

**HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES
SEPTEMBER 8, 2009 – 3:30 P.M.
SCOTT HEYMAN CONFERENCE ROOM**

Approved 10-13-09

Present: F. Proto, Chairman; M. Robertson; W. Burbank; G. Stevenson
Excused: T. Randall (arrived 3:47 p.m.)
Staff: P. Carey, D. Bodner, J. Lent, Department of Social Services; N. Zahler, Youth Services; L. Holmes, Office for the Aging; A. Cole, S. Connors, E. Cameron, Health Department; R. DeLuca, B. Doling, Mental Health; J. Mareane, P. Younger, K. Sutherland, County Administration; K. Schlather, N. Burston, B. Falcao Human Services Coalition; M. Lynch, Public Information Officer; K. Schlather, Cooperative Extension; K. Fuller, Deputy Clerk
Guests: Barry Stein, American Red Cross; Stacey Shackford, *The Ithaca Journal*

Call to Order

Chairman Proto called the meeting to order at 3:32 p.m.

Changes to the Agenda

There were no changes to the agenda.

Approval of the Minutes of August 11, 2009

It was MOVED by Ms. Robertson, seconded by Mr. Burbank, and unanimously adopted by voice vote by members present, to approve the minutes of August 11, 2009, as presented. MINUTES APPROVED.

Report from the Committee Chair

Mr. Proto spoke of a recent op ed article appearing in *The Ithaca Journal* that states New York State is encouraging Medicaid recipients to purchase their prescriptions from outside of the state. As a result of this, pharmacies are concerned that it would be detrimental and would cause a loss of employees within the state. He sent the article to Mr. DeLuca, Ms. Cole, Ms. Carey, and Ms. Holmes and asked them to react to the information and explain how it would apply to their clientele. Local pharmacies that may be affected are CVS, Rite Aid, and others.

Ms. Holmes is concerned how this might affect patient care. If Medicaid mail order is used for specialty drugs and local pharmacies for others her clients may become confused. In addition, she believes the quality of consumer care by one-on-one interaction is beneficial and may be lost if purchases are made out of State.

Ms. Carey shares Ms. Holmes concerns, particularly for the frail population. She has asked staff to contact the State Department of Health and Medicaid offices to determine how far this proposed initiative has progressed and what specialty drugs are being targeted. If talking of only the expensive drugs for a small portion of the population it may be easier for them to order out of state.

Mr. Proto asked that the Committee be provided with additional information as it is received.

Mr. Burbank believes Albany is attempting to do something good for the State and said residents have access to drugs at a lower price it would be better. He does not understand why steps should be taken to assist the large drug companies versus providing what the public needs.

Ms. Carey spoke of having bad experiences with mail order drugs and said there is a need to look out for the consumer needs in addition to the financial savings.

Mr. Proto reported the schedule for seasonal flu clinics has been distributed.

Report from the County Administrator

Mr. Mareane did not have a report.

Youth Services

Grant Updates

Ms. Zahler spoke of the grant submitted to the Appalachian Grant Commission for a multi-county regional effort to coordinate communities' responses to prescription drug use by teenagers. The \$20,000 grant was not funded; however, a five-year Federal SAMSA Drug Prevention Grant was approved. This is a grant the Department has previously been awarded and is due to end in September. The new grant is for \$125,000 per year for the next five years. It had been anticipated that the grant award would be made and it is included within the 2010 budget. The SAMSA grant will allow the department to work with schools countywide and will focus on the prescription drug use by teenagers in addition to alcohol and tobacco use.

Budget Transfer

The Committee received a copy of a budget transfer that placed funds for the previous five-year SAMSA grant in the proper budget lines to carry it forward.

Summer Youth Program Participation

Ms. Robertson inquired whether a report is available to indicate youth participation in summer employment programs. Ms. Zahler said 757 youth participated. She will provide the information for members. Ms. Robertson said it would be good to provide this information to the press. Mr. Proto would like to see the various municipalities listed for the summer program participants. Ms. Zahler noted the 757 includes municipal-aided participants that did not meet guidelines for the other programs.

Health Department

Ms. Cameron, Environmental Health Director, provided written information regarding the Open Burning and Air Pollution regulations for the County. The document cited the Tompkins County Sanitary Code definition for Open Burning, Air Pollution Restrictions, Enforcement, and the proposed New York State Department of Environmental Conservation Part 215 Regulations. Ms. Cameron noted her Division only responds to complaints related to the regulations during normal business hours. Often, individuals are unaware of the regulations and once educated on the law the issue is resolved. She noted that there are occasions when multiple complaints regarding open burning are more complex and may be the result of other issues between the residents. The Committee was informed enforcement is difficult, particularly of night burning

Other types of air pollution may cause a complaint (such as a campfire), or if it causes medical injury to an individual. This too is difficult to enforce since the problem must be witnessed firsthand and be able to verify it is causing problems.

The State Department of Environmental Conservation has proposed regulations that would be much stricter. It would ban outdoor burning in all locations and is similar to the County regulations but will also include agricultural burning as well. Although moving slowly, the State regulations are moving forward. Ms. Cameron said the County regulations would be reviewed subsequent to the State modifying their regulations. It was noted the Agriculture restrictions would allow for crop or brush burning but would restrict plastic.

In response to Mr. Burbank's question, it was noted there is not staffing to provide 24-hour on-call personnel for violations. It is necessary for staff to witness the violations in order to provide evidence at a

violation hearing. Ms. Cameron said when the State Regulations are passed it may be possible for a Conservation Officer to address after-hour situations. Mr. Proto noted the State Department of Environmental Conservation used to provide reimbursement; he asked if it could be possible due to this new State regulation. Ms. Cole said the County has paid the Department of Environmental Conservation in the past for some work. Mr. Proto then inquired whether the County would be responsible for enforcement of the new regulations. Ms. Cameron said the regulations do not address whether enforcement would be a County's responsibility. Mr. Proto has heard the State Department of Environmental Conservation is thinking of appointing two individuals to monitor gas drilling wells throughout the State; he is concerned that there is not enough staff or funding available at this time and the State is presently cutting staff in this and other departments.

Mr. Proto said the Farm Bureau had a presentation last year regarding the plastic used in farming. There is now a mobile shredder/compactor that has been obtained by the Farm Bureau to go from farm to farm to assist in proper disposal of farming plastics. Attempts are being made to have this program operate locally.

It was noted the department receives between 40 to 60 calls annually regarding open burning. Mr. Proto noted that in previous discussions regarding open burning it was stated that if a fire department was called out for this type of situation it may not be available in the event of a more serious situation such as a house fire.

In response to Ms. Robertson's question regarding use of an indoor fireplace or wood stoves, Ms. Cameron explained it could be a violation of the Sanitary Code if the emissions cause medical harm to individuals.

H1N1 (Swine Flu) Update

Ms. Connors provided information regarding the Health Departments role relating to H1N1. The Health Department covers the areas of surveillance, case identification, and contact investigation. Their staff is on call 24-7 and working with the hospital and laboratories to identify the disease and determine how to limit transmission in the community. The Health Department does this with forty communicable diseases and approximately 500 cases per year.

Ms. Connors said H1N1 is a worldwide pandemic and the Health Department does not have the ability to contain it. They are in close contact with the hospital, colleges, and local school nurses to obtain information on absenteeism rates and influenza-type illnesses.

With regard to H1N1, Ms. Connors said it is a virus discovered in late spring, with symptoms predominately being a fever of 100 degrees or more, sore throat, cough, body aches, fatigue, and in some instances nausea and diarrhea. In most situations it is a mild illness. The last Center for Disease Control report (August 29) indicated over 9,000 hospitalizations with a total of 593 deaths. It is anticipated with the opening of colleges that there will be an increase in cases locally. Cornell University sent a notice today that they have over 291 cases of influenza-like viruses illness. Testing for H1N1 is very expensive and is limited to those hospitalized.

Ms. Connors said it is hoped the vaccine will be received between mid-October and November. It is unknown how much would be provided and whether it will be one- or two-dose vaccines. The target groups for the vaccine are: pregnant women, people who live or care for children six months or younger, health care workers, emergency medical service personnel, and persons 6 months of age up to age 24, and those 25 – 64 who may be at higher risk due to underlying medical conditions such as asthma, diabetes, or an immuno compromised condition. If there is a shortage it would further be limited. The common-sense prevention measures are washing hands and not putting hands to your face. If an individual is ill they should stay home. Ms. Connors stated employers should develop a contingency of operations plan (COOP) for a potential shortage of employees due to the flu.

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Ms. Connors said it is hoped to obtain State funding for the extra staff necessary during the H1N1 vaccination period. The target populations are estimated to approximately be 60,000 individuals out of the 100,000 in our community. If vaccine is limited to the priority group, it would bring the number down to 20,000.

Ms. Connors provided seasonal flu clinic information to Committee members.

Mr. Burbank asked if the teacher population working with youth would be included in vaccinations. Ms. Cole said the vaccine would be available only to those working with daycare-age children. The ultimate goal is to do the entire population when vaccine is available.

Mr. Proto asked whether there is the possibility of those vaccinated being carriers? He noted there is a school break where students may travel to other areas and then return. Ms. Connors said the seasonal flu vaccine requires a two-week period before the full immunity occurs; she assumes it would be the same for the H1N1 vaccine. She noted the vaccine lasts for 9-12 months. Mr. Proto noted the necessity to have the second shot for the full benefit.

Mr. Burbank shared information on his experience obtaining the seasonal flu shot, including the material on potential risks of the vaccination. He asked if there are risks involved with the H1N1 vaccine. Ms. Connors replied she did not know at this time: however, she does not anticipate any problems with the vaccine.

Human Services Coalition

Chronic Disease Fact Sheet

Ms. Falcao provided written information on the Chronic Disease Self-Management Program. She said work is being undertaken due to the number of people in the County who have a chronic disease. In a nationwide survey of American workers, over 75 percent have a chronic disease with half of those having two or more. In Tompkins County it is estimated that there are 4,500 with diabetes, 18,000 to 19,000 with hypertension, and 6,000 with asthma. She noted that chronic diseases significantly contribute to higher health care costs. The United States Chamber of Commerce is quoted as saying: "The primary driver of soaring health care costs is the inadequate investment in prevention, health risk reduction, and disease management." Ms. Falcao stressed that when looking at Health Care Reform, how to manage chronic disease is clearly one aspect needing to be considered. She noted that whenever surveys are undertaken by the Health Planning Council, chronic disease is one of the primary responses.

Healthy Living

Ms. Falcao shared the most recent flyer relating to resources for those with asthma. In addition, she referred to the Health and Active workshops that would be held beginning in September. She said the workshops have a record of good outcomes and reduced health care costs. The Health Planning Council is partnering with Finger Lakes Independence Center for this program. She reviewed the contents of the program and noted the future goal is to have individuals trained to be able to continue providing the workshops.

Upcoming Presentation

Ms. Falcao reported Dr. James Fogel will be providing a presentation on September 14th on Dr. Hermann M. Biggs and his work heading up the National Influenza Commission during the 1918 flu pandemic.

Salary and Benefit Survey

Ms. Schlather provided the Committee with the confidential salary and benefit survey completed every two to three years for local home health care agencies. Ms. Robertson thanked Ms. Schlather for providing the information and noted several categories indicating the median salary decreased from 2006. Ms. Schlather explained the survey is not always completed by the same agencies and that may account for the differences. She said that are some categories that did not gain and in some instances lost the level of wages/benefits. The Committee was informed the salary rates are adjusted to provide comparable figures (example: adjust a 35-hour work week to a 40-hour work week).

Ms. Robertson noted there are some agencies that do not pay a living wage. She asked about the County policy regarding living wages and would like to review the County contractual policy to determine if action needs to be taken. Ms. Schlather said the majority of the agencies pay a living wage, however, some struggle to be able to do so. She also noted some agencies have not been able to provide a wage increase in the last five year period.

Mr. Proto said Ms. Chock had requested to have a copy of the original agency funding requests and the Human Service Coalition recommendations. Ms. Schlather said she would provide the information.

Ms. Robertson said sometimes the salary increase is not provided in order to maintain health care coverage. She noted the increase in this cost ran from 10 percent to 14 percent increases. Ms. Schlather said many agencies have attempted to find the lowest premium possible in order to maintain coverage. Mr. Proto noted the increases also relate to private businesses as well.

Department of Social Services

RESOLUTION NO. - BUDGET ADJUSTMENT - DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

Ms. Carey noted there is no local share involved with the HEAP program. The funds are for the “early mail out”. The Department contracts with Tompkins County Action to assist in processing applications.

It was MOVED by Mr. Stevenson, seconded by Mr. Proto, and unanimously adopted by voice vote, to approve the following budget adjustment. BUDGET ADJUSTMENT APPROVED.

Department of Social Services

<u>Revenue Acct</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Amount</u>	<u>Appropriation Account</u>	<u>Title(s)</u>
6010.44641	Federal HEAP	\$ 8,328	6010.51000538	Salary
6010.44641	Federal HEAP	\$ 2,998	9101.58800	Fringes
6010.44641	Federal HEAP	\$11,281	6010.54442	Professional Services
6010.44641	Federal HEAP	\$ 7,766	6010.54442	Professional Services

Explanation: In order to jump-start the disbursement of HEAP benefits, New York State is passing through Federal funds for one-hundred percent reimbursement of approved costs for early certification, eligibility determination, and entry of HEAP benefits into the State-mandated WMS computer system between September 1st and November 30th. The Department of Social Services will contract with the County Office for the Aging (\$11,281) and Tompkins Community Action (\$7,766) as well as hire a full-time Social Welfare Examiner for up to ninety days, to perform this mandated early and accelerated application processing of applications the State itself will mail out.

Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Re-Housing Grant

Ms. Carey spoke of the partnership between her department, Catholic Charities, Human Services Coalition, and Tompkins Community Action, in submitting a Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Re-Housing Program Grant from the State. These funds are from the Federal Housing and Urban Development Department as part of the stimulus package.

The County was informed they were awarded \$2.4 million for this grant. The Department of Social Services took the lead in order to provide the staff required for the administrative aspect of reporting. The partners will assist in the operation of the program, attempting to capture individuals before they become homeless. Seventy-five percent of the grant is for housing assistance to pay back rent, utilities, etc., that may be moving them into homelessness. If they are not able to stay at their present location the funds may be utilized to find other housing.

The program will run for twenty-two months with an anticipated start date of October 1st. There will be a meeting held next week to develop the work plan for the program. Ms. Carey said the program is not limited to clients of the Department of Social Services but anyone who is at 50 percent of the median income on the date of application. This will assist the new population coming to seek services due to the financial crises the nation is facing. Ms. Carey will be driving to Albany to sign the contracts prior to the October 1st date. The County will be signing as a subcontractor of the State for the grant. Ms. Bodner will be responsible for gathering the data associated with the program.

Ms. Bodner believes a large reason the County received the grant is due to the existing work done by Tompkins Community Action, Human Services Coalition, and Catholic Charities. The strengths of the community were used to coordinate how to effectively utilize the funds, which added strength to the application.

Ms. Dillon, Executive Director of Tompkins Community Action, is very excited about receiving the grant; it will provide the opportunity to assist people in need as well as an opportunity to re-think how the agencies look at housing.

Ms. Sanchirico, Executive Director of Catholic Charities, said this is a great collaboration that is a tribute to the County for their support to enable this work.

Ms. Carey said the other piece being worked on is the Continuum of Care portion that is done by the Human Services Coalition. Ms. Schlather said the group has been meeting and making plans in anticipation of the grant. Ms. Schlather said although funding had been dropped for the 2-1-1 information telephone service, funds were provided to continue it. This telephone line will be the gateway for the program.

Ms. Robertson spoke of having been at the Homeless and Housing Task Force meeting when this grant was discussed. She noted it is not going to be used for any new housing units. She asked how it would be used for long-term assistance.

Ms. Carey said agencies such as Red Cross have a great deal of experience how to put individuals into safe housing, particularly those that may be turned down by landlords. She believes the grant will help alleviate chronic housing programs. Mr. Ward, Red Cross Homeless Services Director, said he has worked for several months with Ms. Bodner with regard to re-housing and after care housing to help stabilize the clients. Mr. Proto suggested the group should provide the Landlord Association with a presentation of the program. Ms. Dillon said she believes they are already on the schedule.

Mr. Proto requested the group provide a copy of the quarterly report on the program.

Food Stamp and Temporary Assistance Caseloads

Ms. Lent reported there is an increased number of telephone calls to the department by individuals who are not in the system. The nature of the calls indicates they are coming from individuals who are gathering information on services that would be available to them when their present unemployment benefits run out. As part of the preparation for the potential increases, an emergency assessment center has been put in place in the

reception area of the Department of Social Services. At this time it appears one-time emergency assistance is fairly stable.

She then reported on the increase in food stamp assistance cases from 31 cases in May of 2007 to 45 cases in May of 2009, and up to 50 cases in June of 2009. She believes that part of the increase is due to media coverage as well as expanding eligibility requirements for those paying daycare. Ms. Carey noted that individuals eligible for Food Stamps are also eligible for HEAP; consequently, it is anticipated there would be an increase in that program as well. This may potentially increase the allocation provided for HEAP.

Ms. Lent spoke of the "My Benefits" program that is available online. Next week they will be able to receive training to enable online acceptance of applications from the public, which may increase applications and the "My Workspace" program allows employees to accept the application Ms. Carey anticipates more computer applications throughout the year. She said the State is presently working on a combined application for both HEAP and Food Stamps. Ms. Carey said it could be possible to have laptop computers for staff to use in the field.

Ms. Lent thanked Catholic Charities for their participation as a partner in the pilot program for online applications.

Mr. Burbank inquired whether the Department still goes through a verification process. Ms. Lent and Ms. Carey stated there is still a verification process at this time, however, the State Department of Taxation and Finance may assist in providing information that could provide direct certification. Mr. Burbank then asked whether there is a concern regarding having an adequate firewall for online applications.

Ms. Lent reported a kiosk has been set up in the lobby area of the Department to allow online applications for individuals without computers.

Introduction of Red Cross Executive Director

Barry Stein newly appointed Executive Director for the Red Cross, was introduced to the Committee. Mr. Stein is a Licensed Social Worker, holding Master Degrees in Social Work and Public Administration. He was previously was Executive Director of the Jewish Family Service in Rochester and collaborated extensively with the YMCA, Catholic Family Center, various home health care agencies, nursing homes, and local schools. He expressed appreciation to the County and the Department of Social Services for the homeless services efforts.

Mr. Stein reported in 2005 there were 14,500 nights of shelter in Tompkins County; and less than 8,000 in 2008. Over the past 14 years it is estimated that over 2,000 people went from seeking shelter to alternative housing. He said the numbers suggest how the Red Cross is behind the effort to re-emphasize the focus of Social Services going to homeless individuals for housing and rapid re-housing.

Office for the Aging

RESOLUTION NO. – ACCEPTANCE OF GRANT FROM NEW YORK STATE HOUSING TRUST FUND CORPORATION FOR THE RESTORE PROGRAM

It was MOVED by Mr. Stevenson, seconded by Ms. Robertson, to approve the following resolution and submit it to the full Legislature. Ms. Holmes said her Department has applied for the grant for the last four years; this is the third time receiving it. Five percent of the funds are allowed to offset administration cost in the program, which is to provide home repairs for seniors. There are restrictions for use of this grant.

A voice vote resulted as follows: Ayes – 4; Noes – 0; Excused – 1 (Legislator Randall). MOTION CARRIED.

WHEREAS, the Tompkins County Office for the Aging assists low-income seniors to make emergency health and safety-related repairs to their homes, and

WHEREAS, home repairs have been identified as a major need for low-income seniors, and

WHEREAS, the Tompkins County Office for the Aging has been awarded a grant from New York State Housing Trust Fund Corporation to fund the RESTORE program in the amount of \$75,000, and

WHEREAS, the Tompkins County Office for the Aging has expressed a willingness to administer the RESTORE program, and

WHEREAS, the duration of the grant will be from September 1, 2009, through September 30, 2010, and

WHEREAS, the grant will serve the home repair needs of an estimated thirty-five (35) households who are in emergency situations, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, on recommendation of the Health and Human Services Committee, That the County hereby accepts this grant of \$75,000,

RESOLVED, further, That the Finance Director is authorized to make the following adjustments to his books:

REVENUE	A6779.43803	State Revenue	\$75,000
APPROPRIATION	A6779.54400	Program Expense	\$75,000

SEQR ACTION: TYPE II-20

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RESOLUTION NO. – ACCEPTANCE OF LEGISLATIVE INITIATIVE GRANT FOR HOME REPAIRS FOR LOW-INCOME SENIORS

It was MOVED by Ms. Robertson, seconded by Mr. Stevenson, to approve the following resolution and submit it to the full Legislature. Ms. Holmes said getting restore funds provides leverage to receive other funding as well. In addition this grant does not have the restrictions of the previous grant, and allows repairs to a broader group.

A voice vote resulted as follows: Ayes – 4; Noes – 0; Excused – 1 (Legislator Randall). MOTION CARRIED.

WHEREAS, the Tompkins County Office for the Aging has been granted New York State member-item funding in the amount of \$10,000 from Assemblywoman Barbara Lifton’s office, and

WHEREAS, the funding will be expended from October 1, 2009, through September 30, 2010, and

WHEREAS, the grant will be used to fund home repairs for low-income seniors, and

WHEREAS, the grant will be used to fund repairs not covered under the RESTORE program or Weatherization Referral and Packaging Program, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, on recommendation of the Health and Human Services Committee, That the County hereby accepts this grant of \$10,000,

RESOLVED, further, That the Finance Director is authorized to make the following adjustments to his books:

REVENUE	A6796.43803	State Revenue	\$10,000
APPROPRIATION	A.6796.54400	Program Expense	\$10,000

SEQR ACTION: TYPE II-20

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Budget Transfers and Adjustments

The Committee received a Budget Transfer and a Budget Adjustment for information only.

Update on Lakeside Nursing and Rehabilitation Center

Ms. Holmes said Lakeside's renovation plans were passed unanimously by the Town Planning and Zoning Boards.

Discussion of Special Meeting

Mr. Proto spoke of the possibility of holding a special meeting to review budget items for the Departments reporting to the Committee. He said it could be beneficial to address additional questions the Committee may have following the budget presentations to the full Legislature. [A tentative date of September 23rd was set; however, following budget presentations members of the Committee felt they had received adequate information and the meeting was not held.]

Budget Discussions

Youth Services

Ms. Zahler provided information regarding her proposed budget, noting she had three over-target requests: 1) \$19,168 to restore services to high-need rural youth [not recommended by the County Administrator]; 2) permission to use rollover saved from the administrative budget [recommended by the County Administrator]; and 3) restoration of 6.25 % target funding for the Recreation Partnership [recommended by the County Administrator]; the 2.5 percent requested increase was not approved. The target budget was reduced \$45,473, as was funding for the Municipal Jobs Program, which last year provided 318 youth positions throughout the County. At this time it is not known what the true impact of the program elimination is until municipalities provide input. Some may determine the program is valuable enough to continue it; others may not be able to without the matching funds. She noted there are no income guidelines attached to the program and it provides assistance to individuals who may not be eligible for other programs.

Mr. Proto asked if the municipalities would be able to provide input prior to the proposed September 23rd meeting. Ms. Zahler said she would like Karen Coleman who has worked closely with the program, to provide a clear explanation of the program.

Department of Social Services

Ms. Carey did not have a report at this time.

Mental Health

Mr. DeLuca said he appreciates the placement of the Child Psychiatrist position within his target budget, noting previously it had been a multi-year request. His Department absorbed \$244,000 in cuts without an over-target request to cover the fringe expenses.

The Committee was informed of the lack of funding for the Emergency Outreach Worker position. This position is a critical portion a mobile team dispatched in the event of critical mental health patient situations (such as the event causing Officer Padula's death). Although the State Office of Mental Health Services is discussing a possible reorganization that would require mental health clinics to have an Emergency Outreach Worker on 24-hour call, it is not certain if the reorganization would occur.

Mr. Stevenson was excused at this time.

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Mr. Proto suggested Mr. DeLuca speak of the critical items within his budget at the Expanded Budget Meeting, noting further questions may be asked by other Legislators at that time.

Adjournment

On motion the meeting adjourned at 5:38 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Karen Fuller, Deputy Clerk