

**HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE**  
**November 17, 2020**

Present: Legislators Randy LaChausse, Richard Chartrand, Greg Kulzer, Phil Hathway, and Andrea Moroughan.

Others: Legislators Larry Dolhof, Jerry King, Tom Osborne, Ron Burns, and Ian Gilbert; County Manager Ryan Piche; County Atty. Joan McNichol; Treasurer Eric Virkler; and Human Resource Director Caitlyn Smith; and media representatives.

Committee Chairman Randy LaChausse called the meeting at 2:46 p.m.

Legislator Kulzer made a motion to accept the minutes from 10/20/2020 as recorded, seconded by Legislator Hathway, and carried.

**Project Lifesaver** – Crystal Collette, Director of Office For Aging & Cheryl Lalonde, 911 Dispatch Supervisor

Crystal explained that Project Lifesaver is an initiative that other counties offer which can help anyone who wanders but specifically those struggling with Alzheimer's. This program is connected to law enforcement and is designed to locate individuals who are prone to wandering. There are GPS enabled bracelets that the individual wears and then law enforcement can use equipment to locate the person if they wander away from home. This program would equip the Sheriff's Department with the necessary equipment and training for those who would help with locating someone.

The individual would wear a small transmitter on their wrist or ankle that emits an individualized frequency signal that can be picked up by a patrol car in the area. This would allow police or first responders to locate someone who is out in the elements much faster, which could get them out of the weather faster and therefore save their life. There is a clear need in our community for this service as we have had multiple searches each year and 2 deaths in recent years from individuals who have wandered too long out in the weather.

Crystal concluded with a note from a member of the community explaining how this program would give him peace of mind for his elderly mother. The start up costs would be minimal, less than \$5,000 which would be paid for through surcharge money and donations. It also allows for purchase of additional transmitters as the need arises. Training would include Sheriff Deputies, Firefighters, and Emergency Responders.

Legislator Dolhof asked for clarification on how the receiver works, Cheryl explained that it is in a suitcase and can be pulled out and used in a patrol vehicle. Legislator Dolhof stated that the caregiver would have to notice that the individual is missing and then call the Sheriff's department it wouldn't automatically notify the Sheriff Department if the person was wandering. Legislator Kulzer asked how much each bracelet costs and Cheryl responded that it is roughly between \$300.00 to \$400.00. Legislator Kulzer went on to explain that maybe we should have a few more receivers so that way when someone is missing it can be monitored quickly rather than have the deputy bring it all the way up to Harrisville or the other end of the county. Legislators agreed that this is a great idea. Legislator Dolhof wondered if there would be

anything out there that could notify the Sheriff's department immediately if someone left the home but Crystal explained that it wouldn't necessarily benefit the individual if it would have to be deactivated each time they left for an appointment or went to the store. There was further discussion and Cheryl stated she would investigate if it can be programmed other ways.

**Pandemic update** – Public Health Director Ashley Waite & LCGH CEO Jerry Cayer

Ryan began by stating that county staff has been assisting Public Health and is 95% focused on COVID-19, which may come off as unpreparedness. Ashley reported that there have been 185 cases since October 19<sup>th</sup> and prior to that only 71 cases since March. There were 63 cases over the past week and 424 people in quarantine with numbers rising every day. The county has had its first fatality from COVID-19 and our thoughts go out to that family. There have been 25 cases in the schools with 7 being in the last week and continue to work closely with schools to keep it from spreading. There have been 19 hospitalizations since October 19<sup>th</sup> and it seems the virus is more transmissible than in the past. There has also been an uptick in business exposures.

Ashley commended the hospital for the amazing job handling the testing which makes it easier for Public Health to do their job. Jerry Cayer commended Ryan & Ashley's efforts with the pandemic. He reported that there are daily meetings at the hospital to discuss what is going on for the day. The hospital has 4 positive patients in the hospital and the nursing home has a total of 10 positive residents with 8 positive staff. There is now a COVID distinct team on the nursing home floor, and staffing is being evaluated multiple times throughout the day. Jerry went on to discuss medication and vaccines, which he has applied for.

Legislator Kulzer questioned if the 10 positive residents were on the same floor, Jerry responded that they were. Ryan reported that there are 5 additional people on the Contact Investigating Team, which includes a retired Public Health Director, an OFA employee, two DSS staff. The Quarantine Task Force is made up of 40 staff from across the county working on this endeavor. The Monitoring Task Force is made up of OFA staff and Public Health. The hope is that we can continue to keep up with the current demands to keep this in house. The testing site has been excellent, our church & school outreach has been good, and we need to continue to reach out to the community.

Ryan concluded that he has asked Departments to look at reducing staff density and to do staff meeting virtually to be proactive. There was discussion on how to get the community to be more compliant with regulations. Legislator Chartrand brought up a question about someone who gets quarantined and goes to work, Ashley responded that the person who is quarantined needs to check with their employer to find out if they are an essential worker, if they are they are allowed to go to work. Legislator Chartrand questioned why cases are still being tied to the Church incident, Ashley responded that it is just a way to track the spread and it is the only cluster in the county.

Legislator Kulzer asked for clarification on the incubation period, Ashley responded that it is 48 hours before they are contagious and people should be tested, if they are Asymptomatic, between day 7 and 10 of their quarantine period. There was further discussion on people who are delaying being tested which exposes more people. Legislator LaChausse pointed out that it is a

lack of respect for other human beings. Ashley explained that if you have any symptoms you should get tested right away even if you think it might just be allergies.

Ryan discussed “individual freedoms” and how it can limit someone else’s freedom. Legislator Gilbert stated people need to ask themselves what the virtuous thing is, what is the right thing to do. Ryan responded to Legislator Gilbert and explained that the county has been in contact with local school frequently. Ashley stated that the Public Health Department continues to monitor things closely and are giving the schools the information, they need to make an informed decision about remaining open or going 100% virtual.

There was discussion about creating a commercial from the perspective of a Lewis County resident who has dealt with Covid-19, who can explain the seriousness of the virus. Ashley reported that Fort Drum Regional Health Plan Organization is putting something together with trusted physicians as a commercial for the public but agrees with a Lewis County native telling their experience. Ryan agreed that this would be a great idea and wouldn’t cost too much.

The following dockets were reviewed:

1. Resolution to appoint Dr. John Wat, Karen Boliver, Scott Mathys as members of the Community Services Board effective January 1, 2021 through December 31, 2024.  
AYE   5   NAY   0
2. Resolution to appoint Karen Boliver to the Developmental Disabilities sub-committee of the Community Services Board effective January 1, 2021 through December 31, 2024.  
AYE   5   NAY   0
3. Resolution to appoint Crystal Collette, Deanna Edick, Mark Waterhouse, Randall Clendenning to the Mental Health sub-committee of the Community Services Board effective January 1, 2021 through December 31, 2024.  
AYE   5   NAY   0
4. Resolution to appoint Kyle Chartrand, Amanda Martin to the Substance Use Disorder sub-committee of the Community Services Board effective January 1, 2021 through December 31, 2024; and Matthew Morrow to fill un-expired term of MaryJo Burkhard effective December 2, 2020 through December 31, 2022. *Legislator Chartrand abstained.*  
AYE   4   NAY   0
5. Resolution to appropriate funds in the Community Services accounts in the amount of \$31,839 for the increase of funds due to additional State Aid.  
AYE   5   NAY   0
6. Resolution authorizing agreements between Lewis County Community Services and various providers for program services for the period beginning January 1, 2021 through December 31, 2021.  
AYE   5   NAY   0

7. Resolution amending the Compensation Plan of the County of Lewis with reference to the Lewis County General Hospital to create One (1) PT Dietitian position and abolish One (1) PT Dietetic Technician position.

AYE   5   NAY   0  

8. Resolution authorizing a Memorandum of Understanding by and between the County of Lewis, acting by and through the Lewis County Public Health Agency for Public Health to pay the monthly lease obligation charged by Maple Ridge Center to Lewis County Health System, in consideration of Lewis County Health System agreeing to administer and provide the necessary services to operate a COVID-19 testing and distribution clinic at the Maple Ridge Center facility at a cost of \$1,200/month (\$100/clinic day, anticipated 12 clinic days per month) to be paid with available Federal funds.

AYE   5   NAY   0  

9. Resolution authorizing Memorandum of Understanding between the Lewis County Department of Social Services and the Resource Center for Independent Living to enable Medicaid recipients to utilize the Consumer Directed Personal Assistance Program for a retroactive term commencing on August 7, 2020 and continuing unless and until either party terminates.

AYE   5   NAY   0  

**Motions:**

1. Legislator Chartrand made a motion to authorize Public Health Director Ashley Waite to refill per diem Public Health Nurse position due to resignation, effective immediately, seconded by Legislator Kulzer and carried.

At 4:07 p.m. Legislator Kulzer made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Legislator Hathway and carried.

Respectfully submitted,  
Cassandra Moser, Clerk of the Board









# Clear Need in our Community

2015 - 3 searches

2016 – 4 searches

2017 – 5 searches

2018 – 3 searches

2019 – 5 searches

2020 – 3 searches to date

- 2 deaths in recent years
- Program works to find individuals who wander quickly reducing potential risk to their health and lethality in general

## From a Current OFA Client

“I wanted to thank you for giving us the information on the program you are working on with the Lewis County Sheriffs Office. I know this program will help and relieve a lot of stress for individuals and their families that have Alzheimer’s/Dementia.

My mother Julie for example is quite healthy but suffers from Alzheimer’s. Unfortunately, she has walked off from her apartment at High Falls more than once. On one occasion she walked to the Dollar General in Lyons Falls and then she got lost and or confused.

I believe this program will help my mother (as well as others) keep their independence as long as possible. With mom wearing the GPS unit linked up to the Lewis County Sheriffs office would give us a huge amount of relief. Knowing that if she does wander it won’t be unnoticed. Knowing that she can stay living independent AND be safe at the same time is priceless.”

-John W Seller, Lyons Falls