

**Health & Human Services Committee**  
**December 6, 2022**  
**Minutes**

**Members Present:** Committee Chair Anthony Doldo, Legislators Philip Reed, Allen Drake, John Peck, Jeremiah Maxon, Frances Calarco, Corey Grant and Board Chair William Johnson

**Others Present:** Legislators Robert Cantwell, Michael Montigelli, Daniel McBride, James Nabywaniec, Patrick Jareo, and Robert Ferris, County Administrator Robert Hagemann, Deputy Administrator Sarah Baldwin, County Attorney David Paulsen, Office for Aging Director Kathy Kazakoff, Public Health Planner Steve Jennings, DSS Commissioner Teresa Gaffney, Veterans Service Director David Pavey, Confidential Secretary Jill Jones

Chairman Doldo called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. and offered privilege of the floor.

West Carthage Mayor Scott Burto said that since the DSS housing policy changed to not place sex offenders in West Carthage at the Pleasant Night Inn there has been very little need for the police or fire department to respond to that area, and very few complaints from the business owners. He hoped that with the homeless problem the County is now dealing with in the City of Watertown the policy for placing people at the Pleasant Night Inn will not change. He said other counties have found solutions to their homeless problem, and looked forward to long term solutions coming from the homeless committee that has been meeting for 18 months without forwarding any recommendations so far.

Jeff Powell, real estate broker and (years ago) former homeless individual was frustrated with the amount of time it is taking to come up with solutions to the homeless problem in the community. He visited the temporary shelter and knew of numerous people in the private sector who were willing to help these people but said their hands are tied. He added that sometimes the lack of transportation alone limits people's ability to support themselves. He advocated for something to be done to help the homeless in short order instead of bouncing them around to different places as it has been an ongoing problem for over two years and is only getting bigger.

The Committee approved the minutes of the November meeting, as written.

Chairman Doldo introduced a resolution Amending the 2022 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 Reed and there being no discussion, the Committee agreed to sponsor the resolution as presented.

Chairman Doldo introduced a resolution Re-Appointing Members to Jefferson County Public Health Service Health Services Advisory Board and entertained a motion for consideration. A motion was duly made by Legislator Maxon seconded by Legislator Peck and there being no

discussion, the Committee agreed to sponsor the resolution as presented.

Chairman Doldo introduced a resolution Re-Appointing Members to Jefferson County Public Health Service Professional Advisory Committee and entertained a motion for consideration. A motion was duly made by Legislator Maxon seconded by Legislator Grant and there being no discussion, the Committee agreed to sponsor the resolution as presented.

Chairman Doldo introduced a resolution Re-Appointing Members to the Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Advisory Board and entertained a motion for consideration. A motion was duly made by Legislator Maxon seconded by Legislator Grant and there being no discussion, the Committee agreed to sponsor the resolution as presented.

Chairman Doldo introduced a resolution Authorizing Agreement for Early Warning Wastewater Surveillance Platform in Relation to COVID-19 and entertained a motion for consideration. A motion was duly made by Legislator Drake and seconded by Legislator Reed. Legislator Maxon stated that he could understand the need to survey the wastewater at the height of the pandemic, but could not justify spending money to continue to do it three years after or into perpetuity; and said he would not be supporting the resolution. Legislator Peck agreed with Legislator Maxon and asked for the rationale to continue this and how it benefits our response. Mr. Hagemann advised that Covid is very much still in this community as even people who are vaccinated are struggling to get better from it, and this type of technology allows for surveillance of other diseases as well and is a good investment.

Public Health Planner Steve Jennings advised that New York State is looking to expand the program in the future to test for other diseases. Public Health receives incentive money annually through State Aid to do special projects and counties can accept the money or not, and Public Health always takes it. The State dictates what the focus will be and this time it is wastewater and they are looking at assessing other diseases in the future with a focus on Hepatitis A. He believes it is a useful tool, can help Public Health control disease and monitor activity. Currently, Covid relief funds pay for the program. In the communities that they look at currently (Carthage/West Carthage, City of Watertown and Thousand Islands School District) recent samples show Covid rates are low which is a first. Public Health has used the data when Covid rates were rising which has also been useful to hospitals and nursing homes to plan for more staff or restrict visitors. He said it has been a very accurate predictor to paint a picture of what is coming, and is a science that the State finds useful. Chairman Doldo pointed out that the data would be helpful for vulnerable people with weakened immune systems. Discussion continued as to Covid funding, reimbursement rates for the program, diseases the State would test for and other specifics of the program. Mr. Jennings was not familiar with that level of detail and said he would get back to legislators tomorrow with answers to their questions.

Legislator Maxon expressed concern that the expansion in testing would result in justification for the expansion of New York State power and the State would then find emergencies that don't exist. In constantly monitoring wastewater you could find things that you didn't know were there all along and humanity has survived with for a millennia. He did not agree with this philosophically, did not trust the State and would not support funds being spent

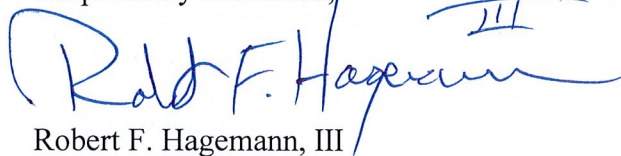
for it, no matter the source. Chairman Doldo said Jefferson County doesn't have to continue the program just because funding is available. There being no further discussion, the Committee agreed to sponsor the resolution as presented with Legislator Maxon voting no.

Legislator Peck gave kudos to those engaged in setting up the temporary homeless shelter on Main Ave ahead of the snow storm. He understood the frustration of the community in the lack of quick solutions to this problem and said he fully expected that DSS would abide by past agreements with regard to housing placements for this population. There are initiatives from other not for profit agencies that will be coming on line soon, and the County does have funding available to address this issue.

Chairman Doldo said he has been at the shelter quite a bit this week and thanked Mr. Powell for bringing items to the shelter for those residents. He said there is a lot going on in terms of agencies coming in to assist the residents and he has been careful to try and coordinate people who want to help through the Community Services Office so they are not stepping on the toes of the agencies. He had compassion for the people that are in the shelter and said things are moving along, but it is going to take time.

There being no further business of the Committee, on a motion by Legislator Maxon seconded by Legislator Drake and unanimously carried, the meeting was adjourned at 6:30 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 "H".

Robert F. Hagemann, III  
Clerk of the Board