

HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE
Monday, January 10, 2022 - 10:30 AM

** This meeting was held remotely **

JoePete Wilson, Chairperson
Charles Harrington, Vice-Chairperson

Chairman Wilson called this Human Services Meeting to order at 10:30 am with the following Supervisors remotely in attendance: Clayton Barber, Robin DeLoria, Stephanie DeZalia, Derek Doty, Shaun Gilliland, Roy Holzer, Kenneth Hughes, Noel Merrihew, Jim Monty, Tom Scozzafava, Matt Stanley, Ike Tyler Joe Pete Wilson, Davina Winemiller, Margaret Wood and Mark Wright. Steve McNally was excused. Charlie Harrington was absent.

Department Heads present: Linda Beers, Jim Dougan, Dan Palmer, Judy Garrison, Krissy Leerkes, Terri Morse and Max Thwaites.

Also present: Dan Sadowski.

News Media: Tim Rowland – SUN

WILSON: I will call our Human Services meeting to order at 10:30. If Mike Mascarenas is here I will give him the floor for the Department of Social Services?

SADOWSKI: Good morning everyone. Mike Mascarenas cannot make it today so he's asked me to step in and cover a few things in his report that he wanted taken care of today. Most of you, I had the pleasure of meeting. There's a few newly elected supervisors that I haven't got to meet yet, for those of you I don't know, let me start by introducing myself. My name is Dan Sadowski. I'm Mike's administrative deputy here in Social Services. I also work in the Youth Bureau, DWI Office and Traffic Safety Office. It's probable our paths have already crossed through a lot of things you guys do at your towns but if not, we certainly will be talking soon and welcome to all the new people on the board I am anxious to meet you.

With that being said, there's a few things he wanted me to take care of today. He does have three resolutions. They are all resolutions of congratulations and appreciation, we had three people retire. So, I'll dive right in the first one, let me apologize upfront I am not typically on these meetings. I have sat through a couple but if I am a little out of sorts of how the procedure runs just stop me if I go too fast. I'm happy to provide you the information I say here today but most of it is all in Mike's report.

The first resolution, we're asking for a resolution of congratulations and appreciation to Stephanie Snow on her retirement from Essex County. She was part of our administrative team and ran all the eligibility units here at DSS and she had 30 years of service.

RESOLUTION OF CONGRATULATIONS AND APPRECIATION TO STEPHANIE SNOW UPON HER RETIREMENT FROM ESSEX COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES. Stanley, unanimous.

WILSON: Thank you Mr. Stanley and thank you Mr. Sadowski for being here today. Your next resolution Mr. Sadowski.

SADOWSKI: Okay, the next resolution is the same it is a resolution of congratulations and appreciation to Cindy Heald on her retirement from DSS. Cindy worked at the front desk and had 22 years of service.

RESOLUTION OF CONGRATULATIONS AND APPRECIATION TO CINDY HEALD UPON HER RETIREMENT FROM ESSEX COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES. Scozzafava, unanimous.

WILSON: Go ahead Mr. Sadowski with your third resolution.

SADOWSKI: Okay third and last resolution is a resolution of congratulations and appreciation to Lisa Nye. Lisa worked in our Child Support Unit and she had 15 years of service with us.

RESOLUTION OF CONGRATULATIONS AND APPRECIATION TO LISA NYE UPON HER RETIREMENT FROM ESSEX COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES. Hughes, unanimous.

WILSON: Did anybody have any questions for Mr. Sadowski before we move on? Alright, thank you for that report. Next up is Terri Morse –

SADOWSKI: Oh, I have plenty more Mr. Wilson.

WILSON: I'm sorry go ahead.

SADOWSKI: Okay. A couple of things. Over the last month we had several Christmas programs that ran and none of these happened without a lot of people behind the scenes so Mike wanted me to put out some special thanks so if you don't mind me taking a few minutes to do so, there's two Christmas programs that ran in our department. One runs through our services department each year, Cheri Reynolds organizes this program. This is run 100% on donations so I would like to thank individually by name each organization that donated to this program this year starting with the following; Adirondack Medical Center, Cedar Run Bakery, The Nature Conservancy, the St. Philips Neri Church in Westport, the St. Philips Church in Willsboro, St. Elizabeth's Church in Elizabethtown, the Trail North Federal Credit Union, Alan and Jackie Stokes, all the Essex County employees that donated to this program as well as the members of the Board of Supervisors who also donated gifts to support this program. This program goes to make sure that all the children that are currently in our child serving system has a decent holiday and like I said, it can't happen without a lot of people's help so I would also like to thank individually from our DSS staff, Amy Catanzarita, Phyllis Martin, Belynda Kitts, Mary Stanley, Steve Pike, Jocelyn Belzile, Amanda Kohen-Napper, Wendy Sargent, Tom Cross, Stephanie Snow, Cindy Heald, Candy Goff, Carrie, Cook, Sierra Snow, Tina Freeman, Sherlene Simpson-Barrows, Katie Vidock, Darcy Lafountain, Kathleen Decker, Faith Johnson, Rachel Collier and Cheri Reynolds who organizes it all each year. We would also like to say a special thanks in minutes here to the staff at Berkshire Farm and Family Corner they assisted in delivery those gifts to the families and at the same time, I'm sure most of you have heard or you are all involved in it too, the Toys for Tots Christmas Program. That one is much larger in terms of how it's advertised it runs across multiple counties. The Toys for Tots program is completely volunteer. This year we sent out over 400 letters to known qualifying clients to ask them to sign up, notifying them of that but understand this the Toys for Tots Program is open to all children in Essex County. I can tell you just quick stats, we ordered toys for over 1,160 children this year and Mike did include in his report a few pictures of that process as you can see it was a pretty big undertaking to sort and distribute to the towns which

than you guys made available for distribution to the families' in your towns. With that being said, I would like to thank a few people by name, also for that lots and lots of volunteers that made this program possible. I will start with the DSS staff special thanks to Angie Allen, Susan Hathaway, Mike Mascarenas, Dee Olcott, Christine Palmer, Jackie Thomas and Tiffani Tromblee and then the Sheriff's office helped deliver the gifts over a course of two days we got them sorted and distributed to each towns. It happened over December 15 and December 16th December 15th Mr. Ken Hughes we would like to thank you for taking them to several different towns for us and then on the 16th the Sheriff's office had people take them to towns. I'd like to thank Major Blaise, Sergeant Leon, Deputy Bobbie, Deputy Forbes, Deputy Kolodzey and Deputy LaPier there. We did have some outside volunteers help with this program too like I said, it's 100% volunteer on this. It's not actually a DSS run program typically, we usually facilitate it but it's not something mandated. So the other outside volunteers; I'd like to say special thanks to Gary Hathaway, Mitzi Hathaway, Mr. Ken Hughes, Zoe Olcott, Bill Thomas, Mechelle Thomas and Gary Wright and then on the town side of it if you don't mind me taking just one more minute, saying special thanks to the town contacts that made it possible to get this out to the families. Town of Chesterfield, I'd like to thank Mr. Clayton Barber and Deanna Prentis, in Crown Point, Mr. Charles Harrington and Linda Woods, in Elizabethtown, Mr. Noel Merrihew and Janet Cross, in the Town of Essex, Mr. Ken Hughes again and Alicia Kelly, in the Town of Jay, Mr. Matt Stanley and Carol Greenley-Hackel, in Keene, Mr. JoePete Wilson, Town of Lewis, Mr. Jim Monty and Susie Ewald, in Minerva, Mr. Steve McNally, in the Town of Moriah, Mr. Tom Scozzafava and John Harrington of the Knights of Columbus, in Newcomb, Mr. Robin DeLoria and Lana Fennessy, in North Elba I'd like to thank Mr. Jay Rand, Zach Clark and Erika Bezio, in North Hudson I'd like to thank Ms. Stephanie DeZalia, in St. Armand, Ms. Davina Winemiller and Barbara Darrah, in the Town of Schroon, Mr. Jeffrey Subra and Patricia Savarie, Town of Ticonderoga, Mr. Joe Giordano and Tracy Smith of the Knights of Columbus there, Town of Westport, Mr. Michael Tyler and Kate Simmer, Town of Willsboro, Mr. Shaun Gilliland and Morgan Denton and in the Town of Wilmington, Mr. Roy Holzer. I can't thank everyone enough. Like I said, you see the long list of names and it just can't happen without that many people or more. So each year it's a great thing that happens and if anyone has questions on that I will try to answer them.

WILSON: Thank you very much.

DEZALIA: I just wanted to do a quick thank you also for you and your group organizing that. The toys were a supplemental bonus for our annual Christmas party gathering that we do. This year we did it at the A Frame for two hours on the 17th and it was quite a nice surprise for kids to come in that didn't expect Santa to be there and to actually get a gift too so that was really nice and I want to thank you.

SADOWSKI: That's great to hear, thank you.

DELORIA: Dan, I just want to indicate that Lana Fennessy is a town board member and this individual does so much outside of our regular meetings that I too take my hat off to Lana. Lana is phenomenal and I wish I had four more of her you know. So I just wanted to mention that and thank you for thanking Lana and myself we're here to help.

SADOWSKI: Great, thank you all. If there isn't any other questions on Mike's report, that's all he really wanted me to mention today. I will say, in preparation this morning I was looking a little bit at what you guys discussed last month and Mr. Scozzafava did mention an ongoing issue with retention and getting - we have had three resolutions notifying you of retirements, it's the ongoing problem of finding workforce. So, I do want to say I noticed there was a conversation last month

about open investigations in the CPS unit and it is mainly being driven by lack of workforce. I did want to just update the board on that, since Mike's last report we hired two new caseworkers not directly in the CPS unit yet but we do have, I am told, I checked in with Angie Allen this morning and I'm told we have I think 5 applicants right now and we're just waiting on the new test, the Civil Service test from the State. As soon as we receive that, we'll be administering the test and we hope to get them in here and get them in training and into our workforce. So there are some applicants. We're happy to see that. So I just wanted to give you a quick update on that Mr. Scozzafava so you know it is in the works.

WILSON: Alright, thank you again Mr. Sadowski. Any further questions?

SCOZZAFAVA: To follow up, Dan Palmer, you're here somewhere right?

PALMER: Yeah, I'm here.

SCOZZAFAVA: So has there been any because due to the Covid restrictions that have been placed on anything and everything else, they are still requiring the Civil Service exams before we fill these positions? Or are we choosing to go that way because we don't want to train someone and then not have them pass the exam?

PALMER: Well, no that really comes down to timing more than anything else. There are certain positions where we can request and get the test, if they are lower level test, continuous recruitment tests, those kinds of things. We try to avoid a provisional appointment if you can. Some of the titles we know we're not going to see for upwards to six months to a year or more so those end up being provisional appointments. It really comes down to the position and how quickly we can get a test.

SCOZZAFAVA: Alright, thank you.

SADOWSKI: And not to interrupt Mr. Palmer, but the caseworker is a skilled position where we need a lot of training so it takes, you know it used to be in person it's been virtual due to Covid for the last couple of years but it takes training at least over multiple months for the foundations training just before you can even touch a case so it's important to have a good, qualified candidate and I'm with Dan, some of these positions are hard provisionally.

SCOZZAFAVA: Thank you.

WILSON: Alright, any other questions? Alright, thank you again Mr. Sadowski I appreciate the report. Next up is Terri Morse, Mental Health.

MORSE: Good morning everyone. I hope everyone had a wonderful holiday and welcome to the new members of the Board of Supervisors. Looking forward to sharing a little bit more about what the Department of Mental Health and Community Services is responsible for at our department heads meeting so I'm going to keep it brief today. I don't know Chairperson Wilson, whether – I was going to share my screen so that people didn't have to look at the report or if you rather me not share my screen? It's up to you.

WILSON: I think I need some technical assistance.

MORSE: Thank you. So you should see my screen with my weekly report on it. I just want to

bring to your attention that in the Mental Health Department our requirement for services continues to not be as extreme as it was in 2020, in the latter part of 2020 but it's still higher when you look at the number of referrals in the November '21, compared to the number of referrals in November of '20. We are still exceeding those numbers. The numbers haven't flattened out like I would kind of hoped and our crisis services are up also. I wanted also to highlight some interesting things that are going on in our department when it comes to treating tobacco use and one of the benefits of hiring Sue Allott from the Public Health Department is that she came to us with a lot of enthusiasm for tobacco use and cessation. So, at the Mental Health Department I wanted to just highlight some of the work that she has been doing. What we are using is a screening tool called the five A's and those five A's are ask, advise, assess, assist and arrange. So we ask every clinical staff member for those that are using tobacco is to do this five A's. Ask the person, advise them on smoking cessation opportunities etc. etc. So here are some of the stats, if you look at the third quarter in 2020, we had 10 of 104 clients being asked the five A's but here in the fourth quarter of 2021, we're at 84% of those with us identified smoking use that are being asked about the five A's so that is, you know you can't in some ways, if you don't ask, people aren't going to consider addressing their smoking cessation needs. So I included in the report some tidbits from therapists notes but some client feedback, I thought this poem that somebody wrote in their journal about how tricky nicotine can be was kind of an interesting thing I wanted to share with you.

So, I wanted to just highlight the work that's being done in Essex County Mental Health, and also give some credit to Sue Allott our RN, who is spearheading that initiative here. I'm going to jump into the resolutions now, unless there's any questions about my report?

Okay, so one resolution that we have is to seek approval from you to contract with an insurance company called Beacon for mobile crisis services. This is revenue generating and has no impact on our expenses.

RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE COUNTY CHAIRMAN OR COUNTY MANAGER TO EXECUTE A CONTRACT WITH BEACON INSURANCE FOR MOBILE CRISIS SERVICES IN THE MENTAL HEALTH DEPARTMENT. Hughes, Wright

WILSON: Any questions on this motion? Being none, all in favor, any opposed – motion carries. Thank you, go ahead.

MORSE: Thank you. Another resolution is authorizing Dr. John Koutras of Adirondack Medical Center to act as my designee for issuing pick up orders for individual that are coming to their ER with suicidal ideation and then them needing to admit them into their medical center.

RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE APPOINTMENT OF JOHN KOUTRAS, MD AS A DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY SERVICES DESIGNEE PHYSICIAN, IN ACCORDANCE WITH NEW YORK STATE MENTAL HYGIENE LAW. Doty, Stanley.

WILSON: Any questions on this motion? Being none, all in favor, any opposed – motion carries. Thank you, go ahead.

MORSE: So, another resolution is to contract with licensed marriage and family therapist, vanes Funfsinn. Back in 2018, when I was a new Director, Linda Beers sent me some books about credential called Infant Mental Health and so we have been pursuing clinicians to be credentialed in providing services to really the family for somebody that would qualify for infant mental health so this like the 0 to 5 population. For those of you that know much about the BRIEF coalition that is something that we are trying to focus on is getting services to individuals and families way

earlier than we had over the years. So I need somebody to support the individuals that are getting credentialed so that they receive the proper supervision so this hourly rate is going to be reimbursed through our System of Care grant. It's only four hours per month.

RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE COUNTY CHAIRMAN OR COUNTY MANAGER TO EXECUTE A CONTRACT WITH VANESSA FUNFSINN, LICENSED MARRIAGE AND FAMILY THERAPIST, FOR THE SUPERVISION OF CLINICIANS PURSUING INFANT MENTAL HEALTH CREDENTIALING IN THE MENTAL HEALTH DEPARTMENT, AT AN HOURLY RATE OF \$100.00 PER HOUR, UP TO FOUR (4) HOURS PER MONTH WITH FUNDS TO COME FROM THE SYSTEM OF CARE GRANT. Stanley, Wood.

WILSON: Any questions on this motion? Being none, all in favor, any opposed – motion carries. Thank you, please go ahead.

MORSE: I have two more, the next one is I'm looking for permissions to obtain certification from the Office of Mental Health to set up a satellite treatment location at Mineville CVS, we do not have therapy services in Mineville and we have an individual who is willing to do that and Mineville said yes also.

RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE ESSEX COUNTY MENTAL HEALTH DEPARTMENT TO OBTAIN CERTIFICATION FROM THE OFFICE OF MENTAL HEALTH TO SET UP A SATELLITE LOCATION FOR CHILDREN MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES AT CHAMPLAIN VALLEY EDUCATIONAL SERVICES (CVES) MINEVILLE LOCATION. Scozzafava, Hughes.

WILSON: Any questions or discussion?

PALMER: Terri, is there a cost associated with that?

MORSE: No, the provision of services would be covered by health insurance reimbursement.

WILSON: Thank you, any other questions? All in favor, aye - any opposed, motion carries. Go ahead.

MORSE: And last but not least, both the Office of Mental Health, the Department of Health and the Office of Substance use have been encouraging providers of those services, PCP's, substance use providers and mental health providers to become licensed in multiple different kinds of services so because Essex County Mental Health has been supporting those with addictions since 2012, we are being asked to actually seek credentialing from IOS so we become what is termed an integrated outpatient service provider. Technically, our office has been doing this work all along for almost 10 years so really what it means for us is that being licensed by both the IOS and OMH we will be able to pursue some grant funding that I can't pursue right now because I'm only licensed in one category also, it will help us attract individuals who have credentialing in substance use treatment. I'm dual credentialed, I have a credential in substance use treatment and mental health. It will help us provide better services to those who have co-occurring disorders. There might be some questions about this one.

RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE MENTAL HEALTH DEPARTMENT TO APPLY FOR AN INTEGRATED OUTPATIENT SERVICES (IOS) LICENSE TO BECOME DUALY LICENSED FOR MENTAL HEALTH AND SUBSTANCE USE TREATMENT. Wood, Wright

WILSON: Any questions or concerns for Ms. Morse? Alright, seeing none, all in favor aye, any opposed – the motion carries. Thank you, go ahead.

MORSE: That concludes my report and resolutions. Thank you.

PALMER: Terri, didn't you have one for the appointment to the Mental Health subcommittee?

MORSE: Oh, I must have neglected to put that in my computer folder. Yes, I do. We do have an addition to our Community Services Board. I'm going to have to hunt that resolution.

WILSON: Terri, I have it so I can read it off. A resolution authorizing the appointment of JoAnn Husslein as a member of the Mental Health Subcommittee of the Essex County Community Services Board, for a term effective January 1, 2022 – December 31, 2023.

**RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE APPOINTMENT OF JOANN HUSSLEIN AS A MEMBER OF THE MENTAL HEALTH SUBCOMMITTEE OF THE ESSEX COUNTY COMMUNITY SERVICES BOARD, FOR A TERM EFFECTIVE JANUARY 1, 2022 – DECEMBER 31, 2023.
Stanley, Wood**

WILSON: Any questions? All in favor, any opposed, the motion carries. Thank you. Anything else for Ms. Morse? Alright, thank you.

MORSE: Thank you Mr. Palmer and thank you Mr. Wilson, I appreciate the reminder.

WILSON: Certainly. Next up is Linda Beers and you wanted to screen share.

BEERS: Well, I will just read a resolution first. Actually I will go through my resolutions and then I will screen share if I could. So I apologize, we did not issue a report it was one of the busiest weeks in the last two years of Covid many, many changes which I will go over but Noel, are you on? Did you receive a copy of that resolution? I didn't know if you wanted to move it?

MERRIHEW: Me? Absolutely, yes indeed. Thank you.

BEERS: It's a resolution of appreciation to Rose Koop-Angelicola. She is a BSRN which are unbelievable rare. She had 30 years of service and she is retiring and very much to what Dan Sadowski was telling you is equally the same for us, except for I don't have people in the pipeline. This will be my third registered nurse who has left through retirement. These folks have been here a long time, and done an amazing job while they are here. Rose happens to live in Lewis and has for all 30 years that she has been at the county. She started at a maternal child health nurse and really was unbelievable, and at the forefront 30 years ago when bringing up maternal child health cases and causes in getting better health outcomes for premature babies being born and then at the end of her career she ended up in our CHHA, our certified home health agency where she's been on the road every day probably the last three years taking care of our most needed that are homebound so I can't say enough about her, we will seriously unbelievably miss her. We have submitted a request to fill so fingers crossed that will be filled but if we're lucky and we're able, we often get, not often but what we're looking for is registered nurses, even with the two-year degree. Rose happened to have that bachelor level RN which is so important to us as well. So we wish Rose the best of luck.

WILSON: So I need someone from the committee, unfortunately Noel is not on the committee.

RESOLUTION OF CONGRATULATIONS AND APPRECIATION TO ROSE KOOP-ANGELICOLA, BSRN UPON HER RETIREMENT AS A PUBLIC HEALTH NURSE FOR ESSEX COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT. Doty, unanimous

WILSON: Motion carries, go ahead.

BEERS: Alright, so Ken can you share my screen? Wow, that worked out pretty nicely. What I wanted to call your attention to is a few things I'm just going to leave this up here while I talk a little bit.

The Essex County Health Department as you know, has been in Covid response, there's so many other things I want to tell you about but this week I really need to focus on this. We've gone through major, major changes since last week and I really need you to be our ambassadors because for our public are confused and it is a confusing time. I will tell you Covid, as you know is fluid we change regulations, we change rules, we change things constantly and when I say we, it is not we, but the New York State Department of Health, CDC and we move along with this ever changing landscape of what is called Covid. So since January 1st and on Friday at about noon, we had 800 cases that is an absolute landmark casing of what we've ever had. We're averaging a little over 100 cases a day 30% of them are usually about children so that's been the norm but as you can imagine, the more people you have positive that number of children is continuing to rise so our concerns in that. What I really wanted to talk to you about is at this amount, us as well as every county in New York State became overrun, that's too many, you couldn't hire enough people to do contact tracing. There's not enough phones to reach all these people. They were being called you know, in clips of 15 at a time. So together with Shaun on Sunday of last week, Shaun said absolutely let's move forward and with the Board of Health and your support we moved to what was called an online web based platform. We really were on the cusp of this. We could not have done it without our IT department, I can't say enough about them working with Jessica Darney-Buehler show was really a catalyst in making this all happen. So what we did was put all these forums online because people were not able to get calls from us so the messaging really is this, yes, you're positive. You have two ways to be positive. Everybody knows right, you have a PCR lab test, you have a lab, you went to a doctor, you went to a pharmacy, went somewhere and they gave you a test and you have been contacted and you're positive. The second way is that you did an at home antigen test and if you did an at home antigen test in Essex County that we decided almost, probably, over two months ago that we would accept them. Testing in Essex County, in any of the rural areas has been a real problem so taking an at home test and saying, yes to it has really made our folks remove themselves from public and really stop the spread so that's how we first started these online portals. So, what I want to call your attention to is this is our website and so it's the Essex County Health Department. This is a ticker thing that usually like revolves so it would change its not always going to be this, but I want you to come to Covid vaccine and testing so I want to drop down here the first thing here is called make an appointment, if you know anybody that wants to do an appointment, so let me tell you that we're open Monday, Wednesday and Thursday three days a week here at the county with 100 slots we can do first dose, second dose, boosters, children vaccine we have everything we have J&J, many of you have been here I hope you found it a seamless process. We have been working non-stop vaccinating through all of this so we have been filled right now we do have open appointments so if you know anybody looking for an appointment please tell them. How to do that? Make an appointment.

The next one is testing and that talks about where testing locations are in our county and that's just a new site that has links but this is the one that I really want you to take notice of, this new isolation and quarantine and if I tap on that, you're going to come down to here and as you move

this down, every one of these hyperlinks brings you into all the definitions so if you want to know what an isolation is, what it looks like, hit that link. What's really important, on top of all these changes in the surge the State of New York dropped the isolation down to five days so we went from a ten day isolation which by the way, was once a fourteen day isolation to a five day isolation and now the isolation is regardless of vaccination so if you're positive, regardless of vaccination you will be in a five day isolation so that either of you didn't have symptoms from the day you took the test or from the start of symptoms and so with that five day turn around I can only tell you this most people don't feel good on Monday they are not sure it's Covid but on Tuesday they are like, I really don't feel good and maybe on Wednesday or on Tuesday they decide to get a test. If they went to a doctor they might not get the test back for two more days and that puts you at day four and on day five, you're out of the isolation. You can see why this fast moving pace is really hard to have somebody call you and put you in an isolation then release you so we went to an online portal and this again, did not come easily it took so much IT work that I can't tell them and thank them enough. So if you come over here across this line, the first one is how do you report your test it's really, really unique and really honestly a model for the North Country because people are copying it, our IT together also with Jessica Darney-Buehler; when you submit you will get an automatic isolation email to your email there's no paper, you're not printing that's what many of the county websites have to write stuff in and print it out, we recognize that not everybody has a printer and that's a real challenge. So when you attest that your positive tested the information that you have goes right to a website, puts your name in it and kicks back an email that puts you in an isolation order extremely helpful.

This is, I need an isolation order the next one here. This is I have a PCR test, nobody has called me, I need to get this documentation for my work or whatever and I can go on here and I can print out the isolation notice will give you my five days. The difference with an isolation order is you can get out the earliest in five days but I'm here to tell you not everybody is well after five days so we moved to the extra step of I need a release from isolation. What happened is when we used all of our contact tracing we put you in an isolation called you for up to ten days and then on the tenth day, we said are you well enough, have you had symptom resolution, have you not had a fever? When you said yes, we released you. So this makes you go on and attest, to release you from isolation so for all of you folks that are wondering, how do I know if somebody is out of an isolation? They should be able to produce a release from isolation order to you. When they fill this out again it goes to a server it comes back in an email no printing and anybody getting this can send the release from isolation right to anybody because it comes in an email format really easy to use and then the I need a quarantine. So I'm a mom, I'm positive I need to put myself in an isolation but I have three kids in my house they are not vaccinated, one has a symptom I need to put them in a quarantine, I need to go here and put my three children in a quarantine and produce that quarantine letter to a school if necessary so all of these things are online at the Essex County Health Department. It is vital that we inform our people. We have been doing press releases, talking about it and really working hard to get this information out with no changes is very hard. I will tell you that New York State is looking to do this exact model. It was going to open today and now they pushed it back to Wednesday but New York State also, very soon put a notification on isolation and quarantine on their website that people can attest to and we'll see how that works and I can only tell you since last Wednesday, actually last week Monday we saw this surge. Our people and people that don't have this ability are not getting called, people are not getting their isolation orders and this really was a wonderful thing for Essex County residents and really gives them the power to get these documents and put themselves in. So, big kudos to all the staff and all the people I mean, unbelievable hours as well as keeping up with the surge so to give you an idea, did it work? In two days, 226 people have attested for self-test and got isolation orders. We only went live on this on Wednesday and 84 people have put themselves in isolation and 17 quarantines so we know it's getting out there and people are using it so that is

really positive. Is there any questions about that?

DELORIA: Linda, I will just say fantastic. Getting the digital world involved in heading off this pandemic, that website is phenomenal. Perfect job.

BEERS: Thank you so much again, thanks to Dan Palmer and IT in prioritizing and Shaun for really the vision because we came out really ahead of this and people were like skeptical and we had to start this on Monday because on Wednesday as you are aware over a 110 cases a day, this was happening across the whole North Country and now the State is actually taking up the model. We weren't alone, big cities had gone to this, and we really used a lot of that, but thanks so much for everybody's vision.

DEZALIA: Yes, I wanted to say thank you too and I think that the website is phenomenal and you're all doing a great. I just worry that when the State puts their model out there's going to be discrepancies and then people are going to be even more confused than they are now of what do I do and then people are looking at the CDC and what they are saying and then they are like, okay, now what do I do? Because there is so much information out there they are like, what way do I follow?

BEERS: Agreed, I will say this, we have aligned with the CDC, not we, but New York State we did go, that's equally another thing that working with Shaun and we did early on. The State was wishy washy, the CDC came out with a five-day isolation and a five-day quarantine New York State did not jump on it but we saw that it was going to go that way, we knew the traction was going to be that way and we designed the site to be five days and luckily we were right. So our site is on the five-day rotation you will get that so when the State does open their site it will go from the ten day which is quite honestly, what our other system is still saying if you print out one of our orders right now it is still going to say ten days on it because they have not updated it Stephanie and it is extremely confusing and I totally agree with you. I think Jess made a Zoom meeting with all of our staff this morning, she equated to like having a semi try to turn around on a dime, these things are just tremendous. Did you want to say anything else?

DEZALIA: No, I just wanted to thank you and just kind of bring out there that I just think right now a lot of people are just confused of what do I do to do this right you know?

BEERS: Agreed, absolutely agree and we'll do our best to communicate that.

DELORIA: Linda, the only other thing I'll add and I don't know if the other towns have webpages and Facebooks but we'll definitely push that out because here's an example I think the Town of Newcomb we started a Facebook back in February of last year and we're well into the thousands of people who, if they share that literally in a days' time with the towns and municipalities sharing on Facebook and or even on their web page you're going to reach tens of thousands of people just on a share so I'll just put that out there and we'll be sharing it today.

BEERS: Why don't I do this, Andrea Whitmarsh is our PIO, Public Information Officer she is the guru of all wonderful things public but I'm going to ask her to specifically make you something that's universal so you can share it and have everything in it and I'll make sure it goes out today and I'll send it in an email to you as well so you can share through a Facebook post. I think that will be best.

HOLZER: Thank you Linda. Did I hear you correctly, did you say you had a record number on

Friday, 800? Did I hear that correct?

BEERS: You absolutely heard it correctly from January 1st to January 7th at noon, we had 800 positive cases.

HOLZER: And with your internal numbers do you see it letting up at all? I see like a lot of town offices are closing down again and I'm seeing more remote where do we stand on all that?

BEERS: Great question and it's hard for me to assess that over the weekend so I would love to have more for you but we are working on that and data doesn't work as well over the weekend. So here's what I do know, I can tell you across New York State, New York City has already started to decline but I would also dare say, that we shouldn't compare ourselves to that and I don't mean, but Westchester and all those had an extremely high vaccination rate if you recall so they are headed down. I believe we are always behind them, and we're just slower to get it always up in the rural areas and I think we're also, we have not shut anything down. We don't ask for vaccination status in all of our restaurants and some of the measures with layered mitigation as they do downstate but I do not believe any time soon I think we are going to stay on this high for a little bit, we are absolutely going to come down. Do I know when that is? I don't but at some point as we all have said, we have got to hit herd immunity right? We're either vaccinated, we've been positive but my goodness, I mean, we are really we are saturating the market with Covid positive people and we really this was certainly something we had all hoped to avoid. I can only tell you that people who have had boosters are faring really well so I highly recommend getting boosters there's no shortage here at the county, getting a booster and I believe that the backlog at the pharmacies has dwindled as well. Also, along with that they added that on Friday we have added and trust me whenever they have added another person or group that can be vaccinated you have to get standing orders, get all of our nurses up to speed, do all of this stuff they added the 5+ group right? So now there is a whole new group of children that can be vaccinated and on Friday at about 4:30 they also changed the adult vaccination time frame about when you can be boosted and Moderna and Pfizer changed a little bit and they lessened it by a month so actually instead of waiting six months you can get it in five so these things have been ongoing and evolving. So people are confused, I really can only tell you it's been a very confusing time so I totally understand why they are confused and why my bigger concern is trying to save face for public health that I tell you something here today and I tell you something different next Monday and you all say, oh you're not a truth teller and I'm telling you, and as is everybody that this story hasn't been written, every chapter changes and next week I could tell you a whole different thing about isolation but today, it's five days. Quarantines are five days so; we move forward with that.

DOTY: Linda it's nice to meet you.

BEERS: Nice to meet you.

DOTY: Someday face to face, I'm trying to assume the role that Jay did for our town. First off, I'd like to thank you for very consistent communication and Jay was good about releasing that to all of us on the board for two years now.

Anyway, moving ahead, first I want to thank you for bringing our retired pharmacist that is a Councilman on our board, Dick Cummings. He will be part of your correspondence now and we thank you for that. He's our town board expert if you will, so you'll be helping him immensely. Secondly, I had a great offer from certainly a retired doctor that I'm sure you probably know, Doctor David Welch, who was the Medical Director at Hamilton County for nearly 40 years. He's offered. If there is a spot you can use him, he would love to help at any capacity.

Thirdly, Dick and I are looking at maybe the purchase of an ID Now machine. In your opinion, would that be a good move and are they available?

BEERS: So, let me for everybody the ID Now machine is what you wonderfully and the Board had the foresight of buying one for every school in Essex County. We're probably the only school districts that I know of that have rapid PCR testing capability in every school district in Essex County. They run about \$45 a test, that's my cost but I bought them in bulk. I bought them in bulk enough to supply us for the whole year. I can tell you that the test machine is like \$4,000, and then you pay \$45. We did not do that because we bought enough material test kits that they gave us or leased us those machines. So, we have 22 to 21 of them at every school in Essex County so every school nurse can do PCR testing on symptomatic individuals so we can do that and that lets the kid go home or if the kid is negative it lets them come back to school without having to seek out a test.

So, your question is, should you get one? First off, you cannot buy one unless you have limited service laboratory. It's a medical device and you would have to get a lab license to do so and I don't know of any town that has a laboratory license to do that and you would need a medical director to sign off on it. You would have to go through Wadsworth Lab to get it. It isn't as easy as an antigen test that you scratch off and do. Anybody who's performing tests on anybody else becomes a medical personnel. You're certifying you personally or whoever is running it that you have read all the information, that these things are in controlled situations and whatnot. So, in Essex County the 21 machines are under Doctor Celotti's limited service liability lab. He is our Medical Director and he has extended our CLIA waiver in Essex County, our lab which we do have here we extended it. I can only tell you that's extended with contracts in about you know fifteen pages of documentation on how every test would be used, how they will be discarded in biohazard bags. It is not such an easy lift. So I don't believe you're going to be able to buy one with it, just so you know, I don't think you can. And whether I think it's a good idea, first off, I understand the supplies are extremely hard to come by and who would you be taking them from, potentially a hospital or somebody else to do testing at your town level. I honestly at this moment with this surge, I would not recommend that. I believe that antigen tests are widely available and antigen test giving are unbelievable surge prevalence in our area, antigen tests are very, very reliable. So a positive is a positive, just to even take that a step further, if you went to Hudson Headwaters or several other doctor's offices they would give you an antigen test first. If you were positive, they would not move that on for a PCR it would stop there there's no reason to move it onto a PCR test. The only time they move it on is you're symptomatic and the antigen was negative, that would be the only time they would send it but a positive was a positive on those tests. Are there potentially false positives? Maybe but when the time is so prevalent and it's so widespread, the test's validity goes up even that much more and those cost \$7 a test so, I don't know.

DOTY: Fair enough, thank you for the advice.

BEERS: Yes and I encourage towns to work with us. New York State has laws. I mean, employers can do other things but you should know that it's not legally binding nobody can put anybody in an isolation or quarantine. It's a public health order and it comes from the direction of me through the county to a citizen but nobody else has the authority to do that. It's removing people's rights. You don't have the authority. You can remove them from their jobs I guess but you can't say that they're in a quarantine or isolation unless I put them in one, you really just can't do that and I've heard some of that happening so I think you should be careful legally that you don't use those terms.

DOTY: Thank you Linda.

BEERS: Oh, your welcome. So again, lots of changes with vaccination, who can be vaccinated, lowered the age group, the quarantines, the isolation that time has changed and then we went to an online system and the State should be. Also very confusing to everybody right now is schools. What are we doing with schools and schools are being delivered antigen tests and they're going through BOCES. In Essex County there is three BOCES that work with schools so it wasn't confusing enough some go to Champlain, Minerva, Newcomb and Schroon Lake go to Hamilton-Warren BOCES, and Lake Placid and Willsboro go to Franklin County BOCES so we have three BOCES delivering antigen tests to schools. So we made a pact with our schools you know, we work with our schools every single Tuesday. We have a call with them. We work really hand in hand with them and we're trying to go to test to stay for the Martin Luther King break. That's important to parents, which I think it is and that's only if we have enough supplies. You can't start something and not have enough supplies, and everybody's trying to do this right we're not alone in that so we're working really hard to make this happen and just to make it another step we've had and we've always had some school open in every school in Essex County Quadrant lab. We have screening capability in every single solitary school to do quadrant lab testing. So we have quadrant lab testing which is a saliva PCR test that every student or students and faculty can always sign up to do. We have PCR testing with a device. If you're symptomatic, we want to identify if you actually have Covid and now we're having an abundance of antigen tests that are coming in for students to be used and that is to be determined and I am hoping within the next 48 hours that is going to shake out. So if people are confused, it's very confusing times to be fair. So sorry, that's my report. Does anybody have anything else?

WILSON: Any further questions for Linda? Linda, thank you and all your staff for continuing to push through this unprecedented workload and changing landscape so thank you.

BEERS: Thank you.

WILSON: Next up is Krissy Leerkes from Office for the Aging.

LEERKES: Good morning everybody. In front of you, are emailed to you, you would have received our packet which was our January report, our monthly newsletter that we developed here as well as our caregiver assistance newsletter.

I have no resolutions just a couple of quick updates. You saw on the front of the report that the emergency HEAP component opened up January 3, so we're dealing with a lot of folks that are low on fuel, out of fuel that we are working closely with the HEAP Home Energy Assistance Program through the Department of Social Services.

We completed our annual evaluation with New York State Office for the Aging late December with no compliance issues, which is always a good thing and now we are preparing for our nutrition evaluation. That takes a peek at our nutrition program as a whole to ensure that we're meeting all the Federal and State guidelines. That will be held in early February so I'll give an update next month on that.

And lastly, we partnered I think I mentioned this in December but we partnered with the Zonta Club of the Adirondacks I believe they are based out of Lake Placid and they donated a ton, a ton of a variety of stuff to deliver to older adults throughout the holiday season so from tea, to cookies, to blankets to you name it we got it and we were able to make little care packages that our staff delivered so that was just very heartwarming. And we also received a call from a private individual from the Town of Keene, her name is Amanda Patnaude and she worked with some students from Keene Central School, and they created absolutely beautiful cars that we delivered as well

as Amanda created some again, gift baskets, gift boxes for older adults that were delivered. So you know, as we're telling older adults to be very careful, you know maybe not go to all those holiday gatherings, we just wanted to give them something to smile about. That's just a quick update from the Office for the Aging and I can take any questions if anybody has any?

HOLZER: Thank you Krissy. Quick question on the emergency HEAP money that came out on the 3rd of January, is that a specific dollar amount and for all the clients in your database do you automatically advise them that additional funds are available?

LEERKES: So, we do not advise everybody that additional funds are available because you have to meet specific criteria for the emergency department. So, one, you have to be within a certain percentage of low on fuel so anybody that has deliverable like kerosene, fuel oil you have to be less than a quarter of a tank. So we don't want to you know, tell individuals that this is available and then think they're going to be eligible and not.

Secondly, we have to work with the vendor to have them send to the HEAP department a delivery history so that way they can ensure that in fact, that this household is low on fuel. They also have to meet resource guidelines so that's another thing. An individual can have up to \$3,000 in resources, as well as a couple is \$5,000 and then it does go up but there's a lot of moving pieces, so we always say, if somebody is low on fuel, give us a call and in their award letter that they got with their original benefit it does state in there that emergency benefits are available January 3. We do a lot of outreach to our clients as well.

HOLZER: Thank you.

DEZALIA: Yes, I also wanted to thank you for the care packages and for the jackets you received from United Way. We had a woman in our town receive one of those packets and she's alone, and it was something that really made her day. So I want to thank you for doing that.

LEERKES: Thank you. We do have a few coats still available. They are pretty snazzy so definitely give us a call if any of your constituents would need any of that. We'll make arrangements to get them. We also did receive from emergency services a very small allotment of at home tests that we are delivering to individuals that do not have family or the ability to get out to a pharmacy if they needed that test. A very small amount of those tests are available but we are also working with any constituent that calls us, we're referring right back to the town or other avenues to get those at home tests via pharmacy or wherever.

WILSON: Alright, anything else for Office for the Aging? Thank you Krissy. Any other members of the committee have anything else to bring up for the committee? Alright then I will adjourn our Human Services Committee meeting. Thank you everybody. Take Care.

As there was no further discussion to come before this Human Services Committee it was adjourned at 11:31 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Judith Garrison, Clerk
Board of Supervisors