

Seventh Special Meeting
November 19, 2020

The Seventh Special Meeting of 2020 was held on November 19, 2020 and was called to order by the Chair at 10:02 a.m. Seven Legislative members were present with Legislators Monell and Roberts being absent.

Chair Sauerbrey asked for a moment of prayer. "Dear Lord, help us. Help us to get through this COVID experience, help us to be good leaders for our community when people are scared and angry, help us in every way, and help us to serve our community as we should."

Chair Sauerbrey led all Legislators and those in attendance in the Pledge of Allegiance.

There were six people in attendance.

Public Health Director of Administrative Services Denis McCann spoke. "At the end of July, Public Health received notification they were receiving funding through an Epidemiology Laboratory Capacity (ELC) grant. This funding came through the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) to New York State and then passed through to the local public health department as part of the Emergency Preparedness and COVID-19 Response.

"We appropriated those funds in August via a resolution and it was still unclear as to what the funding could be used for at that time, but we had a fourteen day timeframe for the County Legislature to act. It is very specific funding as all our COVID-related funding has been specific as to how it can and cannot be used. It was cleared that the funding could be used for hiring or contracting staff. The State was going to provide a person to work on COVID for us as an intercept where we would not pay them, but the State would just reduce the amount of grant funding received to pay for the contractual position. It turns out the State's rate of pay and the rate they would charge for this contractual position would result in one position whereas keeping the position in-house, the County would be able to hire two positions. The funding goes through June 2022 and for many reasons this is by far the best option. Public Health received \$255,000 and they have added an additional \$1 million restricted funds. In the event the State wanted to distribute additional funds, it is already in place and could just raise the amount. There is no additional information on this restricted funding, but the funds are sitting out there to make things easier later if they decide to act."

Legislator Standinger spoke. "I just came from the Board of Health meeting and I asked Public Health Director McCafferty about this. She said in regards to

the State providing a person there was a lot of strings attached, which made it very cumbersome to deal with.”

Mr. McCann spoke. “This would have been a State contracted position following all of their employee rules, so they would not be able to work any extra hours or weekends without prior approval. They would be coming and going based on their contract and not necessarily the hours of the other staff. Currently, no one in Public Health is working a regular workday. Public Health does not know what weekends are anymore as they are just another day of the week. There were a lot of State restrictions. The State was also going to pay more than most of our County staff, as they use the same rate across the State. This was also another area of concern for staff morale. We could have made this work, but this is by far the best scenario for Tioga County.

“As of Monday of this week, we did not believe we would need to do a resolution for this, as this could have fallen under the Emergency Orders, but to be clear and consistent with other positions we are proceeding with this resolution and special meeting.”

Chair Sauerbrey spoke. “This is good, as people need to understand what your office is looking like. Could you explain why the positions are called Public Health Educators?”

Mr. McCann spoke. “Our greatest resource of an educator is their skillset of being able to talk to the community and educate people, which is part of calling people to notify them of an exposure or that they actually tested positive. This skillset has been found to be resourceful for Public Health.”

Legislator Standinger spoke. “It sounds to me like you guys did your homework and a lot of brainstorming.”

Mr. McCann spoke. “We did and we worked with Personnel quite a bit and a lot of people from the State and it was not worthless time spent because we ended up achieving a much better deal. Personnel really helped make this work for the County and expedite the process.”

Legislator Mullen spoke. “Even if we get into the tail-end of COVID, I am guessing there is going to be a tremendous amount of backlog work, accounting, statistical analysis, and other issues these people would be used beyond everybody in Tioga County being vaccinated.”

Mr. McCann spoke. “The work would need to be COVID-related and it is very specific. They may use the additional \$1 million restricted funds for statistical epidemiology review, but right now, it is very specific. You cannot buy chairs for

