

**HEALTH AND MENTAL HEALTH COMMITTEE
MINUTES**

**TUESDAY, JULY 19, 2022
4:00 P.M.**

PRESENT: Peter V. Tuohy, Chairperson
Michael Amo, Glenn R. Ehlers, Kevindaryán Luján, Janet Sutherland, Laurie R. Tautel

ALSO

PRESENT: Katie Bonelli, Chairwoman
Darcie Miller, Commissioner of Social Services and Mental Health
Laurence LaDue, Commissioner, Valley View Center
Donna Strecker, Director of Finance, Valley View Center
Christopher Ericson, Deputy Commissioner of Health
Brian Titsworth, Deputy Commissioner of Infrastructure Services
(Buildings and Grounds), Dept. of Public Works

Mr. Tuohy opened the committee meeting at 4:10 p.m. and asked everyone to stand for the Pledge of Allegiance. All committee members were present with the exception of Legislators Anagnostakis and Faggione who were absent.

Mr. Luján moved request to transfer funds from Mental Health's advance account to Mental Health's 2022 operating budget. These funds are from previous years claiming closeouts. Funds will be used to remove all interior wallpaper, prep and paint entire interior of building, \$179,695.00, seconded by Ms. Tautel.

Motion carried. All in favor.

On the agenda was a Department Update from Darcie Miller, Commissioner of Social Services and Mental Health.

Ms. Miller addressed the committee and highlighted several key points in the update that was emailed to all legislators (see original minutes). The National Suicide Lifeline three-digit 988 number went live on July 17, 2022. They continue to hold meetings with the NIDA HEALing Communities Study Committee. Columbia HEALing Communities Study is preparing for its July 2022 Phase II study launch. The second meeting of the Opioid Settlement Funds committee is scheduled for July 20, 2022. The goal to prioritize services and discuss the development of Request for Proposal (RFP). The Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) has been agreed upon with the Goshen Central School District and the next step is establishing a satellite clinic location. A cross system meeting is scheduled to discuss additional support in the Highland Falls community. They continue to be challenged with workforce hiring and retention across the system and they have received \$70,000.00 from New York State to assist with recruiting and retention. All mental hygiene services continue to be actively providing services going back to in person sessions with most of the service still being offered virtually. Services can be accessed by calling the Orange County Crisis Call Center 24/7 at 311 or 1-800-832-1200.

On the agenda was the monthly report on Valley View.

Ms. Strecker explained that IGT funding was at \$2.1 million, emergency disaster assistance at \$3.2 million and other revenues at \$17 million. Personal services were at \$9 million, equipment at \$32,590.00, contractual at \$4 million, employee benefits were at \$8 million and serial bond interest at \$51,032.00. Their census for June was 68.47%. Their medicaid utilization was at 80.38%, medicaid (HMO) at 1.62%, medicare at 11.89% and private pay at 5.38%.

On the agenda was a Department Update from Laurence LaDue, Commissioner of Valley View.

Mr. LaDue addressed the committee and highlighted several key points in the update that was emailed to all legislators (see original minutes). Valley View's census on July 19, 2022, was 68.06%. They have three units closed but are accepting short-term admissions and the CHHA census is at twenty-seven. Eight employees have tested positive for COVID-19 and no residents have tested positive. No units are currently on precautions and visitation is still allowed.

Mr. Tuohy asked about staff for the CHHA. Mr. LaDue replied that they have two full-time employees with the remainder being contracted. The number of contracted staff varies from patient to patient and is not a consistent number.

Mr. Tuohy asked if the twenty-seven patients come from Valley View. Mr. LaDue replied both Valley View and hospital.

Ms. Sutherland moved request to accept and appropriate grant funds from the New York State Department of Health for Year 2 of 5 of the Creating Healthy Schools and Communities grant for the period of 6/1/22 – 5/31/23, \$305,000.00, seconded by Mr. Luján.

Motion carried. All in favor.

Ms. Sutherland moved to accept and appropriate funds from the New York State Department of Health for the Public Health Emergency Preparedness grant for the period of 9/1/22 – 8/31/23 to be used for the Opioid crisis, \$72,000.00, seconded by Ms. Tautel.

Motion carried.

Mr. Luján moved resolution making an increase to the capital projects budget for the Medical Examiner Facility. Funds have already been appropriated to the capital project budget per ARPA, \$14,000,000.00 (ARPA FUNDING), seconded by Ms. Tautel.

Mr. Ericson explained that they are asking that they increase the capital project budget with American Rescue Plan Act funding (ARPA). He introduced Brian Titsworth, Deputy Commissioner of Infrastructure Services (Buildings and Grounds), Department of Public Works because a great deal of this project is being run by the Department of Public Works.

Mr. Titsworth addressed the committee stating that they are 99% done with design and this will be a state of the art building and will be located by the water tower near the Emergency Services building. The building will be 18,000 square feet, have geothermal heat, family viewing room, family meeting room, special autopsy room, main autopsy room, 40 space refrigerator and standby generator. They will be going before the Physical Services committee this month to close out SEQRA and for the legislature to assume lead agency. The current estimate is \$21 million, and anticipate having the estimate from their construction manager within the month; however, that does not include engineering, construction management or special inspection costs. The medical examiner's office currently operates out of a 6,000 square foot temporary trailer which is totally inadequate. This is Part I of the ARPA funding in the amount of \$14 million to be released for the Medical Examiner Facility.

Discussion continued regarding the challenges of the current viewing room, current conditions of the temporary trailer, planning phase, needs of specific religious groups, how they will be accommodated, providing respect to these religious groups, Town of Palm Tree and village of Kiyras Joel participation in the planning process and their growing population, security concerns, ventilation system in new building, special autopsy room, infectious disease room, Crime Lab Designs, bid process, groundbreaking, timeline and needs assessment.

Mr. Ericson commented that he would investigate the concerns expressed by the committee and report back.

Mr. Amo referred to the book "When a Jew Dies by Samuel Heilman" which provides an eloquent account of the traditional customs that are practiced when a Jewish person dies. He will be abstaining until the concerns expressed today are answered.

Motion passed 5-1 with Legislators
Ehlers, Luján, Sutherland, Tautel
and Tuohy voting in favor Legislator
Amo abstaining.

On the agenda was a Department Update from Christopher Ericson, Deputy Commissioner of Health.

Mr. Ericson addressed the committee and highlighted several key points in the update that was emailed to all legislators (see original minutes). Summer operational programs regulated by the Orange County Department of Health are fully operational. They include Pools, Beaches, Spray Parks, Children's Camps (overnight and day) in addition to Fairs and Festivals. This division has staff in the field seven days a week to keep up with the demand and public safety. The Wastewater COVID-19 analysis project at six different wastewater treatment plants in Orange County continues. The Orange County Department of Health is holding COVID-19 vaccinations by appointment only in their Newburgh and Middletown Offices. The Nursing Division continue to provide booster

vaccinations to homebound residents. Listening sessions to speak with residents about their health concerns and needs have been completed. Sessions were completed across the county in various municipalities. This provided a great opportunity for the Health Department to gather important feedback. The Community Health Assessment will ultimately dictate the priority areas for their Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP). Their Health Summit was held on June 28, 2022, with over one hundred partners participating in discussions on County health data, wastewater surveillance for COVID-19, and breakout sessions on other health related issues. Lastly, they continue to monitor for Monkeypox in the county with no confirmed cases reported.

Mr. Ehlers asked who the wastewater analysis is shared with and how often is it updated. Mr. Ericson replied that it is updated weekly at the state level and is public information. He provided a brief overview of the sample process and how it is placed on the New York State Department of Health website. However, if they see a spike in the wastewater, they will notify the hospitals in that area.

The meeting adjourned at 5:03 p.m.