

**ALLEGANY COUNTY BOARD OF LEGISLATORS  
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE**

**February 8, 2018**

**CALL TO ORDER:** The meeting was called to order at noon by Chairman Curtis W. Crandall

**LEGISLATORS PRESENT:** Chairman C. Crandall, G. Barnes, J. Burdick, P. Curran, D., Decker, W. Dibble, S. Havey, D. Healy, J. Hopkins, J. Ricci, P. Stockin (Absent: D. Fanton, K. Graves, B. Harris, D. Root)

**OTHERS PRESENT:** L. Ballengee, B. Barnes, N. Biedakiewicz, T. Boyde, K. Dirlam, g. Hanchett, L. Hennessy, J. Luckey, T. Moore, D. Rahr, B. Riehle, J. Schultz, T. Shaw, L. Smith, M. Thornton, B. VanHousen

**DEPARTMENTAL PRESENTATIONS AND TOURS:**

**Health Department**

Public Health Director Lori Ballengee introduced the following Health Department employees:

Nicolas Biedakiewicz, Emergency Preparedness Coordinator/PH Technician  
Laurie Hennessy, Director of Patient Services  
Theresa Moore, Supervising Public Health Educator  
David C. Rahr, Accountant  
Tyler J. Shaw, Director of Environmental Health  
Joshua J. Schultz, Director of Children's Services  
Lauri J. Smith, WIC Program Coordinator  
Madelyn Thornton, Cancer Services Coordinator

Mrs. Ballengee noted that she has been the Public Health Director for 11 years, and she was also the WIC Coordinator for 20 years before she became the Public Health Director. Mrs. Ballengee provided an overview of the Coroner/Medical Examiner Program, noting that they used to receive Article 6 reimbursement for the Coroners/Medical Examiners, but that funding stopped in 2009, and it is now financed 100 percent with County tax dollars. It is a mandated program, and their annual budget is approximately \$98,700. They have tried to cut expenses wherever they can. Having the Health Department buy the body bags has been a substantial savings, and the contract with the Olean General Hospital for autopsies has also saved quite a bit. We've had a contract with Monroe County, and their rates have really gone up as their autopsies cost approximately \$2,800 compared with \$1,600 at Olean General. Olean General Hospital does not do forensic autopsies, and law enforcement officials can determine if an autopsy needs to be done in Monroe County. Mrs. Ballengee stated that 106 Coroner cases were handled in 2017.

Environmental Health Director Tyler Shaw has been working for Allegany County for the last seven years. Mr. Shaw stated that the Environmental Health Division employs

seven people – one Director, four Public Health Sanitarians, and two Public Health Technicians. Mr. Shaw stated that Environmental Health Division services are aimed at preserving and protecting the health of Allegany County residents by preventing injuries, illnesses, and deaths that could be caused by or associated with environmental factors. The Environmental Health Division is responsible for inspection, permitting, incident/complaint investigations, and when necessary, enforcement of New York Public Health Law, the New York State Sanitary Code, and the Allegany County Sanitary Code at regulated facilities operating within the County. Regulated facilities include, but are not limited to: agricultural/fairgrounds, bathing beaches, children's camps, food service establishments, mobile home parks, mobile and temporary food service, catering operations, mass gatherings, public water supplies, campgrounds and RV parks, swimming pools, tattoo/body piercing shops, temporary residences such as hotels and motels, vending food machines, cooling towers, tanning booths/beds, aquatic spray grounds, bottled water plants, migrant farmworker housing, etc. Mr. Shaw indicated that the Environmental Health Division is also responsible for a wide range of additional activities including animal bite investigations/rabies control, chemical spill response, foodborne/waterborne disease investigations, residential environmental lead investigations and assessment, environmental health emergency preparedness and response, indoor air quality complaints, public health nuisance complaint investigations, private water supply technical assistance, realty subdivision review and approval, tobacco control, Clean Indoor Air Act investigations and compliance checks, sanitary loan surveys, septic system design and approval, West Nile and Zika virus monitoring and control, drowning and non-fatal drowning investigations, lead in school drinking water assistance, and enforcement activities for all Environmental Health Programs.

County Administrator Tim Boyde asked about the County's policies regarding sewer system designs and whether or not it slows down development. Mr. Shaw stated that commercial facilities can be a complex process, and they usually have to use a design engineer, and the more layers you add, the longer the process takes. For regular homeowners, Health Department employees can usually do the design in their office, and they can sometimes be approved as quickly as two days.

Cancer Services Coordinator Madelyn Thornton has worked for the Cancer Services Program of Allegany and Cattaraugus Counties for nine years. Ms. Thornton explained that they are a grant program and provide screenings for a variety of cancers including breast, colorectal, and cervical for eligible, uninsured, and underinsured women and men. Ms. Thornton mentioned some other funding programs such as the Komen grant that provides gas cards and co-pay assistance to those that may have insurance. Ms. Thornton indicated that they also administer donated funds from various groups that help provide gas cards and co-pay assistance for those that don't fall under the regular programs or Komen Grant.

Director of Children's Services Joshua Schultz has been working for the County for approximately five years. Mr. Schultz stated that we are mandated to provide the Early Intervention Program, and it provides screenings and services to children under the age of three with a confirmed eligible diagnosis or an eligible development delay. In 2017, we performed 72 evaluations for 249 children, and 5,229 services were provided. Private insurance reimbursement is less than 3 percent; however, the program is financed with state aid, Medicaid, and fees. The Special Education PHC Program provides evaluations and individually planned instructional services to eligible children between the ages of 3 and 5 who have a disability that affects their learning such as hearing loss, diabetes, speech

problems, etc. In 2017, we provided over 400 evaluations for 195 children, and 22,230 services were provided. The annual budget for this program exceeds \$1.5 million; however, we do receive state aid reimbursement at the rate of 59.5 percent. Discussions continue on whether this program should fall under Public Health or become a school district responsibility. The Physically Handicapped Children's Program provides financial assistance for medical care to children, birth to age 21, who have or are suspected of having a disabling condition or serious chronic condition.

Human Services Committee Chair Judy Hopkins asked about Health Homes and how it might impact Allegany County. Mr. Schultz stated in order to be eligible for Health Homes, the individual must have two serious illnesses. Health Homes were created under the Affordable Care Act of 2010 and established a mechanism to coordinate care for people with Medicaid who have chronic conditions. It's a centralized medical care model where one service provider will be responsible for the total health care of the individual. Allegany County currently contracts with Hillside out of Cuba to provide a coordinator for children that would be eligible.

Director of Patient Services Laurie Hennessy has been with the County for 30 years and plans to retire in June. Mrs. Hennessy touched on the medical and clinical programs that the County offers, noting that they are all about prevention – preventing illness, disease, heartache, and economic hardship. Mrs. Hennessy stated that our Family Planning Clinics provide cancer screenings, contraception, education, STD testing and treatment, physicals, women's wellness exams, as well as pregnancy testing. Clinics are held in Alfred, Wellsville, and Belmont. Our Immunization Clinics are for children and adults, and we provide all vaccines with the exception of travel vaccines such as malaria, typhoid, etc. In addition to education, individualized assessments are provided. Mrs. Hennessy stated that our Lead Poisoning Prevention Program provides lead testing for children ages one to six years, and the Public Health Law states that everyone should be tested for lead when they are one and two years of age. We provide education, screening, case management, and primary prevention services through the Lead Program. Mrs. Hennessy indicated that current regulations state a lead test exceeding 10 or greater warrants a public health response although any level of lead exposure can be unsafe for children, and she believes they will be lowering the level that will require intervention. Legislator John Rici asked how often kids are exposed to lead, and Mrs. Hennessy indicated that they see it all the time. Quite often the lead exposure is coming from old paint. Mrs. Hennessy indicated that they have a machine that can test the lead in homes, and lead can be present in the air; they don't just have to eat paint chips. Mrs. Hennessy stated that she receives a communicable disease report every day that she reviews to make sure the public is not at risk. The Health Department also oversees a Tuberculous Program, and we see an active TB patient about once every three years. TB treatment is very labor intensive. Mrs. Hennessy also noted that they are going to start doing DOT (Department of Transportation) physicals.

Supervising Public Health Educator Theresa Moore has been with the County for 27 years this March. Mrs. Moore oversees two Educators who provide the educational component of the programs the Health Department offers. Mrs. Moore is also the Public Information Officer and ensures that accurate, timely information is released during a public health emergency. Mrs. Moore noted that she was directly involved with the creation of the County's Community Health Assessment and Community Health Improvement Program.

WIC (Women, Infant, and Children) Program Coordinator Lauri Smith has been with the County for 17 years. Ms. Smith explained that WIC is a federally funded supplemental food program that provides low and moderate income families with healthy foods, nutrition education, and breastfeeding support. WIC is known to be one of the most cost effective nutritional programs out there. The WIC staff consists of eight employees – two Registered Nurses who are Internationally Board Certified Lactation Consultants (IBCLC), two Nutritionists (BS in Nutrition), two Nutrition Support Staff, and two part-time Peer Counselors. Ms. Smith briefly explained eligibility requirements and stated that the mission of WIC is to increase the potential of healthy pregnancies, healthy birth outcomes, healthy growth and development for women, infants, and children up to age 5 who are at nutrition risk by providing nutritious foods to supplement diets, information and education on healthy eating, and referrals to health care providers and critical social services. Ms. Smith stated they are a gateway program and provide quite a few referrals and have a lot of partners in the community. Unlike some programs, all WIC foods must meet USDA requirements for high fiber, low fat, low sodium, low sugar, and encourage fruit and vegetable consumption. They provide a tremendous amount of education. They have a special Breastfeeding Program and believe that breastmilk is the optimal form of nutrition for infants. Ms. Smith stated that in addition to the nutritional advantages of breastfeeding, there are many others. Breastfeeding saves \$1,200 to \$1,500 on infant formula costs in the first year, noting that if 90 percent of women were to breastfeed exclusively for six months, the USA would save \$13 billion and prevent 1,000 infant deaths per year. WIC also supports local economic development with WIC clients in Allegany County receiving over \$1.3 million in 2017. In addition, clients received another \$12,360 to spend at local farmers' markets across the County. Legislator Dwight "Mike" Healy asked where most of the WIC clientele are from, and Ms. Smith indicated that they have clinics across the County, but the majority are from Wellsville. Yesterday they looked at a County map to see where unmet needs are, and they plan to look into that more. Legislator Healy asked if there are any statistics on long-term data, and Ms. Smith noted that there has been a drop in obesity. Ms. Smith also noted that WIC reduces the likelihood of some very costly healthcare issues like pre-term births and low birthweight babies.

Accountant David Rahr has been with the County for six years. Mr. Rahr distributed a summary listing the Health Department programs that are eligible for Article 6 (State Aid for Public Health Services) funding and those that are ineligible. Programs that are eligible include: Public Health (A4010), Family Planning (A4035), Lead (A4037), Rabies (A4043), Water Quality Management (A4050), Tobacco Awareness (A4051), Children with Special Health Care Needs (A4054), Immunization (A4056), TB (A4070), Bio-Terrorism Preparedness (A4189), and WIC (A4190). Mr. Rahr stated that those eligible programs are generating approximately \$2 million in revenue and are costing the County very little to operate. Our Pre-School Program (A2960) is our most expensive program, and it is a mandated program so there is very little we can do. Mr. Rahr said it can be very confusing when you are looking at the Health Department budget, noting that if you look at our Cancer Services Program (A4074), it looks like the revenues exceed expenses, but that is because all of the salaries for that program are actually listed under A4010.

## **Planning/Development/Tourism**

### **Planning**

Director of Planning Kier Dirlam distributed and discussed the Planning, Development, and Tourism organizational chart. In addition to the Director position, his office consists of Planning & Development Specialist Michelle Denhoff and Confidential Secretary Cathleen Whitfield. Mr. Dirlam indicated that some recent projects his office has been working on include an update of the County Hazard Mitigation Plan, Local Update of Census Addressing (LUCA) in preparation for the 2020 Census, Crossroads Development Project at Exit 30, better access to the Genesee River and the Blueway Trail through the Genesee River Wilds, Open Space Inventory, broadband expansion, business development, IDA projects, and Start-Up NY assistance. Mr. Dirlam stated that the Planning Department is the technical backup for Tourism and Development, and that they are the data center for information. Mr. Dirlam noted that they have about 200 GIS layers and work with the Real Property Tax Office, Public Works Department, and Office of Emergency Services. Mr. Dirlam mentioned the Comprehensive Plan and that they had won two awards. It is a living document, and they are constantly reviewing updates, and they intend to officially update it every couple of years. Mr. Dirlam also highlighted the following Planning/Development/Tourism activity from 2017:

1. The new website was built and went live at the beginning of the year.
2. The annual travel and outdoor guide was completed.
3. In March, the Young Professionals Group was created.
4. The Town and Village of Wellsville completed the approval of their Comprehensive Plan.
5. Alfred University Southern Tier Business Center at Alfred University South Hall was funded.
6. The Village of Wellsville received monies for the Burroughs building and found a developer.
7. Worked with KHEOPS to assist towns and villages on CFA grant application and projects such as the County Broadband oversight.
8. The Village of Andover Wastewater Treatment Facility Study was funded.
9. The Village of Bolivar pool improvements were funded.
10. The Village of Canaseraga Wastewater Collection Treatment System improvements were funded.
11. The office continued working with the Allegany County Landbank and will receive over \$500,000 from New York State.
12. The Landbank acquired two properties in Wellsville.
13. Allegany County officially adopted a new logo and letterhead branding for all County departments.
14. The office continued working on bringing water service from Friendship to the Crossroads – Truck Stop area working with LaBella Engineers, Municipal Solutions, Hodgson Russ, IOC Services, and the Town of Friendship.
15. Mr. Dirlam represented the County at the STW Local Government Conference in Houghton in May.
16. The approved Strategic Plan for Development was implemented.

17. The development of additional marketing profiles and additional marketing pieces was completed.
18. The Genesee River Wilds opened the Riverside Campground River access Site in May.
19. We attended the Select USA Summit in Washington, DC, to meet with international business owners and representatives in June.
20. The Allegany County Industrial Development Agency announced the selection of Developers for the Crossroads Site at the Truck Stop site and adjacent property in August.
21. Alfred State announced numerous successful grant applications for the BDCC (Biorefinery) during the year.
22. The review and update of the County Hazard Mitigation Plan with TetraTec was completed, and we are waiting for NYS and FEMA approvals.
23. We completed the installation on the broadband network for Allegany County with CONXX and the 911 Project, and over 11,000 addresses were served.
24. Allegany County Telecommunications Development Corporation made agreements with WinWin Wireless and Tel-Star to provide service.
25. The Allegany County Planning Board provided training for towns and villages on records management and updating laws in October.
26. Alfred State College Architectural Studies students put together a plan for redeveloping Canaseraga.
27. The IDA took ownership of the GE/Lufkin Building.
28. The Park and Ride was completed at the Crossroads Center after seven(+) years of planning.

## **Tourism**

Greater Allegany County Chamber of Commerce Executive Director Gretchen Hanchett has a contract with the County to provide tourism services. Mrs. Hanchett briefly described how the I Love NY funds work, noting that all of the guidelines are not clear and much of the marketing has to be outside of the County, and it cannot be limited to a single attraction, business, or event. The County provides an additional \$20,000 to cover some things the matching funds won't cover. Mrs. Hanchett indicated that they are working on an antiques map. They also do the travel guides and brochures, and they attend a lot of fairs and trade shows. They are putting together an Amish trail, and they have also been working on the Watchful Wildlife Program. Mrs. Hanchett stated they will be working on digital marketing. They want to develop a "We are Allegany County" campaign, and they are working on a marketing plan to move forward as one voice. They continue to build destinations and have been promoting day trips in a County video program entitled, "All in a Day's Drive." The Tourism Office manages the calendar of events, and they market destinations and businesses. They have been working with several counties on a full Genesee River map. They also played a supportive role in History Awareness week. Mrs. Hanchett stated that the NYS Tourism Impact report revealed that between 2011 and 2016, traveler spending in Allegany County has increased over \$10 million. In 2016, tourism spending was over \$64 million. Traveler spending for lodging was \$2,180,00, recreation was \$1,322,00, food and beverage was \$11,822,000, retail and service stations were \$4,573,000, transportation was \$433,000, and over \$44 million was attributed to second homes. Allegany is number one in traveler spending of the Chautauqua-Cattaraugus-Allegany County triangle when it comes to traveler spending on second homes. Legislator

Gary Barnes asked if the majority of the second homes are on the lakes, and Mrs. Hanchett indicated that the largest financial impact is from there, but we also have a lot of camps. Mrs. Hanchett ended by saying that they will continue to preach and share good news about Allegany County, and we are all ambassadors. Legislator Gary Barnes asked about the many NYS signs that are on I-86 that do not meet NYS DOT regulations, and Mrs. Hanchett indicated that the State will be required to remove them by the end of June. Legislator David Decker asked where Mrs. Hanchett obtains her figures, and Mrs. Hanchett indicated that New York States comes up with those figures, and they use the same formulas across the state. It was noted that for every dollar the County spends on tourism, there is a return of \$458, when is a pretty good return on investment. Tourism is a \$105 billion industry in New York State. Legislator Judy Hopkins asked what percent of Mrs. Hanchett's time is spent on tourism and Mrs. Hanchett indicated about 90 percent.

## **Development**

Allegany County Economic and Industrial Development Agency Executive Director Craig Clark stated the County has been contracting with Alfred State College for development services for about two years, and it's been a good blend with the college. Dr. Clark gave a brief history of how his relationship with the County began, noting that he was the Dean of the Wellsville Campus of Alfred State College for about 20 years. Dr. Clark asserted that Alfred State College President Dr. Irby "Skip" Sullivan is an economic powerhouse and visionary and has been very supportive of the relationship. Dr. Clark asked if there were any questions regarding any of the current projects. Legislator David Decker asked if the proposed 84-bed hotel for the Crossroads area is large enough, and Dr. Clark stated that the initial proposal did not show all of the bigger picture. The goal is to have more than one hotel. They plan to start small, and once you have one, more are encouraged to come when they are successful. Legislator Judy Hopkins stated that the investors have made it very clear that they are very committed to make this project a success; however, they want to show a profit before they invest too much. Dr. Clark provided a brief overview of the Biorefinery Development and Commercialization Center (BDCC) project at the proposed Almond Ecological Industrial Park, noting that it is a strategic initiative of Alfred State College building on Alfred's heritage of supporting the manufacturing industry. The center will be a research, commercialization, and project development resource for businesses and research institutions statewide and nationally. Dr. Clark explained that the BDCC utilizes a unique Applied Biorefinery Sciences (ABS) patented hot water extraction (HWE) biorefining process that separates chemical assets from woody fiber, transforming them into market-ready bio products such as moisture resistant wood pellets, food additives, biofuels, lignin, and furfural. Products developed at the BDCC will displace imports that are currently manufactured using noxious processes. The HWE extraction process is safe and clean. The BDCC is a three to four ton prototype facility that will scale up and prove the commercialization viability of marketable bioproducts through continuous HWE processing. Dr. Clark stated they need to prove their processes work before expanding further, but there is huge potential, and once operational, private sector partners will develop a full-scale 700-ton a day biorefinery. Governor Cuomo just announced that they will be getting \$6 million toward this project, and the initial investment was \$150,000. Legislator Judy Hopkins asked about the timeline for this project, and Dr. Clark stated approximately 18 months once the funds are received so probably a good two years. Emergency Management and Fire Director Jeff Luckey stated that this is a great opportunity to get rid of the scrub wood and save our hardwoods. Legislator William Dibble

mentioned that timber management plans were mentioned at the recent NYSAC (New York State Association of Counties).

**ADJOURNMENT:**

There being no further business to come before the committee, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 2:00 p.m. so the meeting could be reconvened in a Committee of the Whole meeting for Legislators and Departments Heads that was scheduled as a follow up to the Roundtable 2021 that was held back in November.

Respectfully submitted,

Brenda Rigby Riehle, Clerk of the Board  
Allegany County Board of Legislators