I. CALL TO ORDER

Mrs. Ferratella called the meeting to order at 9:10 a.m. and asked Mr. Hanna to lead the Pledge of Allegiance.

II. PRESENTATIONS

A. AIM

1. Peer Recovery Services – Mr. Beuter stated he works at AIM as a Certified Recovery Peer Advocate and NYS Certified Peer Specialist. For the last two years he has been working with Public Health, 911, the Sheriff’s Office and various municipalities for the OD Mapping. If there is an overdose in the County, I do not receive any demographic information, but I receive location information. I then contact the Sheriff’s Office or 911 to confirm the address and then I respond to that location within 24 to 48 hours. Last year there were 141 overdoses in the County with 9 fatalities. Year to date we have had 133 overdoses with 11 fatalities. Compared to surrounding counties this represents a major increase for the population. Chemung County has had 61 overdoses and 3 fatalities; Allegany County has had 18 overdoses and 1 fatality and Albany County has had 139 overdoses and 24 fatalities.

Mr. Van Caeseele asked which municipalities are most affected? Mr. Beuter replied Bath, Hornell and Corning; although this is a county-wide issue and it is all over. A lot of the increases we see are COVID-related. Recovery is a huge connection thing and having to do it virtually creates a real disconnect with people. I have worked with families to try to help them get connected with whatever resources they may need. If an individual wants to work with me, we talk about recovery and how they want things to be going forward. We have done a lot of good in the last two years and we would like this program to continue.

Mr. Ferratella asked what ages do you primarily deal with? Mr. Beuter replied we have had people as young as 15 and all the way up to 72. This touches all demographics, ages, socio-economics, etc.

Mr. Van Etten asked will this program be funded in the future? Mr. Beuter replied we were under grant funding for the first two years and we applied for additional funds and that fell through. In order to keep OD Mapping with the peer element, we will need to figure something out. Mr. Wheeler stated AIM submitted a request to us
for ARPA funding. The Ad Hoc Reopening and Recovery Committee had requested additional information. The request is for $30,000 - $35,000.

Mr. Zick explained Mr. Beuter’s proposed program budget for one year is $60,000, however, he does not need to be allocated full-time. We anticipate that we can operate that program 20 hours a week to cover what he is currently doing. Our current funding sunsets September 30th. Mr. Wheeler asked how many years is your request for? Are you applying for additional grants? Mr. Zick replied our intention is to continue to explore alternative funding solutions. We anticipate additional revenue streams and we think there will be sufficient opportunities in the future. We had anticipated our current third-party grant continuing, and to our surprise they notified us in April/May that it would not continue. We did not have sufficient time to find an alternative opportunity. Mr. Wheeler asked so your request for ARPA funds would be $30,000 for one year? Mr. Zick replied correct.

Ms. Fitzpatrick asked of the people you have reached out to through OD Mapping, how many go into a treatment program and what is the success rate? Mr. Beuter replied it is hard to get a specific number. In terms of those that follow through with some sort of program, of the 181 that I have contacted in the past two years, 89 entered into a harm reduction program (AA, NA, Steuben County Alcohol & Substance Abuse Service, Catholic Charities, CASA, etc.); however that is not to say that all were successful or that all are continuing. Ms. Fitzpatrick asked how many additional overdoses were there in the County that you were not able to account for? Mr. Beuter replied we have been able to get all of the information except from AMR or any that go out without Law Enforcement; so that would be about 15 percent. Ms. Fitzpatrick asked what can we do to facilitate getting that data for you? Mr. Beuter replied I have reached out to AMR and 911 has also reached out to them. If we could confirm the addresses with AMR that would be helpful, but we are getting no response from them.

Mr. Van Etten asked could that have something to do with HIPAA? Mr. Beuter replied it could be that. Other agencies have tried to model after Broome County. He commented that his peers have had trouble as well getting the information. Mrs. Lando stated maybe we could send a letter from the Legislature to AMR and ask for that. Mr. Beuter stated the information is in the database, but there is a disconnect somewhere. Mr. Wheeler explained the issue largely is if the call is not connected to us and it is AMR’s call, they have their own dispatch operation. We had talked about connecting the two departments and that would solve the issue. I think a letter from Chairman Van Etten, or Mrs. Ferratella as Committee Chair, would not hurt. Mr. Beuter explained I never look for the demographic information. All I am trying to do is confirm the address with OD Mapping.

Ms. Fitzpatrick stated the other interesting thing to hear is what other things we can do to make your job easier. With the free needle exchange, that is enabling people and there is the issue of used needles laying all over. It is becoming so close to crisis mode and this is such a huge issue and we are blaming so many things on COVID when in reality there are many reasons why it is an issue. I would like to see people that overdose be arrested and then force them to go into a treatment program. Mr. Beuter replied in an effort to avoid debating this, we have been trying to arrest our way out of this problem for the last 50 years. If we had a detox within the area that was readily accessible, that would be the best.

Mr. Van Etten commented even if you had a detox facility locally, there is the socio-economic environment and that drives people right back into the problem. Mr. Beuter replied of course, it is a slippery slope. It is always going to be a matter of how much the person is willing to endure or work toward what they want. Mr. Van Etten asked can these individuals get training, education, employment to make them sustainable so they are not living off the system? Mr. Beuter replied that is basically what we do. Steuben County is ahead of others in the State; it is just a matter of connecting them with the right people.

Mr. Malter asked we were talking numbers between $22,500 and $30,000. Are we locking in the $30,000? Mr. Zick replied our request would be for $30,000. Mrs. Ferratella thanked Mr. Beuter and Mr. Zick for their presentation. Mr. Van Etten commented the timing of the ARPA funding and losing their grant and needing funding is just coincidental. However, this is the type of program that we should be looking to support.
III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

MOTION: APPROVING THE MINUTES OF THE AUGUST 4, 2021, MEETING MADE BY MR. VAN CAESEELE. SECONDED BY MR. NICHOLS. ALL BEING IN FAVOR. MOTION CARRIES 5-0.

IV. DEPARTMENTAL REQUESTS

A. Community Services

1. Budget Adjustment – Dr. Chapman requested authorization to accept $39,400 in revenue from New York State Office of Mental Hygiene. This represents the additional 20 percent of funding that was withheld at the beginning of this year. He requested authorization to appropriate this funding to the salaries and wages line item as well as other fringe benefit line items to cover the cost for the remainder of the year for an additional Grade XIV Staff Social Worker. Prior to the pandemic we had three Staff Social Workers working on our crisis team and with the State’s 20 percent funding cut we opted to not fill one of those positions. Over the past three months there has been an uptick in the number of crisis cases.

MOTION: AUTHORIZING THE DIRECTOR OF THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY SERVICES TO ACCEPT ADDITIONAL NEW YORK STATE OFFICE OF MENTAL HYGIENE FUNDING IN THE AMOUNT OF $39,400 AND APPROPRIATE TO THE SALARIES AND WAGE AND OTHER FRINGE BENEFIT LINE ITEMS TO COVER THE COST FOR THE REMAINDER OF THE YEAR FOR ONE ADDITIONAL GRADE XIV STAFF SOCIAL WORKER POSITION MADE BY MR. HANNA. SECONDED BY MR. VAN CAESEELE. ALL BEING IN FAVOR. MOTION CARRIES 5-0.

B. Public Health

Mrs. Smith stated she would just like to take a couple of minutes to express her vote of confidence for the work that Mr. Beuter has done over the past couple of years through AIM. He has been a pleasure to work with and he is steadfast, invested and engaged in his work.

1. Contract – Mrs. Smith requested authorization to enter into a new contract with Kaitlyn Schultz, Speech Language Pathologist for Preschool Related Services. The rate is set by the State at $70.00 per session and $35.00 per group.

MOTION: AUTHORIZING THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC HEALTH TO ENTER INTO A CONTRACT WITH KAITLYN SCHULTZ, SPEECH LANGUAGE PATHOLOGIST FOR PRESCHOOL RELATED SERVICES AT STATE RATES OF $70.00 PER SESSION AND $35.00 PER GROUP MADE BY MR. HANNA. SECONDED BY MR. VAN CAESEELE. ALL BEING IN FAVOR. MOTION CARRIES 5-0.

2. Accepting and Appropriating COVID Vaccine Response Grant – Mrs. Smith requested authorization to accept a NYS Department of Health COVID Vaccine Response Grant in the amount of $106,360.05. The purpose of these funds is for communication and outreach to increase COVID vaccination rates. Our plan at this point, with your approval of the funds, is to take a regional approach with the Finger Lakes and Southern Tier counties and come up with a poignant, unified messaging approach.

MOTION: AUTHORIZING THE ACCEPTANCE AND APPROPRIATION OF THE NEW YORK STATE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH COVID VACCINE RESPONSE GRANT IN THE AMOUNT OF $106,360.05 MADE BY MR. ROUSH. SECONDED BY MR. HANNA FOR DISCUSSION.

Mrs. Lando asked what is our vaccination percentage? Mrs. Smith replied 47 percent of our population has received at least one dose. For those 18 and older, 56.5 percent have received at least one dose. Our take rates remain the same with Painted Post having the highest at 71.4 percent and Kanona having the lowest at 15 percent.

VOTE ON PREVIOUS MOTION: ALL BEING IN FAVOR. MOTION CARRIES 5-0. Resolution Required.
3. **Accepting and Appropriating Funding for Public Health Corps Fellowship Program** – Mrs. Smith requested authorization to accept New York State Public Health Corp Fellowship Program funding in the amount of $1,383,824. She explained the NYS Department of Health is allocating a number of “fellows” to each County in the State. These fellows will assist local public health departments with COVID response and the State’s hope is that this will increase and build every public health departments’ infrastructure. The allocation of fellows is based on population and COVID numbers. Steuben County could be allocated up to 9 fellows. Our application is online with the Department of Health and I do not yet know if we will end up with that many. The State’s plan is to hire 1,000 fellows for the State.

Mr. Van Etten asked what will they be doing? Mrs. Smith replied they will assist with COVID response, engaged in working vaccine clinics, assisting with research and data collection and communicate with County residents. Coupled with that, the State would like to increase and enhance public health infrastructure, so they could also be assigned to anything in Public Health; clerical, education, etc. This will help to enhance awareness of public health and what we do in hopes that it will peak interest and steer their careers in the direction of public health. Mrs. Smith stated we are under no obligation to put them on our staff.

Ms. Fitzpatrick commented with regard to public education, the Bath Fire Department is having a drive-thru dinner on September 11th and perhaps you could have vaccine information available there.

Mrs. Ferratella asked do you have space to accommodate these fellows? Mrs. Smith replied yes. Depending on how many we get, we can utilize the Civil Defense Building.

**MOTION:** AUTHORIZING THE ACCEPTANCE AND APPROPRIATION OF THE NEW YORK STATE PUBLIC HEALTH CORPS FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM FUNDING OF $1,383,824.00 MADE BY MR. HANNA. SECONDED BY MR. NICHOLS. ALL BEING IN FAVOR. MOTION CARRIES 5-0. Resolution Required.

4. **COVID Vaccine Rate Update** – Mr. Malter stated Mr. Wheeler reported that there has been an uptick in cases. What areas have been affected? Mrs. Smith replied this affects all areas; every municipality, for the most part. Mrs. Lando asked are the cases just the unvaccinated? Mrs. Smith replied it is both, but primarily the unvaccinated. We have had 150 break-through cases. Ms. Fitzpatrick asked can you tell if these new cases are from the variant? Mrs. Smith replied they are just testing and we do not know if the cases are the Delta variant. Mr. Wheeler stated with the statewide testing, 95 percent are Delta so the assumption is the vast majority are Delta. We are seeing definite patterns in terms of spread.

Ms. Lattimer asked are we prepared for the beginning of school for contact tracing? Mrs. Smith replied yes and the process will be the same as last year. We have increased our staff and we will continue to increase staff. With universal masking in the schools, the presumption is we can keep transmission with the schools at bay. Ms. Fitzpatrick asked will the students be allowed to take their masks off when they are at their desks? Mrs. Smith replied no. Ms. Fitzpatrick asked why? Mrs. Smith replied that is mandated by the State. However, there will be multiple mask breaks during the day. The Superintendents will make sure there will be multiple mask breaks throughout the day and masks will not be required when they are outside. Ms. Fitzpatrick asked what about for sport activities? Mrs. Smith replied they will not necessarily have to. Mr. Wheeler explained that will be a school choice.

Ms. Fitzpatrick commented masks are best practice and they should let the schools make a choice. The hard part for parents and school districts is that it should not be a one size fits all approach. It is a shame they don’t allow the schools to make the decision, but it is nice to know that there will be mask breaks and that the students will not have to wear them during sporting events. Mrs. Smith stated that she was pleased to hear the Governor say that her approach will be different than in the past. If there is a school district or a county region that is doing really well, she will take a look at that. As time goes on she will look at that and may lift the mandatory requirement and that may not be the same across the state. Ms. Prossick commented Governor Hochul’s approach is the CDC guidelines. At this time all of New York State is a hot zone.
Mr. Nichols asked with the break-through cases does it hospitalize them or are they just under the weather? Mrs. Smith replied for the most part they are just under the weather, but we have had a small number that have been hospitalized. Mr. Nichols commented that shows that the vaccine definitely helps. Mrs. Smith stated yes, it does.

C. Department of Social Services

1. Family First Legislation – Mrs. Reynolds stated the Family First Prevention Services Act was enacted as part of the Federal Bipartisan Budget Act of 2018. The Governor’s FY 2021 Executive Budget will support compliance with the Family First Prevention Services Act and help keep children safely with their families or in the least restrictive, most family-like setting appropriate to their special needs when foster care is needed. Effective September 29, 2021, any child who is placed in a qualified residential treatment program, within 30 days of the start of each placement, the child must be assessed to determine the appropriate level of care by a qualified individual. Without this assessment, we will lose the Federal funding. Every time a child is moved into a different placement an assessment will need to be made. She stated there are four agencies in the County that are certified as QRTP’s (Qualified Residential Treatment Program) and given the time constraints we have to do assessments, she requested authorization to contract with those agencies. Those agencies are William George Agency, Hillside Children’s Center, Steuben County Community Services and Family Service Society. We do not yet have a set rate. The State did give us the directive to enter into the contracts and they provided us with a model contract to use. She commented these are already locations that we have been using and given the limited number available to us, she requested authorization to contract with all four.

MOTION: AUTHORIZING THE COMMISSIONER OF THE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES TO ENTER INTO CONTRACTS WITH THE FOLLOWING AGENCIES TO PROVIDE QUALIFIED ASSESSMENTS RELATIVE TO THE FAMILY FIRST PREVENTION SERVICES ACT: WILLIAM GEORGE AGENCY, HILLSIDE CHILDREN’S AGENCY, STEUBEN COUNTY COMMUNITY SERVICES AND FAMILY SERVICE SOCIETY MADE BY MR. VAN CAESEELE. SECONDED BY MR. HANNA. ALL BEING IN FAVOR. MOTION CARRIES 5-0.

D. Personnel

1. Reclassification – Department of Social Services – Mr. Alderman requested authorization to reclassify one Social Services Attorney, Grade H to a Senior Social Services Attorney, Grade I. There is an incumbent and they had received an offer from another county with a significant pay raise. With the duties and responsibilities this position has morphed into, the Senior Social Services Attorney is more appropriate. He commented they have been advertising for this position for well over a year and there have been no applicants. Mr. Wheeler commented this is on par with what we have been doing with the Public Defender and District Attorney for their senior attorneys with 30 plus years of experience.

Mrs. Lando asked will you backfill the Social Services Attorney? Mr. Alderman replied no, this is a reclassification of the position. He stated the salary will go from $74,775 to $91,753 and this will be Step XII of Grade I. Mr. Van Etten asked how many years of experience does this individual have? Mr. Alderman replied 19. Mr. Van Etten asked how many other positions are like this? It should not take an outside offer to make sure a position is properly classified. Mr. Alderman agreed that it should not. We see this in the District Attorney’s Office and the Public Defender’s Office. We don’t know what the changes in a position are unless the Department Head tells us. Most of the positions have changed over time. When any Department Head realizes that an individual is doing more, we should always look at those. When the positions become vacant, then we will look to see if they should be reclassified before we refill it.

Ms. Fitzpatrick stated it seems like we do an awful lot of these and there is a flaw in the process. Mrs. Lando asked is this what Bonadio is helping us with? Mr. Wheeler replied no, the Burke Group will be assisting us with a salary study. To a certain extent this is on me; when we did the reclassification study, if someone had significant years of experience, we did not put them at the top of the grade. We gave some people $10,000 - $15,000 raises, but did not put them to years of experience in the grade. Mr. Van Caeseele commented then you might pay more than you need to. All industries do this; they wait until an offer is received from someplace else. It is a budget thing and everyone wants more money.
Mr. Alderman stated one of the issues is that we have some people that get an offer, however, we are not able to do this. In this case, we were able to. That is also part of the problem that we are seeing. Civil Service titles are duty based, not salary based.

Mr. Wheeler stated we should, at some point, take a look at this. We have done this almost exclusively for attorneys. The market, in the three years since the study, has changed pretty significantly, so each County is picking staff off, and let alone each department. We need to look at the attorney salaries based on the new market conditions.

Mr. Malter asked is there reimbursement for this position? Mrs. Reynolds replied we would get 62 – 65 percent reimbursed. Mr. Wheeler commented they have flex in their salary budget to cover the change.

MOTION: AUTHORIZING THE RECLASSIFICATION OF ONE SOCIAL SERVICES ATTORNEY, GRADE H TO A SENIOR SOCIAL SERVICES ATTORNEY, GRADE I AND SETTING THE SALARY ABOVE THE MID-POINT AT STEP XII OF GRADE I MADE BY MR. VAN CAESEELE. SECONDED BY MR. HANNA. ALL BEING IN FAVOR. MOTION CARRIES 5-0. Resolution Required.

V. OTHER BUSINESS
A. 2021 Goals – Mrs. Ferratella stated as we continue to work on our 2021 goals, Mary Perham has published an article regarding the COVID response and I would encourage everyone to read it. The article details what happened, who was responsible for the response and how they worked through it.

B. Opioid Awareness Day – Mrs. Lando stated yesterday was International Opioid Awareness Day. There were proclamations from the County, City of Hornell and City of Corning sponsoring that continuing effort.

MOTION: TO ADJOURN MADE BY MR. HANNA. SECONDED BY MR. ROUSH. ALL BEING IN FAVOR. MOTION CARRIES 5-0.

Respectfully Submitted by

Amanda L. Chapman
Deputy Clerk
Steuben County Legislature

**NEXT MEETING SCHEDULED FOR**
Wednesday, October 6, 2021
9:00 a.m.

Please send agenda items to the Clerk of the Legislature’s Office
NO LATER THAN NOON
Wednesday, September 29, 2021