

**HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE**  
**January 19, 2021**

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

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 Information technology Director Conner Biolsi.

Committee Chair Legislator Moroughan called the meeting at 3:03 p.m.

Legislator Hathway made a motion to accept the minutes from 12/15/2020 as recorded, seconded by Legislator Virkler, and carried.

**COVID-19 Update** – Public Health Director Ashley Waite & LCHS CEO Jerry Cayer

Ashley reported that as of today there were 1,321 cases in Lewis County, with an active case load of 232 individuals. The County has had 137 cases hospitalized, 23 currently hospitalized, 19 residents who have passed away, and currently averaging around 30 new cases per day. Ashley thanked everyone for their tremendous support, which has allowed Public Health to remain on top of everything.

Public Health has received many calls for the vaccine which is encouraging. Every Monday an order is inputted and at the end of the week the State determines who they will allocate the vaccine to. Public Health is then notified on the weekend if they will receive any. Ashley reported that she received word that they would get 100 vaccines and they can only be used on essential workers. They have vaccinated 535 individuals to date.

Pharmacies will also be able to vaccinate individuals, as well as the States vaccination cites which are in Potsdam and Syracuse. Individuals still need to check online to see if they qualify as the only two groups that are open are 1a and 1b. Ryan stated that the State has allocated resources for their new vaccination sites that could and should be used for local Public Health Departments to do well thought out vaccination PODs. Legislator Moroughan inquired what if anything the legislators could do to push back on the state about this. Legislator Dolhof stated that Ryan and himself have been on weekly calls and advocated for better use of resources but feel it isn't changing anything.

Ryan asked Ashley to expound on all the training the State requires of Public Health for mass vaccination clinics. Ashley stated that they have been preparing for this type of mass vaccination since 2002 and are well prepared with specific plans on how this should be done in the most efficient and effective manner. The NYS DOH is advocating for the local Public Health Departments to handle this however it isn't being left up to them to make the decision. Legislator Gilbert praised Public Health on such an amazing job at the Croghan Fire Hall POD last week.

Legislator King and Hathway both suggested that the Board adopts a resolution strongly urging Governor Cuomo to let the local Public Health Departments do their job and handle the COVID-19 vaccinations. Legislator Chartrand suggested putting in some statistics of how many vaccines could be utilized on a weekly basis. Ryan feels that if we could just get our fair share based on our population, we could continue to vaccinate in Lewis County. Ryan and Legislator Dolhof felt that everything being suggested has already been given to the state but seems to be falling on deaf ears. Joan McNichol suggested listing some phone numbers for residents to call and voice their concerns about the way the state is handling the vaccinations. Legislator Moroughan suggested posting a press release on the media outlets. Joan stated she would work on a resolution to Governor Cuomo and a Press Release with the help of Ryan, Ashley Waite and Jerry Cayer.

Jerry thanked Ashley and her team, Joe Austin, and Bob MacKenzie for all their help. Jerry reported that there are increases in COVID-19 positive patients, which on any given day is 50% to 70% of the total census. Elective surgeries have been postponed due to the lack of bed space. Many staff have been quarantined or isolated so there is a constant juggling act to make sure all departments are staffed appropriately. There have been 853 vaccination doses given over 13 clinics. The hospital is now in the stage of planning on second dose clinics over the next few weeks. The hospital has put in an order for 300 more first dose vaccines to be able to assist Public Health in continuing to vaccinate residents.

The following dockets were reviewed:

1. Resolution to appoint Scott Mathys of Lowville, NY as a member of the Substance Use and Disorder Sub-Committee of the Community Services Board effective January 1, 2021 through December 31, 2024.  
AYE   5   NAY   0

The following motions were made:

1. Legislator Hathway made a motion to authorize Social Services Commissioner Jennifer Jones to re-fill a full-time Caseworker position due to resignation, effective immediately, seconded by Legislator Virkler and carried.
2. Legislator Kulzer made a motion to authorize Social Services Commissioner Jennifer Jones to re-fill a full-time Fraud Investigator position due to resignation, effective immediately, seconded by Legislator Chartrand and carried.
3. Legislator Virkler made a motion to authorize Social Services Commissioner Jennifer Jones to re-fill a full-time Employment and Training Assistant position, effective immediately, seconded by Legislator Kulzer and carried.

At 3:34 p.m. Legislator Virkler made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Legislator Hathway and carried.

Respectfully submitted,  
Cassandra Moser, Clerk of the Board