial it is to have the Overdose Detection Mapping Application Program (ODMAP) so that overdoses can be tracked in real time to support public safety and public health efforts, as it stimulates real-time response, real-time public awareness, and strategic analysis across jurisdictions. He said more and more first responder agencies are using ODMAP and large areas of the County are covered. A screenshot from ODMAP showed the concentration of overdoses in the City of Watertown and the immediate surrounding area with a few in outlying communities.

Mr. Jennings outlined the monthly overdose statistics; to date in 2020 there have been a total of 180 suspected overdoses, 23 fatal overdoses, and 121 naloxone administrations. He said 75% of the overdoses are suspected to be heroin or fentanyl and those that receive naloxone are needing multiple doses to bring them back around. He provided a graph that showed opioid lethal toxicology by drug class from 2010-2020. Public Health and area providers are making every effort to get the word out about services that are available in the community for addicts and people who overdose. He said the pandemic influenced overdoses in an adverse way here and across the U.S. in terms of depression due to isolation, economic challenges with unemployment, and people having extra money to spend with the stimulus payments and enhanced

unemployment. It also presented challenges with providing services that had to go totally remote which some people liked, others did not, and others just quit receiving services. The Alliance for Better Communities Coalition has partnered with agencies in Jefferson County, Lewis and St. Lawrence counties in order to pool resources and do intense media campaigns around this issue through social media, television, radio, and print. Jefferson County's worst year for overdose fatalities was 23 in 2016 and we are on target to exceed that as there are currently 22 confirmed and 1 pending overdose deaths for 2020 and it is only August. He provided demographics of the 2020 confirmed deaths to date in terms of age, age group, gender, and geographic area. Chairman Gray added that criminal justice reform (i.e. not holding people in Jail who can then detox and get into treatment) has been a contributing factor to the overdose problem. In response to questions Mr. Jennings advised that Alliance for Better Communities leadership and law enforcement officials (including DA Mills, Sheriff O'Neill, and Police Chief Donoghue) meet monthly to exchange information; ODMAP participation by first responders did increase after his last presentation to the Board as a result of legislators encouraging participation in their districts and he encouraged that to continue as it is a free program; and there is no way to track narc use in the County.

Public Health Director Ginger Hall said Sunday July 26th her Department received a call from a large animal vet who suspected rabies and needed larger containers for submitting samples; Tuesday July 29, 2020 two horses suspected to have rabies came back negative and were forwarded for further testing, and by Thursday, July 30th were confirmed to have Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE). She said we have never had EEE in Jefferson County, but Onondaga, Oswego and Madison counties have had it. EEE is a mosquito bourn disease and causes neurological issues, convulsions, seizures, etc. in both humans and animals; mitigation measures are aerial spraying to reduce the mosquito population. The numerous positive cases happened very fast, and were all horses on Amish farms. She said we do not have an accurate count on how many were infected as they did not always call the veterinarian for issues with the horses, and they would not give permission for each dead horse to be tested. She outlined the time line and activities of her Department from July 30, 2020 to August 22, 2020 when the aerial spraying was completed in the Perch Lake Wildlife area. Some of the activities included: mosquito trapping and testing; NYSDOH approval of eminent public health threat; permits needed to do the spraying; contracting for the spraying; press releases about the spraying; notifying landowners in the area about the spraying by reverse 911 for land lines, and door to door because there are many Amish farms in that area. Through those visits it was learned that every Amish farm, except one, had lost at least one horse or more since last fall, however not all were reported to the veterinarians. Also, NYSDEC cancelled an open house that had been scheduled in the Perch Lake Wildlife Management area during this time frame to limit any human exposure. Director Hall answered questions of legislators related to EEE.

Public Health Director Hall said as of August 17th Governor Cuomo said gyms and fitness centers could open and the guidance applied to: fitness activity and facilities including but not limited to stand alone hotel, residential, office gyms, fitness centers, fitness center gyms in higher education institutions, yoga/pilates studios, boxing, kick boxing gyms, fitness boot camps, cross fit and other group fitness classes; residential hotel gyms and fitness centers must have staff available to ensure the compliance with this guidance. Within that guidance is a requirement

that the local Health Department do an inspection before the facility opens or within 14 days after they reopen, and they started getting calls right away. Jefferson County is a partial service Public Health Department meaning that they do not have an environmental unit and do not inspect restaurants, water, soil, etc. Counties with larger populations have full service Public Health Departments that employ sanitarians that go out and do inspections, but not for gyms, either. Guidance from the State as to what they were looking for in terms of the inspections was forwarded and Public Health condensed it down to three pages. Most of the guidance was what is being done already public health wise and is something they could handle; social distancing, making sure people are wearing their masks, making sure there is cleaning before and after use of the equipment, shutting down water fountains, making sure there are only single showers and they are disinfected after each use, etc. Also included was inspection of the air handling systems with very detailed instructions and requirements that need to be certified and documented by a certified HVAC technician, professional or company, or a NYS licensed professional building engineer. Or a certification that they couldn't update their current system and have to add a ventilation air filtration migration protocol system to their current system. She said inspecting air filtration systems was way outside of Public Health's area of expertise, so Administration reached out to the County's Building Code Enforcement Office and had them partner with Public Health for this portion of the inspections. In answer to questions she said the State did not provide any additional funding for these inspections, and Public Health is stressing that these requirements are those of the State, not of Public Health or Jefferson County.

Chairman Peck introduced a resolution Amending the 2020 County Budget Relative to Office for the Aging and entertained a motion for consideration. A motion was duly made by Legislator Maxon seconded by Legislator Nabywaniec and there being no discussion, the Committee agreed to sponsor the resolution as presented.

Chairman Peck introduced a resolution Authorizing Agreement with DUFLO SPRAY-CHEMICAL INC Relative to Aerial Spraying to Mitigate Eastern Equine Encephalitis and Amending the 2020 County Budget in Relation Thereto and entertained a motion for consideration. A motion was duly made by Legislator Mason and seconded by Legislator Nabywaniec. Chairman Peck asked if this was a reimburseable expense through New York State, Director Hall said it is not reimbursable. There being no further questions, the Committee agreed to sponsor the resolution as presented.

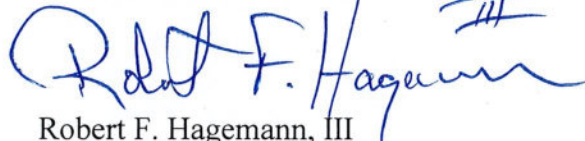
Chairman Peck introduced a resolution Amending the 2020 County Budget in Relation to Public Health Department Accounts and entertained a motion for consideration. A motion was duly made by Legislator Maxon seconded by Legislator Doldo and there being no discussion, the Committee agreed to sponsor the resolution as presented.

Chairman Peck introduced a resolution Accepting Funding for New Epidemiology and Laboratory Capacity COVID-19 Local Health Department Allocation Funding, Establishing a Typist Position Within Public Health and Amending the 2020 County Budget in Relation Thereto and entertained a motion for consideration. A motion was duly made by Legislator Doldo and seconded by Legislator Nabywaniec. Legislator Maxon asked if this was a permanent position or if it would go away after COVID. Administrator Hagemann advised that Public

Health anticipates a retirement in the future and the person in the new position will transition to that permanent position when the COVID position is done. There being no further discussion, the Committee agreed to sponsor the resolution as presented.

There being no further business of the Committee, on a motion of Legislator Maxon seconded by Legislator Ferris and unanimously carried, the meeting was adjourned at 6:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Robert F. Hagemann, III". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "R" and a distinct "III" at the end.

Robert F. Hagemann, III
Clerk of the Board