

DSS/OFA/PUBLIC HEALTH/COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE MEETING
October 17, 2018

Public Health Director Penny Ingham

Penny reported that IT Director Adam Zehr will change and incorporate department computers to Microsoft Office 365 and encrypted emails into the County's system at a cost of \$5,831.46.

The Cancer Services Program ended 9/30/18. Close out reports are being completed. Oswego County Opportunities has contracted to provide those program services to the four-county area of Oswego, Jefferson, Lewis and St. Lawrence.

Penny informed that she has submitted her written intent to retire effective 2/1/2019, and offers to assist the administration with recruitment of her replacement.

Director of Community Services Patricia Fralick

Pat reported the contract with CCSI for completion of required State reporting will exceed budget appropriations by \$1,000, but would be covered by another line item appropriation.

Adam Zehr is assisting to set up an old cell phone and laptop to allow Pat to work remotely when not in the office. There must be assurance that all HIPAA compliance issues are adhered. Any related cost will be covered with budgetary appropriations.

Pat was appreciative that Ryan Piche had presented her budget and responded to Legislator's questions on her behalf at the 10/11/18 budget workshop, so that she could attend the Watertown public summit on the Governor's initiative to legalize recreational marijuana. Senator Griffo's representative Jim Durkish had also attended, as well as Lewis County residents who had testified.

Pat knowledgeably testified against the initiative, and was disappointed that no service providers were present to speak from their perspective.

People spoke of the advantages of medical marijuana, clearly misunderstanding what they were advocating for or against. Pat impressed the importance to educate the public on the differences of regulated marijuana.

A Colorado resident testified about the bad affects experienced since legalizing marijuana in that State, including increased law enforcement issues. It would be more advantageous to get out in front of the issues rather than dealing with the aftermath.

Pat said the 15% THC content in marijuana has increased to 99% concentration having unbelievable impacts. The Colorado legislation did not limit the THC concentration. The 99% concentration is equal to crack cocaine. There are no similarities to medical marijuana. The Governor's cited favorable study was based on 16% concentration. The plan has no boundaries to protect the community.

The NYSDOH issued a supporting report for regulated marijuana, but had been rushed by the Governor to issue their report within four months, that customarily would have taken a couple of years.

County Public Health Directors throughout the State collectively banded to oppose the initiative. Penny Ingham invoked they had “ripped the NYSDOH report to shreds”. The Directors had submitted a formal letter to State Offices to impress the widespread misunderstanding of what the law would mean. “Regulated Marijuana” would be regulated by the State, but communities would be required to use all resources to combat violators or respond to those needing treatment services. In conclusion, Penny stated that Colorado has experienced 150% increase in traffic violations and 85% increase in teen marijuana use.

Pat Fralick then thanked the Community Services Board and sub-committee members, who sometimes give up revenue to attend meetings or participate at events.

In consideration of Legislators’ quest for least cost services, Pat affirmed that appropriation requests are thoroughly reviewed before submission.

In response to Legislator Lehman, Pat would appreciate a formal action by the Board to oppose the Governor’s initiative to legalize recreational marijuana, while asking for more time to educate them prior to their action.

Penny Ingham stated that many medical providers are in favor of regulated marijuana, merely because the medical marijuana program is not working. The entire system needs to be fixed, she said, most importantly health insurance carriers must allow the products to be covered.

The meeting concluded at 10:20 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Terry Clark, Clerk of the Board