

Health & Human Services Committee
February 26, 2013
Minutes

Members Present: Committee Chair James Nabywaniec, Legislators Michael Docteur, Robert Thomas, Michael Montigelli, John Peck, Anthony Doldo, Chairwoman of the Board Carolyn Fitzpatrick

Others Present: Legislators Philip Reed, Allen Drake, Barry Ormsby, Robert Ferris, and Jennie Adsit, County Administrator Robert Hagemann, Deputy Administrator Michael Kaskan, County Attorney David Paulsen, Information Services Director Gregory Hudson, Public Health Director Jean Bilow, Treasurer Accountant Anne Converse, Watertown Daily Times Reporter Daniel Flatley, Confidential Secretary Jill Jones

Chairman Nabywaniec called the meeting to order at 6:45 p.m. The minutes of the January Committee meeting were approved in the absence of objection or correction.

Chairman Nabywaniec introduced a resolution amending the 2013 County Budget Relative to Mental Hygiene/Community Services Program and authorizing amended agreements in relation thereto and entertained a motion for consideration. A motion was duly made by Legislator Doldo seconded by Legislator Peck and there being no discussion, the Committee agreed to sponsor the resolution as presented.

Chairman Nabywaniec introduced a resolution amending the 2013 County Budget relative to Community Services and entertained a motion for consideration. A motion was duly made by Legislator Thomas seconded by Legislator Montigelli and there being no discussion, the Committee agreed to sponsor the resolution as presented.

Chairman Nabywaniec introduced a resolution authorizing agreements for provision of mental hygiene services and entertained a motion for consideration. A motion was duly made by Legislator Doldo seconded by Legislator Peck and there being no discussion, the Committee agreed to sponsor the resolution presented.

Chairman Nabywaniec introduced a resolution authorizing agreement with New York State Department of Health in relation to rabies control reimbursement program and entertained a motion for consideration. A motion was duly made by Legislator Thomas seconded by Legislator Docteur and there being no discussion, the Committee agreed to sponsor the resolution as presented.

Chairman Nabywaniec introduced a resolution authorizing agreements with area veterinarians for preparation of specimens for rabies testing and entertained a motion for consideration. A motion was duly made by Legislator Thomas and seconded by Legislator Montigelli. In response to questions Ms. Bilow advised that the County contracts with all veterinarians in the County that are capable and willing to contract with Public Health for this

service noting that 6 out of the 7 vet practices in the County are under contract; the only area of the County that she would like to see more coverage in is the Northwest section (Alexandria Bay), keeping in mind the ease with which residents are able to get to a veterinarian that can prepare and submit a specimen, and that has not been an issue. There being no further discussion, the Committee agreed to sponsor the resolution as presented.

Chairman Nabywaniec introduced a resolution accepting donation on behalf of the Department of Social Services and amending the 2013 County Budget and entertained a motion for consideration. A motion was duly made by Legislator Doldo seconded by Legislator Peck and there being no discussion, the Committee agreed to sponsor the resolution as presented.

Legislator Peck made reference to the grand opening of the Meadowbrook Facility in Carthage and Samaritan Medical Center's open house today at the Summit Village Assisted Living Facility as they are great projects and great additions to the community and will help with long term care for senior citizens in the area.

Chairman Nabywaniec agreed saying that as far as transforming long term care in the County these two facilities will do that and will fill a great need for assisted living beds in the County, as well as allow the County to close the Whispering Pines facility. Both open houses were very well attended and the interest out there in the community is great as these facilities will vastly improve the quality of life for those residents in need of the level of care they provide.

Board Chairwoman Fitzpatrick said the open house today was a wonderful opportunity to see so many people in the community who were involved in the project, and at her opportunity to speak she reminded those present that the \$5 million dollars contributed by the County was not just from the Board, but from all taxpayers. She said Assemblyman Blankenbush gave credit to Chairman Nabywaniec as he was on the ground level of the Project. Chairman Nabywaniec added that Mr. Blankenbush and many other County people such as Laura Cerow and Jean Bilow were also at the table, and it was a community effort with Carthage Hospital and Samaritan Medical Center, the County, Watertown Housing Authority and the Community Assisted Living Corporation.

Mr. Hagemann advised that the Department of Health/Samaritan are targeting the first couple weeks of March for occupancy but nothing is definite yet. He was sure that when the certificate of occupancy is received everything will move quickly. Chairman Nabywaniec advised that the Carthage facility is currently accepting patients.

Legislator Reed stated that this Board and past Boards' did the right thing in working through the long term care issue. He said everyone made a conscious decision to team up and do the hard work and if that had not been done the Medicaid beds could have gone anywhere else in the State. He said the cost increased the longer the matter took to resolve, but everyone made a commitment to spend the taxpayers dollars wisely, keep the beds here, and partnered with some good people so residents would not have to travel to see loved ones who are in these facilities. He added that Chairman Nabywaniec and everyone that served on those boards/committees deserves credit. Chairman Nabywaniec thanked everyone for not falling out of their chairs when

the final price tag came in.

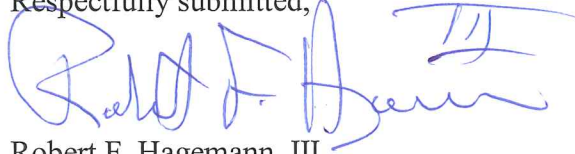
Chairman Nabywaniec advised that this was Director of Public Health Jean Bilow's last official Committee meeting before she retires and he could not say enough good things about how well she ran that Department for the County. He said the Board never worried because they knew she was on top of everything and ahead of the curve, and she did a fantastic job running a large department for the County and doing it so well. On behalf of the Board of Legislators he thanked Ms. Bilow for her service to the County. Chairwoman Fitzpatrick also thanked Ms. Bilow for her service to the County and presented her with a bouquet of flowers.

Ms. Bilow said she has been with the County for 38 years but initially only intended to stay one year when she was hired. In that year she learned Public Health was the career that held the most promise and interest for her. She said the years have gone quickly and while she may be the one that has answered the questions, she represents the many professionals and support staff that work at Public Health and grew the agency from 31 direct and contractuales when she started in 1975, to 41 in 1980 when she was named Director, and to a little under 200 currently. The budget when she first started was under \$500,000 and now is \$8.3 million. They have expanded programs, services, and delivered care to people, and they have provided education programs and a myriad of services to many individuals with the great staff in the Department. She said this was able to be accomplished because she always had the support of Administration and of the Board of Legislators, and before that the Board of Supervisors. She thanked the Board for all they have done for Public Health.

Chairman Nabywaniec again thanked Ms. Bilow for her commitment to the County and advised that with the promotion of Ginger Hall to the Director position, Jean Bilow will be helping out in the transition time until the County is able to fill Ginger's former position of Director of Patient Services.

There being no further business of the Committee, on a motion by Legislator Peck seconded by Legislator Montigelli and unanimously carried, the meeting was adjourned at 7:02 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Robert F. Hagemann, III
Clerk of the Board