

Onondaga County Legislature

TIMOTHY T. BURTIS Chairman

TAMMY BARBER Deputy Clerk

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HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE MINUTES – FEBRUARY 21, 2024 CODY M. KELLY, CHAIR

MEMBERS PRESENT: Mr. McCarron, Mr. Meaker, Ms. Harvey, Mr. Bush

ALSO ATTENDING: Chairman Burtis, also see attached

Chair Kelly called the meeting to order at 12:59 p.m.

SOCIAL SERVICES – ECONOMIC SECURITY: Sarah Merrick, Commissioner
a. 2023 Transfer Resolution (\$30,300)

PURPOSE: Purchase 39 electronic workstations for TA Employment (formally JOBSplus!) staff.

OBJECTIVE/ WORK PLAN: One-time work station purchase - \$30,300

Prior to absorbing JOBSplus!, we provided all DSS-ES sit stands to improve employees' well-being and productivity. Now that TA employment staff are part of DSS-ES, extending sit stands to these staff would be beneficial to their well-being and productivity too. Unfortunately, to squeeze the number of JOBSplus! staff on 4KOB when we had to move them from the Salvation Army building, their workstations are smaller than the average DSS-ES work station. The model of Sit Stand DSS-ES purchased for the department will not fit on the smaller work surfaces. Therefore, DSS-ES needs to purchase 39 electronic work tables to accomplish the same thing as sit stands. When the TA Intake space was renovated in 2KOB, work stations were outfitted with similar electronic work stations. These work stations have worked very well in that area.

FUNDING SOURCE: Medical Payment by State MMIS

BUDGET: \$30.300

- Requirement of anyone receiving temporary assistance; must seek employment
- Dedicated team of temporary assistance employees
 - o Determine if able to work
 - Develop resume
 - Prepare for job interview for employment
 - Not able to work
 - Short term disability
 - Connect them with health and mental health services
 - Permanently disabled
 - Work on getting social security benefits
 - Close temporary assistance case
- Staff sitting all day; want to equip staff with things to help with wellness
- Rest of staff have sit/stands; will complete process of sit/stand adjustable tables for staff

Questions from the Committee:

- Is there a photo of a sit/stand desk that can be viewed?
 - Come over to view various sit/stand desks
 - o These are mechanical workstations to raise or lower desk to sit or stand
 - O Started process five years ago 400+ sit/stands now; current staff in DSS is 470

- How does the applicant communicate with the office, do they have to come to downtown Syracuse?
 - o For TA, most people come in person to apply
 - o Can go through application process over the phone (i.e. SNAP, Medicaid)
 - When the person has an open case, they have to meet in person with TA Counselor
 - Website access is available if not able to come downtown
- Are there satellite sites available throughout the county?
 - o No, DSS is on the state network, it takes physical ports
 - o NYS is not implementing anymore physical ports

A motion was made by Mr. McCarron, seconded by Mr. Meaker, to approve this item. Passed unanimously; MOTION CARRIED.

Chair Kelly stated the previous meeting's minutes were approved.

ADULT & LONG TERM CARE: JoAnne Spoto Decker, Commissioner; Maria Mahar, Deputy Commissioner a. 2023 Transfer Resolution (\$21,000)

PURPOSE: Purchase of Shelf Stable Meals and Accessible Furniture

OBJECTIVE/ WORK PLAN: Shelf Stable Meals-Purchase of Shelf Stable Meals for frail and low-income seniors who participate in the Meals-on-Wheels programs throughout the County. A total of three (3) Shelf Stable Meals will be delivered to each participant at their home, similar to the Meals on Wheels delivery. These extra meals, known as "Blizzard Bags" are delivered to each participant to ensure that the seniors will have nutritious, and safe, food to eat when a regular meal delivery cannot occur during inclement weather, such as a severe snow storm or other weather event that prohibits the volunteers from their normal delivery.

Shelf Stable Meals (Blizzard Bags) are equipped with packaging that is easy to open and does not require electricity. This ensures that can goods supplied can be opened during a power outage. A total of 1800 will be purchased.

Accessible Furniture: The Department plans to replace the decades-old furniture that is currently in the 10th Floor West waiting area. Most clientele that come to the 10th Floor are seniors and/or persons with disabilities. The current furniture is too low, and narrow, to allow for easy access for those visiting the Office for Aging, the Veterans Service Agency and Adult Mental Health, which all occupy the 10th Floor West location. New, accessible furniture in this space will allow for the comfort and dignity of those seeking needed services.

FUNDING SOURCE: 2023 Local Dollars

BUDGET: Shelf Stable Meals (Blizzard Bags) \$18,000 Accessible Furniture: \$3,000







Full Specifications

Lenox Steel from Lesro is a modular seating system that provides complete layout flexibility for reception area and lounge seating applications. The graceful transitional styling and long-life comfort of the Lenox Steel will give your space a light, airy look. Sophisticated yet affordable, the Lenox Steel collection includes guest chairs, connecting chairs, sofas, benches and an assortment of matching tables. Sturdy steel construction provides years of reliable use, even in high traffic environments. Ideal balance of style, function, and value.

- The Lenox Steel oversize guest chair with its graceful transitional styling, gently sloped arm design, and upholstered seat and back cushions will give your space a light, airy look. Sturdy steel construction, durable powder-coat finish, and a Matrex seat support system provide long-life sitting comfort. Seat features environmentally friendly, durable, and comfortable 1.8 density soy based foam. Steel frame cleans easily with a damp cloth; generous clean out space between seat and back make cleaning a breeze. 400 lb. weight capacity per chair. Easy to assemble with Lesro's unique interlocking hardware. Only tool required is a rubber mallet, limited lifetime warranty on frames and internal structures; 2 year warranty on fabrics, proudly American built.
- > Sturdy steel oversize guest chair with upholstered seat and back
- > Designed for high use reception area, lounge, dining and pull up applications
- > Durable powder coat paint finish. Seat made from 1.8 density soy-based foam for long-life comfort
- Generous space between seat and back for easy cleaning
- Blizzard Bags \$18,000
 - o Actually boxes with shelf stable food (i.e. soups) to get through any inclement weather
 - o Includes 2-3 days of food
 - o If power outage, no electricity needed, all pop-tops
- Accessible Furniture \$3,000
 - 0 10th floor consists of:
 - ALTC services
 - Adult Mental Health
 - Veterans Service Agency
 - A lot of visitors are physically impaired or need bariatric chairs
 - Looking at Lesro to purchase furniture
 - State Contract
 - Looking to purchase two chairs, couch, and table

Questions/Comments from the Committee:

- How many chairs does ALTC have?
 - There is a couch and two chairs
 - o If someone has a cane or walker and sits down, difficult to get up
- What is typical usage of "Blizzard Bags" throughout the winter, and is there a stockpile on hand?
 - o Already purchased in November and have been distributed
 - o In the past, purchased a batch in November and January (bad winters)
 - No storms to date, fully stocked
 - One of few counties that offer blizzard bags, which was helpful during COVID; using for more than 3 decades
 - o All meals meet dietary requirements for this age group

- Is the cost of meals \$10?
 - Yes, for two days/two meals
 - Distributed by volunteers; subcontract with Meals on Wheels
 - o Department of Aging has a contract with the following:
 - Syracuse Meals on Wheels
 - North Area Meals on Wheels
 - Meals on Wheels of Eastern Onondaga County
 - Jewish Family Services
 - Meals on Wheels provides meals to the outskirts of Onondaga County and the city
 - o City of Syracuse is biggest, serves 800 people
 - o Every year funding is provided
 - o Case Managers do an assessment for other services the people may need to be able to stay home (i.e. SNAP, HEAP)

A motion was made by Mr. Meaker, seconded by Ms. Harvey, to approve this item. Passed unanimously; MOTION CARRIED.

- 3. **HEALTH:** Michelle Mignano, Deputy Commissioner
 - a. 2023 Transfer Resolution (\$326,000)

PURPOSE: Replace vehicle taken out of service in late 2023 for Forensic Investigators scene response. Replace biohoods in the MEO Toxicology Lab and install new counters cabinets in the X-ray area.

OBJECTIVE: In late September / early October an MEO scene investigation vehicle was unexpectedly deemed unfit for repair / use. An SUV was leveraged from Environmental Health after summer field work wound down. A replacement vehicle is needed to ensure 24/7 coverage for forensic investigators to get to scenes when needed, not impact other Health Department operations during 2024. \$45,000

The biohoods used in daily casework in the Toxicology lab have reached the end of their usable lifespan. This important laboratory safety equipment protects both the staff and the samples being analyzed from contamination. Reasonable use lifespans factor in such things as physical degradation of the units, energy savings, performance improvements, and the ability for vendors to service and provide parts to the equipment - \$35,000. The implementation of the new Lodox full body x-ray imaging device requires changes to physical layout of the workspace area including cabinets and countertops. \$15,000

FUNDING SOURCE: Regular Employee Salary Savings

BUDGET: \$95,000

PURPOSE: Replace comparison microscope.

OBJECTIVE: The comparison microscope is "the most important technique in the field of forensic firearms examination and comparison." (National Institute of Justice, 2023) The current comparison microscope is well beyond its meaningful life and must be replaced. Critical to addressing gun-relating crimes, this equipment includes two compound microscopes joined by an optical bridge to analyze tool marks on specimens. Forensic technology has grown markedly since the purchase of the last compound microscope and is key to criminal investigation and prosecution. Improvements to optics, magnification, automation of the device, and data capture combine to improve efficiency and analysis.

FUNDING SOURCE: Regular Employee Salary Savings

BUDGET: \$96,000

PURPOSE: Replace field and clinic tablets with laptops.

OBJECTIVE: Purchase 30 laptops and docking stations for use in clinic-based services and environmental health fieldwork services. The equipment to be replaced is used significantly away from the traditional "desk office" and has been subject to issues with internet/network connectivity, battery and charging failures, and fragility.

In addition, the use of laptops in clinic-based service areas will reduce the need for purchasing additional EMR licenses and the total cost of Medent, which is based on the number of unique connections and not users.

FUNDING SOURCE: Regular Employee Salary Savings

BUDGET: \$50,000

PURPOSE: Implement visualization software to improve data analysis, support performance management, and improve communication efforts.

OBJECTIVE: Purchase 10 Tableau licenses. Tableau is a visual analytics platform. This tool aligns with the Department's goal to utilize data to improve performance, services, and staff development. Used to manage and explore data, the platform will be incorporated into our performance management and quality improvement programs.

Integral to supporting and reporting our new Strategic Plan efforts, a data-driven culture is key to our reaccreditation efforts.

FUNDING SOURCE: Regular Employee Salary Savings

BUDGET: \$10,000

Essential Need Tick Surveillance

Total Request: \$75,000

Tick Surveillance: \$75,000

Tick borne diseases have become increasingly prevalent across the nation and NYS and constitute a growing public health concern. Efforts to prevent and diagnose tick borne disease is significantly aided by access to current and accurate information on the prevalence and type of pathogens found at the local level.

Dr. Saravanan Thangamani at SUNY Upstate has been conducting tick surveillance using a Citizen Science approach (residents mail in ticks found on themselves or their pets), where the ticks are identified and tested for any diseases. Since 2019, they have received ~3,000 ticks from Onondaga County, of which 36% carried a pathogen that could cause human disease. We know from his data that Lyme disease and other tick borne diseases are increasing in our area, representing a significant public health threat to Onondaga County.

The only other testing source, NYSDOH, performs "surveillance" for only 50 ticks per year in Onondaga County, which is insufficient to have our finger on the pulse of these emerging pathogens. OCHD seeks support for continued local testing in 2024 to provide invaluable and irreplaceable data. In exchange for this support, Onondaga County residents will receive a 50% discount on testing costs.

Further detail on the program can be found here: Upstate Tick Testing Laboratory (nyticks.org)

Questions/Comments from the committee:

- Where are the laptops purchased, and what is the cost?
 - o Onondaga County's IT department has a contract with Dell
 - o \$1,000 for laptop with docking station

Request: Health Department to supply laptop details and cost

- Sounds like the County is scaling back on the tick program
 - o County is not
 - o NYS Department of Health, the Wadsworth Lab in Albany is the NYS Lab
 - o CNY does not have a lot of community labs
 - o Testing for the last 5 years, keeping it at 50 ticks a year
- Concerning tick surveillance, in the 2023 budget there was an allocation of funding, then appropriated more for CNY Lyme and Tick-Borne Disease Alliance and Dr. Thangamani's lab; is there any money in the 2024 budget?
 - o Health:
 - No
 - o Finance:
 - County appropriated \$50,000 in 2023 (Dr. Thangamani's lab)
 - No money in the 2024 Health Department budget
- Concerning the status of the lab, there was a threshold they were working towards up until they were not going to be able to resume testing
 - o CNY Lyme:
 - It was \$550,000/year to run lab
 - Discussions now about opening lab under different conditions
 - Want to reopen the lab, as it is needed
- Is there a concept of what this funding will help accomplish?
 - Open up this season for testing; Onondaga County to potentially get a 50% discount
 - Working on federal grant funding
- Is there a budget breakdown for the laptops?
- Health Department does not have control over the laptops, it is County IT Department
 - o Finance:
 - Contracts are bid out from Purchasing Department; whoever lowest bidder is, or if off state contract
 - Prices will be the best that county has for that time
 - Using 2023 funding would have to be discussion now, as Finance is closing the books
 - If tabled, this would have to be a discussion using 2024 funding

A motion was made by Mr. McCarron, seconded by Mr. Bush, to approve this item.

- Is the money for two vehicles or one?
 - One, cost of vehicle is \$45,000 for a Ford Explorer
- Budget is for \$95,000
 - O The other \$40,000 is for cabinetry and Lodox room

A vote was taken on the item.

Passed unanimously; MOTION CARRIED.

b. Authorizing the Execution of Agreements with the Oswego County Soil and Water Conservation District Providing for the Transfer of Funding for Finger Lakes – Lake Ontario Watershed Protection Alliance (FLLOWPA)

PURPOSE: The Environmental Health's Finger Lakes - Lake Ontario Watershed Protection Alliance (FLLOWPA) Program receives funds through the Oswego County Soil and Water Conservation District (OCSWCD) to fund water quality projects in Onondaga County. The money is allocated to OCSWCD by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) through their Environmental Protection Fund (EPF).

BACKGROUND: Onondaga County's FLLOWPA program is guided by the County's Water Quality Strategy which focuses on priority water bodies and drinking water protection, invasive species control, agricultural best management practices, water quality monitoring, and stormwater management. The FLLOWPA Program has supported the following projects:

- Providing for an agricultural waste tire collection and recycling program.
- Water quality monitoring and assessment of Beaver Lake, Tully Lake, and Otisco Lake watershed streams.
- Conducting sonar-based aquatic vegetation abundance surveys in Otisco Lake, DeRuyter Reservoir, and Tully Lake.
- Providing funding to assist invasive species aquatic vegetation control programs in DeRuyter Reservoir, Otisco Lake, Skaneateles Lake, and Tully Lake.
- Providing support for water chestnut control in the Seneca River.
- Soil and sediment control training for members of the Onondaga Earth Corps job readiness program for new construction workers.

FLLOWPA funds/ projects have leveraged other grants such as the development of the Otisco Lake Management Plan and Aquatic Nuisance Species grants for Water Chestnut control.

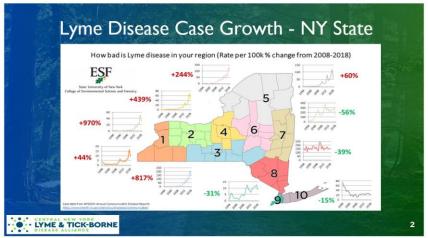
FLLOWPA grant funds are budgeted annually in the Onondaga County Health Department's grant budget. The grant funding for 2023-2024 is \$107,200.

Past projects have included collaborations with: Onondaga County Soil and Water Conservation District, Onondaga County Water Environment Protection, Onondaga County Parks Dept., Onondaga County Water Authority, OCSWCD, Cortland County Soil and Water Conservation District, City of Syracuse Water Dept., Madison County Planning Dept., Otisco Lake Preservation Association, Skaneateles Lake Association, Tioughnioga Lake Preservation Foundation, and Tully Lake Property Owners Association.

A motion was made by Mr. Bush, seconded by Mr. Meaker, to approve this item. Passed unanimously; MOTION CARRIED.

- **4.** <u>CNY LYME & TICK-BORNE DISEASE ALLIANCE</u>: Anne Messenger, Founder & Former Board Chair; Royale Scuderi, Executive Director
 - a. 2024 Transfer Resolution (\$75,000)

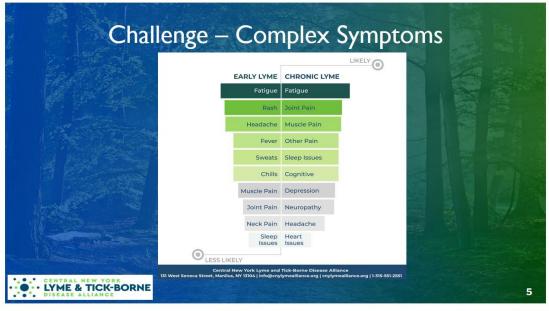






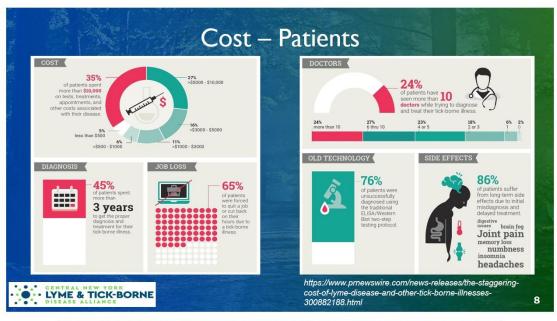


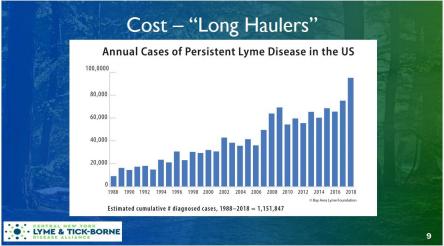












- 20% of cases go unresolved every year
- State and federal government are years behind in tracking







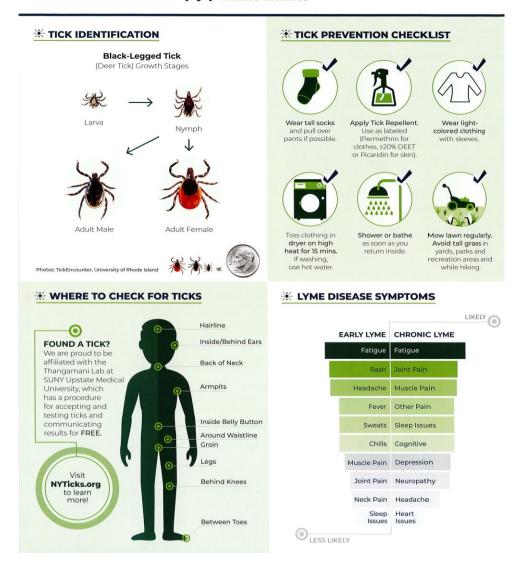
- Piloting K-12 education program with area schools
 - Syracuse City schools; suburban, rural, urban testing out the curriculum to see what works best
 - o Develop to train the trainer good reception with health teachers and school nurses
 - o Initial focus on middle school because of robust health curriculum and health teachers in classrooms
 - Keep growing with 2-3 year curriculum for each age group
- This is not an area where tick-borne illnesses are identifiable by zip code
 - o The state does not collect them; no good reporting
 - o NYSDOH case numbers are sampling take few cases and extrapolate into guestimate number
 - o Hard to know if CNY Lyme or Health Department are making progress
 - Nationwide problem
 - o ½ million people are reported as having tick-borne diseases, but many are misdiagnosed/unreported











Questions/Comments from the committee:

- Does CNY Lyme have many colleagues throughout the state?
 - Nobody in NYS doing this work; only a couple advocacy groups that do not do public education
 - Easiest way to treat this is to not get it; CNY Lyme Alliance is helping public not get bitten by a tick (if bitten, get to a doctor right away)
 - Provider education doing 3rd Lyme Summit
 - Inconsistent level of knowledge with providers in the area
 - Trying to get providers on same page of with latest diagnostics and treatments, and understanding complexities
 - CNY Lyme is the only one in country doing things like this gentleman who previously worked for Global Alliance wanted to make CNY Lyme a pilot
 - Not part of the Upstate lab, but integral in the operations
 - Dr. Thangamani is the only one in NYS doing what he is doing investment is a big deal
- Law: If someone finds the tick within 24 hours, are they generally safe from it?
 - o Not a doctor, but general rule of thumb is 24 hours for Lyme disease specifically (but subject to change)
 - o Some diseases can be transmitted quicker; if someone is bitten, go to a doctor to assess the risk
- Speak to the growth of the organization over the years in terms of fundraising to support the work being done
 - o In beginning there was no staff, no budget, no board
 - o Received few small grants from local foundations to start
 - O Budget went from \$150,000 to \$400,000+ this year and growing

- o Mother Cabrini Health Foundation is major granter for area; other foundations underwrite tick kits
- o Last 2 years received \$50,000 through Senator Mannion from NYS; Assemblyman Stirpe gave \$18,000
- o NYS will not put in budget, will have to be discretionary money CNY Lyme has to fight for
- Other individual fundraisers, corporate sponsors and donors has doubled to 80, this year targeting 100

A motion was made by Mr. McCarron, seconded by Ms. Harvey, to approve this item. Passed unanimously; MOTION CARRIED.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:07 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Debbie Karinsti

DEBBIE KAMINSKI, Assistant Clerk

Onondaga County Legislature

ATTENDANCE

COMMITTEE: HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE

DATE: FEBRUARY 21, 2024

NAME (Please Print)	DEPARTMENT/AGENCY
MARIA MAHAR	Adult & Long Term Care
Joanne Spoto Dech	adult & Long Term Care
Kristi Smiley	Finano
Darcie Lesnial	leg
Sovah Merrick	PSS-ES
Ber Your	Law-
Michelle Mignons	OCHD
Store Grand	Fin 0,05
Den Romei	heq.
Nodesia Hernandez	heg.
Maurice Brown	Leg.
Tin Buttis	Leg.
John DeSepths	hea
Joe Frateschi	Coursel
Jim Beebe	Leg
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