

Tompkins County Council of Governments
September 24, 2009
Scott Heyman Conference Room
3 p.m.

Approved 10-09

Members Present:

T/Caroline – D. Barber	V/Cayuga Heights – J Gilmore
T/Danby – R. Dietrich	V/Groton – E. Conger
T/Dryden – M. Sumner	V/Trumansburg – D. Nottke
T/Enfield – F. Podufalski	C/Ithaca – C. Peterson
T/Ithaca – H. Engman	Co./Tompkins – M. Robertson
T/Ulysses – E. Thomas	T/Newfield – R. Dolge

Municipalities Not in Attendance: T/Lansing, V/Freeville, V/Dryden, V/Lansing, T/Groton

Guests: P. Mackesey, County Legislature; J. Mareane, J. Kippola, M. Lynch, County Administration; S. Locey, SMSI Health Insurance Project; P. Dougherty, Town of Enfield; WHCU; C. Nelson, Emergency Preferred Procurement Consortium (Tompkins County); S. Beeners, Town of Danby; S. Whicher, EMC Subcommittee; L. Shurtleff, Director of Emergency Response; S. Connors, Tompkins County Health Department

Staff: M. Pottorff, Legislature Office

Call to Order

Mr. Barber, Chair, called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m.

Review of Agenda

It was agreed by consensus to add an appointment to the Water Resources Council to the agenda.

Review of Meeting Minutes: August 27, 2009

It was MOVED by Mr. Dolge (T/Newfield), seconded by Ms. Conger (V/Groton), and unanimously adopted by voice vote by members present, to approve the minutes of the August 27, 2009, meeting as amended. MINUTES APPROVED.

H1N1 Update – Tompkins County Health Department

Sigrd Connors, Director of Patient Services, spoke of the Health Department’s role in terms of communicable disease and H1N1. The Department is responsible for monitoring the level of disease or illness in the County. There are over 60 communicable diseases that they track with over 500 illnesses every year. The Department looks at case identification and contacting individuals if they need prophylactics or antibiotics. The Department also keeps in close contact with Cayuga Medical Center.

Ms. Connors said in the beginning there was a focus on case counts and the number of confirmed cases there were in Tompkins County. They are no longer testing for H1N1 because 90% of the influenza-type illness that is being seen by physicians is the H1N1 influenza-a. When most people get the illness they have symptoms of a fever over 100, sore throat, cough, feeling of achy-ness and are tired. Ms. Connors said the majority of people get well and recover without needing to go to a doctor; however, there are people with chronic illness who may need to contact their physician. Cornell recently had a large number of people with H1N1, however, those numbers are beginning to decline. She believes this is largely due to Cornell’s emphasis on education, prevention, and personal hygiene.

She spoke of the vaccine and said there are four manufacturers of which three are injectable and one is a nasal mist. The mist would only be used for people who are 2-49 years of age and for those who could have the live vaccine. In the beginning, the flow of the vaccine will be slow and Tompkins County will be receiving its first shipment of approximately 50 doses during the first week of October. The Department will be focusing on the five target groups the Centers for Disease Control Prevention has identified as being the most at risk. These categories were chosen based on who got ill, who has been hospitalized, and who has died: pregnant women, people who live with or care for children who are six months of age or younger, health care workers, and emergency services personnel (includes voluntary fire fighters who are expected to respond to a medical emergency), children ages 6 months to 24 years of age, and individuals 25 to 64 who have chronic diseases. New York State has issued a statement saying the focus for the next two months is to distribute as much of the vaccine as possible to the target groups. Once that is complete they will open it up to everyone else not included in those target groups.

Ms. Connors said when the Department is ready to start giving public clinics they will let everyone know. They are keeping the Department's website up-to-date as more information becomes available. She stressed the message the Health Department wants to communicate to employers is that everyone needs to have their COOP (Continuity of Operations Plan) and policies in place for dealing with absences. She directed people to the Centers for Disease Control website at www.flu.gov or <http://www.health.state.ny.us/>. Meetings have taken place with law enforcement, emergency medical service providers, and schools. She noted there are approximately 60,000 people in Tompkins County who are in the target groups. Although vaccinations are mandatory for health care workers, it is voluntary for everyone else. She stressed the importance of awareness and education, and providing employees with the tools they need such as disinfectant wipes and sanitizers.

Mr. Dolge asked if receiving the vaccine for the seasonal flu would make you more susceptible to getting the H1N1. Ms. Connors said it would not make someone more susceptible than anyone else.

Ms. Peterson said the City of Ithaca has a crisis action team that is working on a COOP; the team is analyzing the staff level need in every department and precautionary measures are being taken, such as having individual sanitizers on every desk. At the present time they are working through union issues with regard to sending people home and requiring people not to come to work.

Emergency Services Report

Mr. Dietrich spoke of the COOP (Continuity of Operations Plan) and said it has raised a number of issues in the Town of Danby. They have run into several brick walls, using the Fire Department and Highway Department as one example. These Departments used to be separate entities that had no interaction with the Town but due to different changes they are now confronted with being very involved with the Highway Department and shared-service agreements. He said in terms of emergency management there are not universal shared service agreements in the County and proposed the County become the lead agency and require all communities to have such agreements.

Mr. Dietrich said one reason there is a need to have shared service agreements is due to the way FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Agency) is now being configured. He said if there are shared service agreements, resources could be pooled to qualify for FEMA funding. Mr. Dietrich said there are real barriers in town governments functioning effectively in a dialogue with the highway and fire departments over what the procedures are to follow in emergency situations. He said the Town of Danby has tried to use the H1N1 scenario as a catalyst and as they have gone through the process a number of questions have arisen that he believes pertain to many municipalities.

Mr. Dietrich said the County was going to do a workshop with town officers in September and it was put off until the first of the year after elections. He believes it is extremely important that such a

workshop not be postponed and that each municipality start working on a COOP plan. He concluded his statement by saying he applauds the emergency service workers in the County. He believes there has been a fundamental shift in terms of what municipal governments are responsible for, particularly with regard to H1N1 when the system of communication has shifted from the Department of Emergency Response to the Public Health Department.

Mr. Dietrich said originally an emergency situation was given to the fire department as their responsibility; however, it is ultimately the mayor or supervisor who is responsible. He questioned what relationship supervisors or mayors have with the fire departments and is the fire department willing to go along with a plan. He said this is where he has found the biggest disconnect, particularly when there is a mandate that tells governments that they must assume certain roles. He said there are real problems when a municipality tries to have a dialogue with the highway department, fire department, and its town board. He said the H1N1 presents an opportunity for towns to work through some of these problems.

Cheryl Nelson offered the services of the Emergency Planning Committee and would like municipalities to let them know how they can help.

Mr. Shurtleff said some of the problems Mr. Dietrich spoke of are also being addressed at the County level. The County is developing a framework for a Continuity of Operations Plan. He emphasized that the starting point for any organization is to outline the very basics and determine very clearly what the lines of succession are. An organization should then identify the services that are provided on a day-to-day ongoing basis, and then determine and prioritize what services are essential. From that point, factor in what a 40 percent absenteeism rate would do to the organization.

Mr. Whicher, former County Administrator, said when this was looked at previously there were a couple of issues that arose. He said some staff are going to have conflicts because they may work for two different agencies. Second, there needs to be a plan in place of who will be brought in first and what the order of others being brought in would be. There should also be a clear list of responsibilities identified.

Dog Control

Mr. Barber reported all of the participants met with the SPCA and are working through an agreement and process and moving forward with ideas for the budgets. They are also discussing dog enumeration.

Natural Gas Update

Mr. Barber said the subcommittee will meet next on September 29th at 1 p.m. At that meeting a draft ordinance on road preservation will be presented and discussed in addition to discussing critical environmental areas. Ms. Robertson said a couple of meetings will be held with representatives of Governor Patterson's Office and someone in Senator Valeski's Office. She asked that members let her know if anyone is interested in attending. Mr. Dietrich said with regard to natural gas drilling the following areas should be looked at: noise, lights, culverts, stormwater regulations, water rights, and unique and natural areas.

Mr. Engman said the County Planning Department has offered to help municipalities identify those subject areas that are important in communities; however, to date no one has taken advantage of this offer.

Mr. Gilmore suggested that because the Village of Cayuga Heights has processed drill water for a number of months, someone from the Village should be involved with this effort.

Broadband

Mr. Barber said he has in contact with Chuck Bartosch and there is no new information to report.

Cell Tower Sub-Committee

Ms. Robertson said the subcommittee continues to meet. Dan Hoffman drafted an RFP for legal services for putting together some kind of coordinated group to manage cell tower planning issues. They are working on that and hope to bring it to an upcoming meeting. They are also following-up on an RFP for technical engineering services. She said it would be very helpful if there can be coordination and planning for where municipalities would like cell towers to go. Lee Shurtleff, Director of Emergency Response, is working on updating the spreadsheet that shows existing sites; that will also be included in an upcoming agenda packet.

Ms. Peterson said the subcommittee would like information as soon as possible as to which municipalities want to be involved.

Deer Management

Mr. Gilmore said the issue of deer management is an issue that must be more severe and concentrated in Cayuga Heights than in other areas in the County. He said the Village has resolved that there needs to be deer remediation and lowering of the population, which is estimated to be between 200-300 deer on 1.85 square miles of land. Mr. Gilmore said there are various reasons why this is a major issue in the Village, including car accidents, damage to landscaping, shrubbery, and plants, and an increased incidence of lyme disease. The Village has scheduled a public hearing prior to going through the SEQR process to give everyone a chance to speak out. The Village plans to spend \$804,000 (5% tax increase) on sterilization and shoot by gun or bow and arrow over a ten-year period to reduce the population. He said Cornell is very interested in creating a PhD position and funding it in the amount of \$50,000 annually for up to four years.

Ms. Robertson recalled previous discussions where it was agreed this is a big problem but one where the State had a role to play. Mr. Gilmore said the goal is to reduce the population by 140-200 and to sterilize approximately 40.

Ms. Sumner said this is a bigger issue in the County than anyone has made it out to be and the environmental damage being done by the deer overpopulation is enormous.

Mr. Gilmore said once the Village has a specific plan he will bring the information back to provide additional information and explore whether there are ways to collaborate with other municipalities. Mr. Gilmore noted the Southern Tier Food Bank has tremendous needs and are very interested in the possibility of processing fresh venison.

Statement of Appreciation to Police Agencies

On behalf of the Village of Cayuga Heights, Mr. Gilmore expressed appreciation to the State Police, the Sheriff's Office, and the Village Police Department for the way they worked together during the recent homicide. He said these officers acted in a manner that prevented additional injury or death.

SMSI Health Insurance Project

Mr. Locey reported the Health Insurance Consortium Board of Directors will hold its second meeting this evening. Agenda topics include: election of officers, review of budget, and discussion of a

timeline for approval of the budget and rates. At the present time there are 14 municipalities that have joined the Consortium, two that will not join and one municipality that will make a decision on Monday. Mr. Locey said any municipality not wishing to join at this time will have an opportunity to do so at a later time. At the meeting this evening the Board will begin to review Excellus Blue Cross/Blue Shield's contract for administrative services, prescription benefits administrator, and outreach to the unions. Mr. Locey said he has a meeting set up with Excellus to discuss staffing that will be needed from them in terms of outreach to employees and retirees. They will also begin a benefit plan review and will be discussing future agenda items.

Mr. Locey said they will no longer attend TCCOG monthly meetings but will provide this group with at least semi-annual updates in 2010 on how the Consortium is operating from both a logistic and financial perspective.

Dave Sanders will be contacting supervisors and mayors to schedule at least one informational meeting in each municipality for employees and retirees. The consortium will also have its own website.

Appointment to the Water Resources Council

It was MOVED by Mr. Barber, seconded by Mr. Podufalski, and unanimously adopted by voice vote by members present, to recommend the reappointment of Cindy Schulte to the Water Resources Council as the municipal government representative with a term expiring December 31, 2011.

Resolution

RESOLUTION NO. 005-09 - IN SUPPORT OF NEW YORK STATE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION (NYSDOT) REASONABLE ACCESS HIGHWAY REGULATION (AMENDMENT OF PART 80000 OF TITLE 17 OF THE CODES, RULES, AND REGULATIONS OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK)

MOVED by Mr. Dietrich, seconded by Ms. Robertson, and unanimously adopted by voice vote by members present.

WHEREAS, the Tompkins County Council of Governments recognizes the need of large transport trucks to supply our communities and farms, and

WHEREAS, increasing numbers of large transport trucks are using highways through our region not to deliver local goods within the region but as an alternative to Interstate highways, and

WHEREAS, the large number of non-local transport trucks is causing deterioration in the fabric and infrastructure of our communities by disturbing rural and urban residents alike with noisy engine brakes, damaging pavement and weakening bridges because of their weight, and threatening the safety of young and old pedestrians and bicyclists, and

WHEREAS, the economic impact of the continued presence on our highways night and day of sizeable numbers of through transport trucks will negatively affect the growing tourism industry that currently brings approximately \$160 million into Tompkins County, and

WHEREAS, the New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT) has promulgated regulations to provide relief for Tompkins County residents and make our roads safer by limiting truck traffic in Tompkins County on Routes 96, 89, and 79 to local deliveries, and

WHEREAS, through transport trucks will have to travel less than 25 miles out of their way to avoid traveling on Routes 96, 89, and 79 in Tompkins County, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, That the Tompkins County Council of Governments urges Governor Paterson and the New York State Department of Transportation to implement the proposed regulations (amending

TCCOG
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Part 8000 of Title 17 of the Codes, Rules, and Regulations of the State of New York) as quickly as possible.

SEQR ACTION: TYPE II-20

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Next Agenda

The following items were suggested for inclusion on the next agenda:

2010 Census
Cell Tower Update

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 4:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Michelle Pottorff, TC Legislature Office