

HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE
January 18, 2022

Present: Lisa Virkler, Chair; Andrea Moroughan, Vice-Chair; Richard Chartrand, Ron Burns, and Jeffrey Nellenback.

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

Committee Chair Legislator Virkler called the meeting at 2:00 p.m.

Legislator Virkler made a motion to accept the minutes from November 16, 2021 as recorded, seconded by Legislator Chartrand and carried.

Hospital Improvement Project Overview – Frank Pace, Project Leader

Lewis County Health Systems C.E.O, Jerry Cayer introduced Frank Pace as the Executive Lead for the project. Frank went over the revised schedule for submission and bid as follows: January 11th the Modified Certificate of Need was submitted to the Department of Health; January 17th the Bid Documents went out to the public; January 26th there will be a virtual contractor briefing; February 2nd there will be a contractor walk-through; February 18th the bid submissions are due and will be opened and reviewed. The revised budget is now reduced to \$31,946,000. There were renderings with different perspectives of the new addition shared.

The changes that were made to reduce the total project cost is that there will no longer be a 1st level on the addition, it will be slab on grade. That area would have been used for offices, conference and classrooms, a physician’s lounge, and the relocation of General Surgery practice, relocation of Orthopedic practice, and Women’s Health under the operating suites. The morgue addition will still be in the project as well as relocating the Finance Offices to create a corridor between the existing and new addition.

The predicted start of construction is Spring of 2022 with a completion date of December 2023. Legislator Virkler questioned the level of confidence in the estimated budget numbers, Mr. Cayer responded that he won’t truly know until bids are received and opened. The modifications that are being made to the project will help to reduce the overall cost.

2022 Health & Human Services Committee Goals – Ryan Piche, County Manager

Ryan Piche recommended the following Health & Human Services goals for 2022:

1. LCHS \$30,000,000 Renovation and Addition Project – continue to get updates each quarter.
2. Pandemic Response – continue to support Public Health.
3. Explore Homeless Shelter and Housing options with Transitional Living Services and Lewis County Opportunities, possibly set up an Ad Hoc Committee. Ryan felt strongly

that the county could have an outside agency staff a house purchased by the county and still be less than what the county currently pays for hotel fees each year.

4. Roll out Mental Health Video Series sometime in the Spring of 2022.
5. Roll out Child Care Initiative.
6. Explore Mental Health Training for Law Enforcement.

Covid-19 update – Ashley Waite, Public Health Director

Ashley reported that the number of cases locally has decreased. The 7-day count was 603 cases and is now down to 462 with only 13 hospitalizations. Last week New York State made changes regarding Isolation and Quarantine protocols. Lewis County is still doing case investigations within households, the state is only information individuals who are positive for covid-19. The Public Health website has been updated with new guidelines and protocols for isolation and quarantine. Lewis County Public Health and NYS are moving away from calling every case to shift the responsibility from Public Health to more of a personal responsibility on the public. Public Health will still track positive test results, hospitalizations, and deaths.

The following dockets were reviewed:

1. Appropriating funds in the Community Services accounts from the NYS Mental Health Block Grant System of Care award in the amount of \$25,000.00.
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Motions:

1. Legislator Virkler made a motion to authorize Community Services Director, Patricia Fralick to send out an RFP for technology website services, seconded by Legislator Burns and carried.
2. Legislator Virkler made a motion to authorize Office For the Aging Director, Crystal Collette to refill one (1) full-time Administrative Assistant position effective immediately due to promotion, seconded by Legislator Chartrand and carried. *Legislator Chartrand asked for clarification on what a motion at committee level does, County Attorney stated that a motion that is carried at the committee level gives the department authority to start the process. Ryan would like to change things so that any re-fills could just be actions by committee and not the full board as they have no impact on the budget. Any new or abolished positions have to be done by the full board in resolution form. There was further discussion on making changes for a more efficient workflow.*
3. Legislator Virkler made a motion to authorize Public Health Director, Ashley Waite to refill one (1) full-time Public Health Nurse or Registered Nurse position effective immediately due to resignation, seconded by Legislator Nellenback and carried.
4. Legislator Virkler made a motion to authorize Public Health Director, Ashley Waite to refill one (1) full-time Early Intervention Services Coordinator position effective immediately due to resignation, seconded by Legislator Chartrand and carried.

5. Legislator Virkler made a motion to authorize Social Services Commissioner, Jennifer Jones to refill one (1) full-time Caseworker position effective immediately due to retirement, seconded by Legislator Chartrand and carried.
6. Legislator Virkler made a motion to authorize Social Services Commissioner, Jennifer Jones to refill one (1) full-time Employment & Training Specialist position and all associated backfills effective immediately due to promotion, seconded by Legislator Moroughan and carried.

Legislator Virkler pointed out that there is an unprecedented blood shortage across the county and highly encouraged everyone who can donate to do so. They need all blood types and are having to make some very difficult decisions due to a lack of blood. Anyone can go to the Red Cross website and look up donation locations. There is one this Friday in Lowville.

There being no other business to come before the committee, Legislator Virkler made a motion to adjourn at 2:35 p.m., seconded by Legislator Burns and carried.

Respectfully submitted,
Cassandra Moser, Clerk of the Board