

Health & Human Services
May 30, 2023
Minutes

Members Present: Committee Chair Anthony Doldo, Legislators John Peck, Jeremiah Maxon, Steel Potter, Corey Grant and Board Chair William Johnson

Others Present: Legislators Robert Cantwell, Philip Reed, Michael Montigelli, Daniel McBride, and Patrick Jareo, County Administrator Robert Hagemann, Deputy Administrator Sarah Baldwin, County Attorney David Paulsen, Confidential Asst. for Fiscal Affairs Ashley Durham, Office for the Aging Director Bethany Munn, Community Services Director Tim Ruetten, Public Health Service Director Ginger Hall, DSS Commissioner Teresa Gaffney, DSS Deputy Commissioner Karen Marcum, Veterans Services Director David Pavey, Human Resources Director Valerie Nugent, JCC Administrator in Charge Daniel Dupee, JCC Associate Vice President of Human Resources Kerry Young, Confidential Secretary Jill Jones

Chairman Doldo called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. and offered privilege of the floor however no one present wished to speak.

Alliance for Better Communities - Youth Alliance of Jefferson County Project Director Tammie Nabywaniec, Project Director Anita Seefried-Brown, Taskforce Coordinator Heidi Williams, Taskforce Coordinator Lonny Snyder, and Coalition Member Avery Sousa (Watertown City School District), were in attendance for a presentation to the Committee about a community scanning project the Youth Alliance performed recently about vaping and youth access in our NYS rural communities (copy attached for file reference).

Project Director Nabywaniec said the Youth Alliance is in the third year of a five year federal grant, and their goal is to reduce and delay the use of substances in 9 - 25 year olds. She said the reason for the focus on vaping and youth access is because data has shown that next to mental health, THC and the addictive qualities of nicotine vapes are on the rise in all communities and are a concern. This has been proven in focus groups throughout the County and in the Needs Assessment done annually which reflected students perception of harm from these substances is very low, which is not true. The recently completed Youth Summit where students went through what was individual to their districts, again identified vaping as an issue and they came up with some strategies to raise awareness, which is why Alliance personnel are here tonight.

Taskforce Coordinator Williams said in response to the Needs Assessment, in January the Alliance started building school based coalitions in certain target school districts and have now expanded into many other districts in the County. She and Taskforce Coordinator Snyder said the coalitions are student lead and they help the students work on different campaigns, (i.e. educational posters in the bathrooms, murals, special events at the school) in order to build peer to peer discussions on the harmful substances that the students see in their schools. Coalition

Member Sousa who is in the Watertown City School District explained that on a daily basis students are vaping in the bathrooms, hallways, and at the back of classrooms; vapes are confiscated, the children are disciplined, but nothing changes. She said students not vaping are punished because bathrooms and locker rooms are closed and can't be used by anyone, but it doesn't stop the vaping. She said a girl she knew had a vape confiscated in the morning and by 8th period she had another one; she also said it is well known there is a store in the community that openly sells vapes to minors without repercussions.

Mrs. Nabywaniec went through the presentation detailing the facts and the highly addictive and harmful nature of the products being sold in the community, how easy it is for youth to get them, and how they are different than traditional cigarettes or the other traditional items you see in a school because they are much more discreet. She passed around an assortment of products that were confiscated in Jefferson County schools; all except one being illegal and all can be readily purchased in the community. Comments in the presentation from Dr. Maja Lundborg-Gray (Medical Director, SMC) provide a community perspective regarding the need for prevention and mitigation of use of these substances because patients present at their Emergency Department suffering prolonged psychiatric, cardiovascular, and neurologic side effects. The presentation further detailed the rise in number of Smoke Shops in Jefferson County from 7 in Spring 2022 to 18 in Spring 2023 with 16 of 18 openly displaying and selling banned flavored nicotine products and openly displaying and selling THC as well as "other" banned products; 15 of 18 aggressively targeted youth with lights, stuffed animals, flavored products, backpacks and youth friendly other drug paraphernalia. Mrs. Nabywaniec said the Youth Alliance went to Albany and met with Assemblymen Blankenbush, Gray and Barclay as well as Senator Walczyk and others to share their findings and hear what the legislators are working on at the State level. She said this is too large an issue for one school district to address and there needs to be a collective, supportive approach from many people in order to have a positive impact. Mrs. Nabwwaniec answered questions of legislators related to this serious issue.

Chairman Doldo introduced a resolution Authorizing Agreement for Provision of Related Services in Connection with the Program for Preschool Children with Disabilities 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 Agreements for Provision of Mental Hygiene Services 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 Appointing Members to the Community Services Board and entertained a motion for consideration. A motion was duly made by Legislator Maxon seconded by Legislator Potter and there being no discussion, the Committee agreed to sponsor the resolution as presented.

Chairman Doldo 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 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 Accepting Funding for New York State Department of Health Health Equity Project, Authorizing Agreement, and Amending the 2023 County Budget in Relation Thereto and entertained a motion for consideration. A motion was duly made by Legislator Maxon and seconded by Legislator Potter. In response to questions Director Hall advised that the Town of Leray was chosen for this grant because over 40% of their population is non-white. She said the survey will focus on the impact of Covid and the vaccination hesitancy in this population, and it will be done with current citizens in a town hall kind of setting with different focus groups. She said survey results will be used to develop plans to address issues for Jefferson County health care providers. Following discussion, the Committee agreed to sponsor the resolution as presented.

Chairman Doldo congratulated Public Health Director Hall for receiving the Ruth F. Wilson Award from the Home Care Association of New York. He said it is the Association's highest honor and is given to dedicated individuals who have significantly contributed to home care over their career, and Director Hall is very deserving of the award.

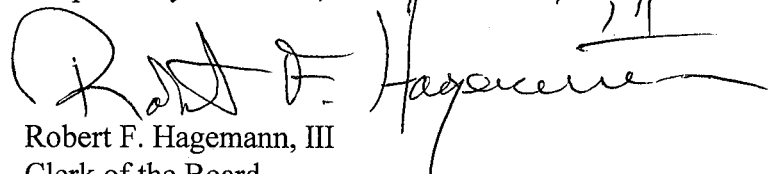
Chairman Doldo introduced the new Office for the Aging (OFA) Director Bethany Munn who started May 1st. He encouraged legislators to contact her should they have any questions or concerns with OFA.

Administrator Hagemann noted that the OFA Senior Picnic will be held on July 19th at Westcott Beach State Park and said there is a reminder on legislators desks.

Legislator Peck stated that if migrant individuals seeking asylum are sent up from New York City, Jefferson County may want to approach how they are handled from a Public Health standpoint.

There being no further business of the Committee, on a motion by Legislator Maxon seconded by Legislator Grant and unanimously carried, the meeting was adjourned at 6:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,


Robert F. Hagemann, III
Clerk of the Board