

HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE
February 16, 2021

Present: Legislators Andrea Moroughan, Richard Chartrand, Greg Kulzer, Phil Hathway, and Lisa Virkler.

Others: Legislators Larry Dolhof, Jerry King, Tom Osborne, and Ian Gilbert; County Manager Ryan Piche; County Atty. Joan McNichol; Treasurer Eric Virkler; and Human Resource Director Caitlyn Smith; and Information Technology Director Conner Biolsi.

Committee Chair Legislator Moroughan called the meeting at 3:12 p.m.

Legislator Moroughan made a motion to accept the minutes from 1/19/2021 as recorded, seconded by Legislator Hathway, and carried.

Vaccine Rollout – County Manager Ryan Piche & Public Health Director Ashley Waite

Ryan began by sharing the most updated vaccine information. There have been 3,300 first dose vaccines given. Lewis County Governmental entities have been giving the bulk of the vaccines with Public Health giving out 1,012, LCHS giving out 723, and LC Residential Health Care Facility giving out 142. This equals over 50% of all vaccines given. Kinney Drugs in Lowville has done 447 vaccines which is almost 14%. If you look at the age demographic, over 53% of vaccines have gone to those aged 65 and up. The notification on the number of vaccines doesn't get to us until Sunday afternoon for the upcoming week which makes it difficult to plan around.

Ashley explained that two weeks after someone's second vaccine dose they are considered fully immunized. Last week NYS DOH has begun following the CDC guidelines which means no one who is fully immunized needs to quarantine up to 90 days after their second shot. There could be shipping delays due to weather, so our clinics are not scheduled until we have the vaccines in hand. Ashley explained the specific groups of individuals that can get the vaccine as of now. She went on to explain that there will be a waiting list on the Public Health website for people to sign up if they want a vaccine. The comorbidity groups that can now get the vaccine can use an attestation that they have a qualifying underlying health condition. Legislator Kulzer asked if individuals can just call Public Health to get on the waiting list. Ashley responded that they could register online but those without internet can call a phone number to get assistance to be put on the waiting list. Ryan stated that everyone should be encouraged to use the website or offer to help them with it rather than tie up the phone lines at the county departments.

Legislator Chartrand asked about an incident with the phone number that was given previously to sign up for a vaccine clinic and an individual who kept calling but received a message that the spots were filled but later found out that they were still booking appointments. Conner Biolsi explained that there was an issue with the number of phone calls coming in on the line and it basically crashed so there was a brief time when the default message that the spots had been filled went out before they had corrected the issue and opened the lines back up.

Legislator Moroughan asked Ashley for an update on the per diem positions that were approved by the board. Ashley responded that there have been 9 per diem positions filled and they are helping with all aspects of the pandemic and vaccine roll out.

Veterans Services Agency report – Veterans Services Agency Director Stephen Kilionski

Stephen Kilionski reported that due to the pandemic there was slightly fewer federal funds brought into the county compared to 2019, but still a strong number at \$628,566.50. The number of contacts with individuals was 846 compared to a little over 1,100 for 2019. Stephen stated that he had 135 healthcare enrollments in 2020. Legislator Dolhof questioned what the 846 represented, Stephen explained that it was the total number of people that he saw, although due to the pandemic most of them were over the phone. In response to Legislator Dolhof, Stephen explained that number doesn't represent the number of veterans receiving benefits.

Stephen explained that much of the money is from compensation and pension not medical, it is money they can spend in the community. Legislator Dolhof asked what the average amount a person gets would be, Stephen stated that it varies from veteran to veteran based on their disability level. Legislator Dolhof asked how many individuals made up the \$628,566.50 figure, Stephen couldn't state an exact figure but estimated 25 to 30. Stephen went on to report highlights from 2020 as the Blue water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act of 2019 as their claims are now being decided; Veterans Residential Care Choice Act which is a bill that would allow veterans to live at a residential care facility; and Veterans Hearing Benefits Act of 2019 which would allow a percentage of hearing loss as a valid disability. Legislator Hathway thanked Stephen for helping the Veterans in his district.

The following dockets were reviewed:

1. Resolution amending Compensation Plan with reference to Lewis County General Hospital to create two (2) FT Certified Nursing Assistant positions and two (2) PT Food Service Helper positions and to Abolish three (3) PT Certified Nursing Assistant positions and one (1) FT Senior Food Service Helper position.
AYE 5 NAY 0
2. Resolution authorizing a Memorandum of Agreement with Transitional Living Services of Northern New York, Inc. for the purpose of providing the services of psychiatric and/or psychological evaluations of individuals receiving services from DSS for a period from January 1, 2021 through December 31, 2021 at a cost not to exceed \$158.00 per assessment.
AYE 5 NAY 0
3. Resolution approving amendment to 2020 resource allocation plan with NYS Office of Children and Family Services to accept additional \$2,284.00 in Youth Development Funds.
AYE 5 NAY 0
4. Resolution to appoint Deanna Edick, Lewis County Director of Services as the Youth Bureau Director and Ramona Carpenter, Lewis County Senior Keyboard Specialist as the Youth Bureau Assistant and authorize stipends for same, effective and retroactive to March 1, 2021.
In response to Legislator Kulzer's question Ryan reported there was no assistant for several

years but that the duties will be divided out and that the amount that is being divided between both positions is almost the same as what the current director was being paid.

AYE 5 NAY 0

The following motions were made:

1. Legislator Moroughan made a motion to authorize Social Services Commissioner Jennifer Jones to re-fill a full-time Senior Account Clerk position due to resignation, effective immediately, seconded by Legislator Virkler and carried.

At 3:51 p.m. Legislator Chartrand made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Legislator Virkler and carried.

Respectfully submitted,
Cassandra Moser, Clerk of the Board