SARATOGA SPRINGS CITY COUNCIL MEETING

February 2, 2021

MEETING HELD VIA ZOOM

PRESENT:

Meg Kelly, Mayor
Lisa Shields, Deputy Mayor
John P. Franck, Commissioner
Michele Madigan, Commissioner
Anthony Scirocco, Commissioner
Robin Dalton, Commissioner
Matthew Veitch, Supervisor
Tara Gaston, Supervisor
MAYOR KELLY: Thank you. Good evening. Welcome to city council meeting Tuesday, February 2nd. It is 7 p.m. We have no public hearings tonight.

Roll call, please?

Secretary to City Council:

Commissioner Franck?

COMMISSIONER FRANCK: Present.

Secretary to City Council:

Commissioner Madigan?

COMMISSIONER MADIGAN: Present.

Secretary to City Council:

Commissioner Scirocco?

COMMISSIONER SCIROCCO: Here.

Secretary to City Council:

Commissioner Dalton?

COMMISSIONER DALTON: Present.

Secretary to City Council: Mayor Kelly?

MAYOR KELLY: Here.

Secretary to City Council:

Supervisor Veitch? He's here. I see him.

And Supervisor --

SUPERVISOR VEITCH: Here.
Secretary to City Council: --

Gaston?

SUPERVISOR GASTON: Here.

MAYOR KELLY: Thank you. Please rise for the Pledge of Allegiance.

I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America and to the republic for which it stands, one nation, under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

Thank you. Next on the agenda is the public comment period. I would ask you to keep your comments brief, up to two minutes. There will be a bell to signify the end of your time. Public comment period will begin -- will continue for fifteen minutes. Please be respectful to the speakers and address the council as a whole.

As a reminder, public comment is not a dialogue or a discussion with the council. However, at the end of the public comment period, any council member may respond to any comment. Anyone who wishes to address the council upon any
issue may now raise their hand on the
bottom of their Zoom screen, and we will
call you in.

DEPUTY MAYOR SHIELDS: Mayor, go
ahead. And you see Claudia (ph.)?

MAYOR KELLY: Yeah. Claudia. Let's
see. Am I unmuting them? Yeah, I have
to unmute them, hold on.

MS. KRAMER: Thank you.

MAYOR KELLY: Okay. You're on --

MS. KRAMER: Thank you.

MAYOR KELLY: -- Claudia. Thank
you.

MS. KRAMER: Thank you, Mayor. I
was trying to raise my electronic hand,
but I figured my regular hand will work,
too. Thanks for recognizing me and for
this opportunity to make comments
tonight.

As you know, I'm representing
residents who live on the east side and
who are opposed to the fire EMS facility
being located on the horse track grounds.
This is something that came up last year
right at the beginning of the pandemic,
and we asked you to table your
consideration of the agreement, the lease
agreement, but that went forward. And
now tonight, you have the accepting a bid
for additional design engineering
services is my understanding.

And we are asking you to again, once
again, to hold off on going forward with
that. We still have many concerns about
the siting of this particular facility.
There has been no city-wide study to
evaluate the best location for this
facility and how it would be able to
respond to people all over the city in
the best, most efficient way. There has
been no environmental impact statement to
study the environmental and historic
impacts of a facility like this on the
racetrack grounds, and we are asking for
that to be conducted before you go
forward with this kind of proposal.

And, you know, to be frank, it -- it
does seem very concerning that you're
going forward with a five- to six-
million-dollar project when everyone
knows this city's budget revenue went
down last year by over -- I believe over
six million dollars. And people were
laid off, and we had to delay other
projects and other funding. So it just
seems like there's a lot up in the air,
and the litigation is still pending. Ad
so we are asking you to not make a
decision to go forward with that
particular bid award tonight.

Thank you for your consideration.

MAYOR KELLY: Thank you.

DEPUTY MAYOR SHIELDS: Holly (ph.)?

MAYOR KELLY: Yeah. Holly.

DEPUTY MAYOR SHIELDS: Yeah.

MAYOR KELLY: Yeah.

DEPUTY MAYOR SHIELDS: Go ahead.

Yeah.

MS. HAMMETT: Hi.

MAYOR KELLY: Hi.

MS. HAMMETT: Good evening. I just
need to -- I got to read my statement.

I'm here tonight to ask the city
council to publicly support the Police
Reform Task Force. We're fortunate to
have a representative and conscientious
task force exploring and addressing the
complex and controversial issues related
to policing. Wanting and needing public
input, the task force released a survey
last week. I ask all of you to complete
the survey yourselves and encourage your
constituents to do the same.

Given this council will be voting on
task force recommendations by April
4th -- April 1st, I implore all of you to
take an active interest now in the issues
being addressed and not wait until the
recommendations are before you. You and
your deputies could be attending these
meetings to listen and learn. Your lack
of visible interest gives the impression
this task force and its mission are not
important.

As our elected city leaders, I ask
you to lead. Acknowledge that racism and
distrust of law enforcement is epidemic
in our country. Help city employees and
residents understand that Saratoga
Springs is not and cannot be immune from
racism and systemic problems in its police department because we are a city and a state and a country founded on the premise of white supremacy, and it is in our blood. That does not make those of us who are white bad. None of us were the founders of this country or enslaved anyone.

However, as Isabel Wilkerson explains, when we buy or inherit a house with bad plumbing and structural problems, those problems are not our fault as we did not create them, but they are our responsibility. To not fix the problems is negligent. To cover them up and sell the house is immoral. She also points out that when one is diagnosed with a serious illness that is hereditary, one should not feel ashamed and hide the diagnosis. One should research to understand the illness and best treatment options and how to prevent this condition from being passed down to the next generation.

Please do your research. Listen to
learn --, and learn from those who have
already done research. Listen to those
who have lived experience and support
police reform efforts to make everyone
feel safer.

Thank you.

MAYOR KELLY: Thank you.

MS. HAMMETT: Is that the time bell
or --

MAYOR KELLY: That is the time bell.

MS. HAMMETT: -- is that an alarm?

Oh.

MAYOR KELLY: That's the time bell.

Thank you.

Lisa, anybody else?

DEPUTY MAYOR SHIELDS: Yes. Darlene
(ph.).

MAYOR KELLY: Darlene, you're on --

DARLENE: Hi.

MAYOR KELLY: -- yeah.

DARLENE: Yes. Hi.

MAYOR KELLY: Do you have video,
Darlene? Or no?

DARLENE: Yeah. Hi. Sorry about
that.
MAYOR KELLY: That's okay.

DARLENE: I wanted to speak up. I am a resident of the City of Saratoga Springs, and I've been trying to discuss with the city for a long time that we have a water problem. It's not only a Public Works, but it's a Public Safety problem, too. And last time the council said that they drank the water, but I have done specific tests, and I found that we do have chloroform -- coliform bacteria within the water system. And the bacteria is within where I live with the housing authority, and it's -- it's not within the rest of the city, which I hope not. But I still want something done, and our code enforcement officers have a responsibility, and the council has a responsibility of making sure that we have safe, drinkable water.

And I am going to end it at that. And I am also going to do second tests, and I'm going to put that on video for you all.

MAYOR KELLY: Thank you.
DEPUTY MAYOR SHIELDS: Thank you.

MAYOR KELLY: Anyone else? Please raise your hand if you want to speak.

DEPUTY MAYOR SHIELDS: I don't see anyone else, Mayor.

COMMISSIONER DALTON: Perhaps your response is -- and to --

MAYOR KELLY: I do, too, Commissioner. I do, too. Just hold on one minute.

I see this 518. Who's 690 number? Do they want to speak?

DEPUTY MAYOR SHIELDS: They're muted. I'm not sure. I don't --

MAYOR KELLY: Okay. Then --

DEPUTY MAYOR SHIELDS: -- think so. Okay.

MAYOR KELLY: Then I will turn it over to the council for comments.

Commissioner Dalton, if you want to go, go ahead.

COMMISSIONER DALTON: Yeah. I just had two comments, actually. One was to Ms. Kramer (ph.). I take exception to her saying she represents residents of
the Saratoga Springs east side neighborhood. I am one of those residents, and she does not represent me. So I wish she would be more specific in terms of the group that she's speaking of.

Secondly to Ms. Hammett (ph.) and her talk discussing about our participation in this task force. I have watched every single meeting. I can't always watch them live, but that does not mean that I haven't taken an interest or haven't been viewing them. But in many cases, involvement or interference from the city council goes contrary to what the Executive Order 203 states. And so I would not take -- however, she sees our lack of participation as a negative thing because that's just not how this process was meant to happen.

MAYOR KELLY: Thank you, Commissioner.

Anybody else?

COMMISSIONER MADIGAN: Yeah, I've got it --
COMMISSIONER SCIROCCO: Yeah --

COMMISSIONER MADIGAN: Go ahead, Commissioner.

COMMISSIONER SCIROCCO: Okay. I just want to say that I think the water in the city is safe. I don't find any issues with the water in the city.

And I think -- Darlene, I think you're on Jefferson Street, so I'm going to send somebody over there to check it out to make sure that there are no issues over there. And if there are issues over there, well, we'll just take appropriate action. So rest assured that I don't think we want to have any issues with any residents in the city again. I think the water's safe, so I don't have a problem with that.

MAYOR KELLY: Thank you, Commissioner.

COMMISSIONER MADIGAN: I have two responses. The first is about the fire EMS because there seems to be some confusion about the city's financial
situation. First of all, we did not have any layoffs in the city. We did have a furlough program last summer, but we have not had any layouts. Our bonding capacity remains very healthy, and this is what this project would be. A five-to six-million-dollar project would be issued in debt, and right now interest rates are extremely low, and that's why we continued to move this project forward. It's our cash flow and our general operating funds that are suffering quite a bit as a result of COVID-19. And those are real concerns that I have, and I address this with the council and the public regularly.

But at this point in time, I think one of the best things we can do for our economy is invest in projects, infrastructure projects, construction projects. So I just wanted to clear up the issue with the city's finances. It really is our basic day-to-day operating budget that has some stress, a lot of stress on it as a result of COVID, but
our bonding capacity still remains healthy. And the city has taken it upon themselves to refinance debt since I've been here several times, which has saved us an additional five million dollars in future bonding capacity.

My second comment is about the task force. I am very interested in what's going on, and I, like Commissioner Dalton, do watch the meetings and agree with her that sometimes it's not always appropriate to have council members show up, certainly in front of the planning board or the zoning board and perhaps with this task force.

However, I have reached out to both co-chairs, and I've yet to receive a response from them, asking them if they would like to meet with me one-on-one. Now, every now and then I do miss an email, so I don't want to say they have not reached out to me. But I have not really heard back from them with my offer to meet with them and discuss sort of my knowledge in terms of being with the city
for the last ten years and what I might
be able to offer to the task force.

I do watch the meetings, and I've
also made myself available to both of my
appointees. And while I have -- it's
been a little while since I've talked to
them, I have made it clear that I'm
available to them when they need me. And
I do expect that I'll be meeting with
them to get a more firm update going
forward.

Thank you.

MAYOR KELLY: Thank you,
Commissioner.

And I would also like --

Commissioner Franck, I'm sorry. Do
you have anything to add? Okay.

COMMISSIONER FRANCK: No.

MAYOR KELLY: So I would just like
to add something on the task force also,
that the idea of this task force, it was
created by the council as an independent
group to work on this topic without the
influence of the council. That's what it
was for. So we can add to it, but we
want to see what they come up with. And
they hand it over to us, and then we can
look at it.

But so I do take offense to
leadership in that conversation because
we have the council that leads, and we
are leading really well. And we are not
interfering with the task force. If we
were on the task force or sitting there
every day, we'd be getting beat up, too.
So we're staying away, and that's what we
need to do. We could watch it online.
We don't have to go to every meeting, and
we don't have to see it. We could see it
after.

So I just think that it's not a fair
statement to say that we're not involved
and we don't care. That is not the case
of this council, and it would take -- I
personally take offense to that.

So that's all I have. Thank you.

MS. HAMMETT: I -- I didn't say you
didn't care, or you weren't paying
attention. I was saying how it appears
publicly --
MAYOR KELLY: You said lead, lead, lead. This isn't a dialogue. Thank you. Okay. Anybody else? Okay. Then at this time, I'm going to ask Commissioner Dalton. She has an item that she wants to move up to the top of the agenda. And you want to add an item.

COMMISSIONER DALTON: Yes, I did. I wanted to make a motion to add an announcement at this time.

MAYOR KELLY: Yeah. Can you --

COMMISSIONER DALTON: So --

MAYOR KELLY: -- tell me what the announcement is?

COMMISSIONER DALTON: Yes. The announcement is about Black History Month.

MAYOR KELLY: Okay. And that's a motion?

COMMISSIONER DALTON: Yes.

MAYOR KELLY: And is there a second?

COMMISSIONER MADIGAN: Second.

MAYOR KELLY: Any discussion? All those in favor say aye.
IN UNISON: Aye.

MAYOR KELLY: Any opposed?

The matter passes. Go ahead, Commissioner.

COMMISSIONER DALTON: Thank you very much, Mayor, and thank you for moving this up. I know my agenda is dead last, so sometimes we lose some visibility by the end of the meeting.

But I just wanted to announce that as of yesterday we have started Black History Month, and I think that's something that the city needs to celebrate and be involved in. And to that end, the community outreach committee that I know has presented to this council and has been active in the community has been working on a number of special events to help celebrate Black History Month. And I wanted to encourage the city council to each consider appointing someone to this community outreach committee to be involved in events celebrating Black History Month. I know one of the panels that we're
working on, but I think it's very
impactful for everyone in Saratoga. And
I'm hoping something that a lot of people
watch and listen to is what it's like to
be black in Saratoga and have a panel of
people speaking to that as one element of
how we're celebrating Black History
Month, which goes from February 1st
through March 1st of this year.

So I just wanted to make that
announcement and hope that you will all
consider appointing someone to this
committee, which as I said before our
mission is to address race and bias in
Saratoga Springs through culture,
awareness, and education. And so we are
looking forward to Black History Month
and working on lots of different events
to appeal to all of Saratoga Springs.

So that concludes my announcement,
unless anyone has anything else to say.

COMMISSIONER MADIGAN: I do. I'm
assuming you're going to -- I think this
is great, and thank you for doing that
and moving it up to the beginning of the
agenda so people have an idea of what
we're doing. So thank you for taking the
lead on this.

I'm assuming you're going to want an
appointee fairly quickly since we're into
the month?

COMMISSIONER DALTON: Yes.

COMMISSIONER MADIGAN: So I'll try
to get somebody to you like within the
next twenty-four to forty-eight hours.

COMMISSIONER DALTON: Thank you.

I'll follow up with an email with all of
you, if that would be helpful.

COMMISSIONER MADIGAN: Okay.

COMMISSIONER DALTON: Yeah.

COMMISSIONER MADIGAN: Okay.

COMMISSIONER DALTON: I appreciate
that.

COMMISSIONER MADIGAN: And thank
you. Thank you.

MAYOR KELLY: Great. Anything else,
Commissioner?

COMMISSIONER DALTON: That's it.

MAYOR KELLY: Okay. Thank you.

On to the consent agenda. Are there
any changes or additions or edits to the consent agenda? I move that the city council approve the consent agenda as included with this agenda, this is a motion. Is there a second?

COMMISSIONER DALTON: Second.
COMMISSIONER MADIGAN: Second.

MAYOR KELLY: Any discussion?

All those in favor say aye.

IN UNISON: Aye.

MAYOR KELLY: Any opposed?

The matter passes.

On to the Mayor's department. My first item is discussion and vote, accept the Saratoga Springs Recreation Center donation from Mayor Scott Johnson. Former Mayor Scott Johnson and Julie Johnson would like to donate fitness equipment to the Recreation Department. The total value is estimate to be $6,700. Scott and Julie are donating a Universal weigh station, a TRUE Fitness treadmill, and a P/Core rower.

With the assistance of the Department of Public Works, the
Recreation Department will pick up the
new equipment and install in the
recreation center for public use. For
the information for the public will be
available after the Recreation Department
establishes protocol for the new
equipment.

I move that the city council accept
the donation for the Saratoga Springs
Recreation Center from Mayor Scott
Johnson. This is a motion. Is there a
second?

COMMISSIONER FRANCK: Second.
COMMISSIONER MADIGAN: Second.
MAYOR KELLY: Any discussion?
COMMISSIONER DALTON: Thank you,
Former --
COMMISSIONER MADIGAN: Yeah.
COMMISSIONER DALTON: -- Mayor Scott
Johnson.
COMMISSIONER MADIGAN: Thank you.
MAYOR KELLY: All those in favor say
aye.
IN UNISON: Aye.
MAYOR KELLY: Any opposed?
The matter passes.

Second item is an announcement.

Mayor's Department food drive and benefit to Franklin Community Center and Mother Susan Anderson Women and Children's Emergency Shelter. The Mayor's office will host a drive through food drive at Vanderbilt Avenue Recreation Center on February 11th through the 13th. The food drive will benefit the Franklin Recreation Center and Mother Susan Anderson Shelter. Those who wish to contribute items to the food drive may arrive at the rec center at 15 Vanderbilt Avenue during one of the following drop-off times: 2 to 6 p.m. Thursday, February 11th; 2 to 6 Friday, February 12th; 9 to 12 Saturday, February 13th. COVID protocols will be in place. Please wear a mask. Details including requested donation items are on our city website.

Third item is discussion and vote authorization for the Community Development Planner to execute HUD-mandated environmental reviews as a
certifying officer. For the past three years as a city development community planner, Lindsey Connors (ph.) has successfully completed dozens of environmental reviews for city CDBG funded project as required by federal regulations. Given the recent retirement of her immediate supervisor, we are requesting that the council authorize Ms. Connors to act as a certifying officers for these environmental reviews.

I move that the city council authorize the City Community Development Planner to execute the HUD-mandated environmental reviews as certifying officer. This is a motion. Is there a second?

COMMISSIONER FRANCK: Second.

COMMISSIONER MADIGAN: Second.

MAYOR KELLY: Any discussion?

All those in favor say aye.

IN UNISON: Aye.

MAYOR KELLY: Any opposed?

The matter passes.

My fourth item is discussion and
vote, approval for Mayor to sign Saratoga County Office for the Aging Transportation Agreement 2021. This item and the following item are annual agreements with the County's Office of the Aging for Transportation and Nutrition Programs for seniors in Saratoga Springs.

I move that the city council approve the mayor to sign Saratoga County Office for the Aging Transportation Agreement 2021. This is a motion. Is there a second?

COMMISSIONER FRANCK: Second.
COMMISSIONER MADIGAN: Second.

MAYOR KELLY: Any discussion?

All those in favor say aye.

IN UNISON: Aye.

MAYOR KELLY: Any opposed?

The matter passes.

The next item is discussion and vote, approval for the mayor to sign Saratoga County Office for the Aging Nutrition Agreement 2021. I move that the city council approve the mayor to
sign the Saratoga County Office for the Aging Nutrition Agreement 2021. This is a motion. Is there a second?

COMMISSIONER MADIGAN: Second.

MAYOR KELLY: Any discussion?

All those in favor say aye.

IN UNISON: Aye.

MAYOR KELLY: Any opposed?

The matter passes. That concludes my agenda. I'm going to switch it over to Accounts.

Commissioner Franck?

COMMISSIONER FRANCK: Thank you, Mayor. The first item is award of bid for to bond counsel to Walsh & Walsh upon the recommendation of the Finance Department. I move to award the bid for bond counsel to Walsh & Walsh, as included with this agenda, and that's a motion.

MAYOR KELLY: Is there a second?

COMMISSIONER DALTON: Second.

COMMISSIONER MADIGAN: Second.

MAYOR KELLY: Any discussion?

All those in favor say aye.
IN UNISON: Aye.

MAYOR KELLY: Any opposed?

The matter passes.

COMMISSIONER FRANCK: Thank you, Mayor. The second is award of bid fiscal advisory services to Fiscal Advisors & Marketing. Upon the recommendation of the Finance Department, I move to award the bid for fiscal advisory services to Fiscal Advisors & Marketing, as included with this agenda. And that's a motion.

MAYOR KELLY: Is there a second?

COMMISSIONER MADIGAN: Second.

MAYOR KELLY: Any discussion?

COMMISSIONER DALTON: Can I just ask what that is? I'm just not sure what it is.

COMMISSIONER MADIGAN: So Fiscal Advisors & Marketing is -- they've served the city for a few years. They work with Walsh & Walsh. We primarily use them for services when it comes to bonding. And yeah, they give us advice on finances. They're like the big one --

COMMISSIONER DALTON:
COMMISSIONER MADIGAN: -- pretty much in the whole state. So yeah.

COMMISSIONER DALTON: Cool.

COMMISSIONER MADIGAN: They provide us spot-on guidance.

COMMISSIONER DALTON: Awesome.

COMMISSIONER MADIGAN: So --

MAYOR KELLY: All those in favor --

COMMISSIONER MADIGAN: That's the best I can say.

MAYOR KELLY: -- say aye. Oops, I'm sorry.

COMMISSIONER MADIGAN: What?

MAYOR KELLY: All those in favor say aye.

IN UNISON: Aye.

MAYOR KELLY: Any opposed?

The matter passes.

COMMISSIONER FRANCK: Thank you, Mayor. The third and last item for this evening on my agenda is award of bid for resilient wedge gate valve to Blair Supply Corp. Upon the recommendation of the Department of Public Works. I move
to award the bid for resilient wedge gate valve to Blair Supply Corp. in an amount not to exceed $43,730. And that's a motion.

MAYOR KELLY: Is there a second?
COMMISSIONER SCIROCCO: Second.
MAYOR KELLY: Any discussion?
All those in favor say aye.
IN UNISON: Aye.
MAYOR KELLY: Any opposed?
The matter passes.
COMMISSIONER FRANCK: Thank you, Mayor. That concludes my agenda.
MAYOR KELLY: Thank you, Commissioner.
On to Finance, Commissioner Madigan.
COMMISSIONER MADIGAN: Thank you, Mayor. My first announcement and I'm wearing red to kick this off is the American Heart Association Go Red for Women National Wear Red Day which is on February 5th, 2021. The American Heart Association is holding its annual Go Red for Women campaign to help raise awareness of heart disease in particular
among women. Heart disease is often
generally associated with men, but
cardiovascular disease is the number one
killer of women.

So National Wear Red Day aims to
raise funds for research and to this
misunderstood disease with women. A key
fundraiser of the movement this year is
Friday, February 5th, when they are
asking everyone to wear red. So I'm
going to encourage everyone to
participate. We'll see what we can do
about getting those hearts. If you make
a small donation to the American Heart
Association, you usually get one of those
heart pins.

I also forwarded on an email to the
Department of Public Works about lighting
up our buildings starting Thursday or
Friday all red. We've done that in the
past. It's been a little busy. I lost
track of that, but I did forward that to
the commissioner and the deputy and the
business manager. The American Heart
Association has asked if we will
participate again this year, and what we usually do is put some red candles in the windows to show our support for the American Heart Association.

My second --

COMMISSIONER SCIROCCO: We're on it --

COMMISSIONER MADIGAN: Yes? I'm sorry.

COMMISSIONER SCIROCCO: We're on it, Commissioner.

COMMISSIONER MADIGAN: Oh, thank you very much because I know I sent the email a little bit late.

Item number two is an announcement, city hall department addresses and suite numbers. We're going to have a new city mail receptacle that we will be using beginning March 1st that will now include department suite numbers. Departments, please use these numbers for all mail going forward, and people who want to send mail to the city should use these suite numbers. All of these numbers will be posted on the city website. If anyone
has any questions, please contact Rachel Patrina (ph.) in communications at extension 2576 at city hall.

Item number three is an update on city finances. As I stated at the first meeting of 2021, this will be a recurring topic at most 2021 city council meetings. It's a critical message that I think needs to be heard. The most recent development is that New York State Office of the State Comptroller has informed us that they will be onsite for a 2021 budget audit regarding the impact of COVID-19 on city finances. We are well-prepared for this audit. It is important that the council makes careful, disciplined budget decisions on essential services, departmental plans and priorities and expenditures that these might require, and is aware of the amounts of actual cash on hand at all times as we go forward.

We have borrowed 11.3 million and sufficiently burdened future administrations. Discipline now is going
to help us as we go into 2022. The New York State Governor's executive budget has removed an additional 1.5 million dollars in revenue from our current operating budget, based on what we budgeted for 2021. If this is sustained by the New York State legislature, the city will have to adjust to a substantial revision in revenue available to support current operating expenses through 2021.

We have responded with letters to the Governor from the Finance Department and the Mayor's Department and each of our state representatives making a strong case for reinstatement of VLT Aid. And I have submitted my testimony to testify on February 11th in front of the joint legislature to also make the case to reinstate the VLT Aid and also one-hundred percent of our AIM aid that we receive from New York State.

We can't borrow our way out of this. We have done a lot of borrowing, but I think we've done a sufficient amount of borrowing. Working on a 1.9 trillion
dollar release package that does include aid for state and local governments.
Without relief, the city remains poised to experience a substantial dip in cash flow come June of 2021, which will result in insufficient funds to meet payroll and other expenditures. So let's hope things go well with the 1.9 trillion dollar aid, and feel free to reach out to me anytime if you have any comments or questions.

So when I'm talking about this, because I noticed the confusion we had at the beginning of the meeting, this is really about cash flow and general operating expenses. This is not about our debt, our debt servicing, or financing other infrastructure, water, sewer, building-type projects. That's a whole other way of looking at some of our -- it's a whole other budget that gets managed in a whole other way. Happy to explain that to any member of the public who wants more information about that, or any member of the council who would like more information about that.
Any comments?

MAYOR KELLY: Commissioner, just if you could touch on VLT. Maybe you did send a letter, right? And I sent the letter --

COMMISSIONER MADIGAN: I did touch on VLT.

MAYOR KELLY: Okay.

COMMISSIONER MADIGAN: I did say that I sent a letter --

MAYOR KELLY: Okay.

COMMISSIONER MADIGAN: -- and that you sent a letter. I don't know if you missed that.

MAYOR KELLY: I did. Sorry.

COMMISSIONER MADIGAN: And that we were both -- that we both sent letters, and then I had already registered to testify between the joint legislature. And anyone who would like --

MAYOR KELLY: Okay.

COMMISSIONER MADIGAN: -- to join me, the mayor, Commissioner Dalton, I can make sure that you have the links, and you're prepared to send in some testimony.
for that. So --

MAYOR KELLY: So I did request a
letter to come from the council, too. So
I want to --

COMMISSIONER MADIGAN: Okay.

MAYOR KELLY: -- get that done. So
I have our consultant working on that --

COMMISSIONER MADIGAN: Okay.

MAYOR KELLY: -- and we can get that
done, too. And then I definitely will
sign up to testify, and --

COMMISSIONER MADIGAN: Okay.

MAYOR KELLY: -- just we'll talk
about that. Thank you.

COMMISSIONER MADIGAN: Yeah. I
mean, I think the more letters and the
more joint letters and individual letters
that we send --

MAYOR KELLY: Yeah.

COMMISSIONER MADIGAN: -- the
better. We really do need that funding.
We are --

MAYOR KELLY: Yeah.

COMMISSIONER MADIGAN: -- dependent
on it.
One positive is I did listen to a podcast. I believe it was Senator Adubato who is very much in support of reinstating this aid and understands that communities rely on it. Communities such as ourselves, we're used to having it, rely on it for our public safety and to help maintain property taxes.

MAYOR KELLY: Um-hum.

COMMISSIONER MADIGAN: So I thought --

MAYOR KELLY: Thank you, Commissioner.

COMMISSIONER MADIGAN: -- that was a positive.

Okay. Any other comments about what's coming up? All right.

Item number four is a discussion and vote, the 2021 tax resolution. Each year we are required to vote on the tax resolution that confirms county and city tax rates, tax levy totals as well as the special assessment district information. 2021 tax bills have been generated, processed, and went out in the mail
today, and our tax payers should be receiving them some time during the week this week.

I move that the city council approve the 2021 tax resolution as included with the agenda. This is a motion.

MAYOR KELLY: Is there a second?

COMMISSIONER DALTON: Second.

MAYOR KELLY: Any discussion?

All those in favor say aye.

IN UNISON: Aye.

MAYOR KELLY: Any opposed?

The matter passes.

COMMISSIONER MADIGAN: Thank you.

Item number five, discussion and vote, authorization for the mayor to sign an agreement with Walsh & Walsh, LLP for bond counsel services. Walsh & Walsh is a local law firm that has served the city for several years. They are very familiar with our form our government, the city's economy, as well as its needs. They've been readily available for on-the-spot guidance, as well as council presentations. Their fees are
competitive and reasonable. This is the best choice for the city. This is a three-year contract for $16,000 a year, $48,000 for three years. It was approved by the city attorney, Purchasing, Finance, Risk and Safety.

I move that the city council authorize the mayor to sign an agreement with Walsh & Walsh, LLP for bond counsel services as include with the agenda, this is a motion.

MAYOR KELLY: Is there a second?

COMMISSIONER FRANCK: Second.

MAYOR KELLY: Any discussion?

All those in favor say aye.

IN UNISON: Aye.

MAYOR KELLY: Any opposed?

The matter passes.

COMMISSIONER MADIGAN: Discussion and vote, authorization for the mayor to sign an agreement with the Fiscal Advisors & Marketing, Inc. for fiscal advisory services. Fiscal Advisors & Marketing also has a local law office.

They have also served the city for
several years and work well with Walsh & Walsh. They, too, are very familiar with our form of government, the city's economy, as well as its needs. They've been readily available for on-the-spot guidance, as well as council presentations. Their fees are competitive and reasonable. Again, this is the best choice for the city.

This is a three-year contract, based on the proposal included with the contract approximately 30,000 per year. It was approved by the city attorney, Purchasing, Finance, and Risk and Safety.

I move that the city council authorize the mayor to sign agreements with Fiscal Advisors & Marking, Inc. for fiscal advisory services as included with the agenda, this is a motion.

MAYOR KELLY: Is there a second?

COMMISSIONER DALTON: Second.

MAYOR KELLY: Any discussion?

All those in favor say aye.

IN UNISON: Aye.

MAYOR KELLY: Any opposed?
The matter passes.

COMMISSIONER MADIGAN: Thank you.

Item number seven is a discussion and vote, authorization for the mayor to sign an agreement with CivicPlus for website and design maintenance. CivicPlus designed, implemented, and it has serviced the city website for several years. This is a complicated, multiyear plan, design, and conversion which improved the city web immensely over the last version when I first started with the city. It would cost the city hundreds of thousands of dollars and several more years to engage in a new endeavor. It would require countless IT hours that the city is not in a position to give up.

At this time, we are looking for an additional year of maintenance and service. If we engage these services now, we are eligible for a cut rate at a significant discount that allows us to use credits accumulated over the duration of our contract. This is a one-year
contract based on the proposal included
with the contract, approximately $8,150
per year. It's approved by the city
attorney, Purchasing, Finance, and Risk
and Safety.

I move that the city council
authorize the mayor to sign an agreement
with CivicPlus for website design and
maintenance as included with the agenda,
this is a motion.

MAYOR KELLY: Is there a second?
COMMISSIONER FRANCK: Second.
MAYOR KELLY: Any discussion?
COMMISSIONER DALTON: So one quick
question. I thought that I had heard
that CivicPlus, because we've used them
for so long, we were eligible for some
kind of a free upgrade in terms of
(indiscernible) --
COMMISSIONER MADIGAN: We --
COMMISSIONER DALTON: And so I don't
know if whether or not we could explore
it. Obviously, free is free, and free
upgrades are great. So that's --
COMMISSIONER MADIGAN: We are
elible for that --

COMMISSIONER DALTON: Sure.

COMMISSIONER MADIGAN: -- and we

have been trying to work on that project.

And that project is also a pretty big

project, but --

COMMISSIONER DALTON: Sure.

COMMISSIONER MADIGAN: -- the deputy

commissioner of finance, Deidre Ladd, has

been following up on that. And I'll ask

her to provide the council or yourself,

Commissioner Dalton, with a little bit of

an update on where we're headed and sort

of a time frame for that. It's another

reason to stay with them. So we can make

some changes to the way we navigate,

colors, and photos, and it might be -- it

just needs a little -- it does need some

attention. You know? It does, but --

COMMISSIONER DALTON: I know how

(indiscernible) y'all are, so --

COMMISSIONER MADIGAN: Yeah.

COMMISSIONER DALTON: -- I

appreciate that Deidre has taken that on.

Thank you.
COMMISSIONER MADIGAN: Yeah. Thank you very much.

MAYOR KELLY: All those in favor say aye.

IN UNISON: Aye.

MAYOR KELLY: Any opposed?

The matter passes.

COMMISSIONER MADIGAN: Thank you.

Item number nine is budget transfers to contingency, lines 1 through 2, transfer funds from contingency to the Accounts Department to cover eScriber contract costs in the amount of $2,364.17 for services prescribed by the state under COVID-19 requisites for verbatim transcripts of each city council meeting. There are in addition to -- I don't know what that says -- to 7,000 -- I don't know what that says. These are in addition to some other funds contributed by Risk and Safety from its programming budget.

Thank you to Risk and Safety.

The contingency budget appropriation currently has a balance of $250,000.
Following approval of this transfer, there will be $244,635.83 available. The city will not need to appropriate -- okay. Great.

I move that the city council approve the budget transfers contingency as included with the agenda, this is a motion.

MAYOR KELLY: Is there a second?
COMMISSIONER FRANCK: Second.
MAYOR KELLY: Any discussion?
All those in favor say aye.
IN UNISON: Aye.
MAYOR KELLY: Any opposed?
The matter passes.
Commissioner, you missed number eight, payroll.

COMMISSIONER MADIGAN: Oh, payroll transfers. Thank you very much.
MAYOR KELLY: Um-hum.
COMMISSIONER MADIGAN: So back to number eight, discussion and vote, budget transfers payroll, budget transfer lines 1 through 5. Move funds from the Camp Saradac director to clinics and summer
recreation programs in the amount of $88,082.60. This is part of the reorganization of the department for 2021 budget neutral operations.

I move that the city council approve the budget transfers payroll as included with the agenda, this is a motion.

MAYOR KELLY: Is there a second?

COMMISSIONER DALTON: Second.

MAYOR KELLY: Any discussion?

All those in favor say aye.

IN UNISON: Aye.

MAYOR KELLY: Any opposed?

The matter passes.

COMMISSIONER MADIGAN: Thank you.

I'll jump to my item number ten now. So this is to set a public hearing, Local Law Number 1 of 2021, a local law to defer scheduled payments of taxes during the COVID-19 emergency. The governor has signed a bill authorizing property tax deferments and installment payments while the COVID-19 state of emergency is in effect. The law permits municipalities to adopt a local law to defer payments of
property taxes and other levies for a period not to exceed 120 days past the original payment due date, or to permit as many installment payments as necessary to be determined by the local legislative body for a period not to exceed 120 days past the original payment due date during the state of emergency.

The city already permits four installment payments per year, which is a longer period of time than the bill allows. So its focus will most likely or will be on allowing our taxpayers additional time to make their property tax payments, the 120-day deferral. The legal department will craft the local law best suited for the city. It will be presented at the 2/16/21 city council meeting in time for the 2021 tax payment due dates, which are on or about March 1st through June -- and then June 1st, September 1st, and December 1st.

A public hearing is required for a local law, and I think we only need five minutes for that.
Secretary to City Council: Excuse me. 6:55 on the 16th.

COMMISSIONER MADIGAN: Thank you very much. And that will complete my agenda.

COMMISSIONER MADIGAN: Thank you. Thank you, Commissioner.

On to Public Works, Commissioner Scirocco.

COMMISSIONER SCIROCCO: Thank you, Mayor. The first item on my agenda is discussion and vote. This is authorization for the mayor to sign a contract with Blair Supply Corporation for resilient wedge gate valves. The purchase of two 24 resilient wedge gate valves with accessories is needed in order to replace aging, gear-operated valves in the city's water distribution system. One of the existing valves is known to be inoperable, while the other valve is highly suspect given the age, approximately eighty-seven years old, of the gear mechanisms and internal components.
When installed, the new valves will provide critical control of flow to the large diameter water main located along North Broadway. This is part of a broader program to replace other large gear-operated valves in the distribution system that have reached their life expectation as far as functionality and reliability.

Therefore, I move for the mayor to sign a contract with Blair Supply Corporation for resilient wedge gate valves in the amount not to exceed unit bid price per proposal. And I put that in the form of a motion.

MAYOR KELLY: Is there a second.

COMMISSIONER FRANCK: Second.

COMMISSIONER MADIGAN: Second.

MAYOR KELLY: Any discussion?

All those in favor say aye.

IN UNISON: Aye.

MAYOR KELLY: Any opposed?

The matter passes.

COMMISSIONER SCIROCCO: Second item on my agenda is discussion and vote.
This is authorization for the mayor to
sign Tree City USA application. This is
an annual renewal application for the
City of Saratoga's Tree City USA
recognition.

City of Saratoga Springs has been
nationally recognized as a Tree City USA
community by the Arbor Day Foundation to
honor its commitment to community
forestry since 2016. The renewal
application must be submitted annually to
ensure that the community is following
the four standards to become a Tree City
USA community. First, having a tree
department, also a tree ordinance,
spending at least two dollars per capita
on the urban forestry, and finally an
Arbor Day observation and proclamation.
The city has met all of these
requirements.

Therefore, I move for the mayor to
sign the Tree City USA application. And
I put that in the form of a motion.

MAYOR KELLY: Is there a second?

COMMISSIONER MADIGAN: Second.
MAYOR KELLY: Any discussion?
All those in favor say aye.
IN UNISON: Aye.
MAYOR KELLY: Any opposed?
The matter passes.
COMMISSIONER SCIROCCO: Third item on my agenda is discussion and vote.
This is authorization for the mayor to sign a Tree City USA Growth Award application. The Tree City USA Growth Award is presented by the Arbor Day Foundation to participating Tree City USA communities that demonstrate a high level of tree care and community engagement.
The following are just two examples of how the Department of Public Works, along with the city arborist, have significantly improved our community forestry. DPW has established a partnership with BOCES in which a student intern from their forestry program can assist the city's Urban Forestry Division through tree planting and aftercare. Also a special program was initiated by the city arborist in conjunction with the
city engineer to obtain permission to
extract a row of evergreen hedges from a
development site and transplant them in a
city park.

Therefore, I move for the mayor to
sign a Tree City USA Growth Award
application, and I put that in the form
of a motion.

MAYOR KELLY: Is there a second?
COMMISSIONER MADIGAN: Second.
MAYOR KELLY: Any discussion?
All those in favor say aye.
IN UNISON: Aye.
MAYOR KELLY: Any opposed?
The matter passes.
COMMISSIONER SCIROCCO: And Mayor,
I'd like to add an item to my agenda.
This is an announcement for VLT aid.
MAYOR KELLY: Yeah. Yeah. Is that
a motion?
COMMISSIONER SCIROCCO: Yes.
MAYOR KELLY: Is there a second?
COMMISSIONER DALTON: Second.
MAYOR KELLY: Any discussion?
All those in favor say aye.
IN UNISON: Aye.

MAYOR KELLY: Any opposed?

The matter passes.

Go ahead, sir.

COMMISSIONER SCIROCCO: Thank you, Mayor.

And again, this is an announcement, VLT aid. As the city council is aware, Governor Cuomo's executive budget for the State's fiscal year 2022 eliminates VLT aid to all municipalities except for Yonkers. City residents will recall that Governor Cuomo proposed the elimination of VLT aid last year as well.

Eliminating VLT aid in good economic times is a concern. But now with the impacts of the pandemic on state and local government budgets, we need to be more vigilant in fighting for our fair share of state aid. Our residents know what a challenge this budget year was for all of us, and elimination of VLT aid only make the situation worse.

The council received correspondence from our state legislative delegation,
sent to the governor and legislative minority leaders, advocating for restoration of VLT aid. I believe we need to loudly join their call with a follow-up letter. I also believe we need to bring together our colleagues at the County Board of Supervisors and form a coalition with other municipalities that receive VLT aid. Our message will be louder together. I am willing to work with anyone on the council on this and will be putting together backup documentation to justify our claim to VLT aid.

Prior to VLT aid becoming Section 54-L of the state finance law as it was passed in 2007 state budget as Chapter 57 of the laws of 2007, there were bills introduced in the state legislature to authorize VLT aid to municipalities. Some of the justifications were related to providing the necessary services but also to minimize property tax increases. Saratoga Springs and Saratoga County have done both over the years while hosting a
successful VLT facility that has
benefited the state education system.
These are not just arbitrary host
benefits. VLT aid is a partnership
between the state and local government to
host facilities that generate enormous
revenue primarily for state education.

This is an important issue for our
tax payers, and we need to focus our
efforts, work with other elected
officials, and advocate to ensure we get
our fair share for hosting a world-class
VLT facility.

And that concludes my agenda.

MAYOR KELLY: Thank you,
Commissioner.

COMMISSIONER MADIGAN: Well, I
just -- I have a comment. I mean, we've
been on this, and we welcome you to
testify. I'll send you the website link.
Send in the testimony that you've just
read to the council here tonight and to
the public, but we have definitely been
on top of this. The mayor, myself, and
Commissioner Dalton and I went down last
year, and we got the aid fully restored, and then it was cut by twenty percent as a result of COVID. And we've been doing the work this year, too. I've already got my letters out. The mayor's got a letter out and has asked a consultant to work on a joint letter. But individual letters are helpful, and making sure you sign up to testify on local government day will be also very useful.

COMMISSIONER SCIROCCO: Again, I don't have a problem going down and testifying. But I guess what I -- I guess what I'm trying to say --

COMMISSIONER MADIGAN: Well, you would be able to do it virtually.

COMMISSIONER SCIROCCO: But I guess what --

COMMISSIONER MADIGAN: Yeah.

COMMISSIONER SCIROCCO: -- I'm trying to say is there's strength in numbers, and I think it's important that we need to get together with other municipalities that have lost VLT aid because I'm sure they're hurting just as
bad. And I think if we work with them
along with our own county and maybe some
of the other municipalities, I think
again it just makes more sense. The more
people you've got behind you, I think the
more people listen to your message. So
that's all I'm saying.

MAYOR KELLY: Yeah, I think we all
agree with that, and I appreciate the
words. And I think that including the
county is a great idea.

So yes. Tara, if you want to say
something, you can.

SUPERVISOR GASTON: Thank you. I
don't want to --

MAYOR KELLY: That's okay.

SUPERVISOR GASTON: -- interject.

The county is working on a letter. It's
going to be a little bit broader than VLT
because there are some other items in the
budget that also impact the county and
not the city specific. But we are also
absolutely advocating for this as well
and are happy to sign on --

MAYOR KELLY: So --
SUPERVISOR GASTON: -- and work together as best we can.

MAYOR KELLY: So could you and maybe Supervisor Veitch do your own letter for VLT for us?

SUPERVISOR GASTON: Absolutely.

MAYOR KELLY: Okay. So that would be terrific. That's what we're trying to do to get -- we'll send it as a council. You'll send it as the supervisors. And then we're going to be trying to hit them from all angles. That's all we're saying. So I appreciate that. Thank you.

SUPERVISOR VEITCH: Yeah. We also have a racing and gaming committee meeting on Thursday, and I believe this is going to be taken up at that meeting, so --

MAYOR KELLY: Great.

SUPERVISOR VEITCH: -- we'll keep you posted. But signing on a letter, not a problem. Happy to do it.

MAYOR KELLY: Okay. Okay.

SUPERVISOR VEITCH: And we should be
doing it.

MAYOR KELLY: Great. So I could send you a copy of the letter that I sent out, and then you could draft your own from that if you want.

SUPERVISOR VEITCH: Great. Thank you.

MAYOR KELLY: I could do that. But thank you, Tara. And thank you, Matt. And thank you, Commissioner Scirocco.

COMMISSIONER SCIROCCO: Okay.

MAYOR KELLY: Anything else?

COMMISSIONER SCIROCCO: That's it.

MAYOR KELLY: Okay. Thank you. Let's move on to Public Safety, Commissioner Dalton.

COMMISSIONER DALTON: Thank you, Mayor. The first item on my agenda is a COVID-19 update. I have been swamped over the last few days with other issues pertaining to public safety, and I like to hear the most up to the minute update. So I've asked Supervisor Gaston to take the full COVID-19 update for tonight, and
she will do that when she gets to her agenda.

So the second item on my agenda is to set a public hearing to amend Chapter 58 of the City Code entitled alarm systems. Over the years, we have removed the mention of fee amounts in public safety codes. This amendment to take up any mention of fee amounts in Chapter 58 and instead allows these to be established by the council from time to time by resolutions of the city council.

I'd like to set a public hearing for the next city council meeting to discuss this and set these (indiscernible) fees.

Secretary to City Council: We can do it at the same time at 6:55.

COMMISSIONER DALTON: Perfect.

Thank you very much.

The third item on my agenda is discussion and vote, authorization for the mayor to sign an agreement with Hixny, which is Healthcare Information Exchange of New York. And this is pretty exciting. This agreement allows us,
specifically EMTs and paramedics and fire
department, to access patient records
with the patient's permission should an
emergency arise. Meaning, if you have a
pre-existing medical condition and we
were to respond to a 911 call or an
emergency call to your home and you were
not in a state of consciousness to be
able to articulate what your previous
health issues might be, this would allow
us to know in advance and respond more
appropriately. It would also be able
to -- it would also allow for us to
analyze medical trends in our community,
allowing providers the opportunity to be
better educated and trained on specific
issues that face Saratoga Springs.

So this is at no cost to us, and I
think it's a really exciting program for
us to be able to sign on to. And so I'd
like to make a motion to authorize the
mayor to sign the agreement with Hixny.
This is a motion.

MAYOR KELLY: Is there a second?

COMMISSIONER FRANCK: Second.
MAYOR KELLY: Any discussion?
All those in favor say aye.
IN UNISON: Aye.

MAYOR KELLY: Any opposed?
The matter passes.

COMMISSIONER DALTON: Thank you.

The fourth item on my agenda is a discussion and vote, authorization for the mayor to sign a contract with CHA Consulting for architectural design services. This is for the schematic design of the third fire station plus EMS station.

I make a motion to authorize the mayor to sign the contract with CHA Consulting for architectural design services. This is a motion.

MAYOR KELLY: Is there a second?

COMMISSIONER FRANCK: Second.

MAYOR KELLY: Any discussion?
All those in favor say aye.

IN UNISON: Aye.

MAYOR KELLY: Any opposed?
The matter passes.

COMMISSIONER DALTON: Thank you.
The fifth item on my agenda is discussion and vote, authorization for the mayor to sign a contract with CHA Consulting for civil engineering design services. This is for the civil engineering design for the third EMS station.

I make a motion to authorize the mayor to sign the contract with CHA Consulting for civil engineer design services. This is a motion.

MAYOR KELLY: Is there a second?
COMMISSIONER FRANCK: Second.
COMMISSIONER MADIGAN: Second.
MAYOR KELLY: Any discussion?
All those in favor say aye.
IN UNISON: Aye.
MAYOR KELLY: Any opposed?
The matter passes.
COMMISSIONER DALTON: Thank you.

The sixth item on my agenda is a discussion and vote, authorization for the mayor to sign a contract with Hueber Breuer Construction Company for consultant support services. This is for consultation services to help guide us
through the schematic and civil
engineering designs for the third
station. Hueber Breuer has been
instrumental in getting us to where we
are, and I look forward to working with
them in the future.

I make a motion to authorize the
mayor to sign a contract with Hueber
Breuer for consultant support services.
This is a motion.

MAYOR KELLY: Is there a second?

COMMISSIONER SCIROCCO: Second.

COMMISSIONER MADIGAN: Second.

MAYOR KELLY: Any discussion?

COMMISSIONER MADIGAN: I just want
to say I think that they have been
excellent. Like, we did some good due
diligence to select them and couldn't be
more pleased.

COMMISSIONER DALTON: They are
operating in a way that really minimizes
any financial risk and capital outlay on
our end and are helping us put together
schematics so that we can apply for state
aid and grants when they come up --
COMMISSIONER MADIGAN: Yeah, I know.

COMMISSIONER DALTON: -- and are just helping us get the most responsible financial steps forward and continuing this project without putting the city in any kind of, like, financially liable situation. So I don't think they could have done a better job. And I'm really anxious --

COMMISSIONER MADIGAN: Yeah.

COMMISSIONER DALTON: -- to have them back on board.

Have we voted? I don't --

COMMISSIONER MADIGAN: Good.

COMMISSIONER DALTON: I don't think so.

MAYOR KELLY: Yeah. All those in favor say aye.

IN UNISON: Aye.

MAYOR KELLY: Any opposed?

The matter passes.

COMMISSIONER DALTON: Thank you very much to the council for all of those.

The seventh item on my agenda and announcement about retirements, we have
four retirements. I'm going to do two
now, and two at the next city council
meeting if that is all right with you
all.

The first retirement is the
retirement of Lt. Mark Bellantoni from
the Saratoga Springs Fire Department.
And I'm just going to read this quick
memo from Chief Dolan.

Effective January 29th, 2021, Lt.
Mark Bellantoni is retiring from SSFD.
Mark began his career at the department
on December 18th, 2010. He had
experience as a firefighter and paramedic
prior to Saratoga Springs and was
assigned to group 2 where he honed his
skills. He took his craft seriously and
passed on his knowledge to everyone who
was willing to listen. Firefighter
Bellantoni was exceptional when it came
to public education. He was always
willing to teach kids the importance of
fire safety, and it was evident early on
in his career that he was an incredibly
strong community force.
On January 5th, 2019, Mark was promoted to lieutenant. As a new lieutenant, he was assigned to fire at Fire Prevention Bureau where he would perform fire inspection and provide education to the public. Lt. Bellantoni's ability to speak with the public allowed him to excel in this role. Lt. Bellantoni's retirement comes sooner than expected as a result of an injury sustained while in the performance of duty. The Saratoga Springs Fire Department would like to wish Lt. Mark Bellantoni a happy and healthy retirement. His work ethic and attitude will not soon be forgotten.

Sorry. I get a touch emotional. It's hard seeing anyone retire from this department. They're just such a loss.

Anyhow, we wish Lt. Bellantoni the absolute best in his retirement, and I thank him for his years of service in the fire department.

Secondly, I'd like to announce the retirement of a longtime employee in our
traffic department, Tom Armstrong (ph.).

He served our city for over thirty-nine
years in our traffic maintenance
department as the traffic control
maintainer. Tom's family has a history
of long, dedicated service to the city.

His father worked for the Department of
Public Safety for forty years, and his
mother worked for the city court for
forty-two years.

Tom was one of those employees who
quietly worked behind the scenes, but his
hard work contributed to making the city
street network safer and better managed.

In the 1980s until 1989, Tom was working
with one part-time employee to maintain
the entirety of city traffic signs and
pavement markings. For nearly four
decades, Tom was also responsible for
setting up and removing all of the
special traffic control needs for the
annual thoroughbred horse racing season.

Tom worked closely with the police
department to provide all of the traffic
controls -- all of the traffic control
needs for all of the special events which required special street closings. Tom assisted in many other areas of the department's mission, such as traffic signal installation and maintenance and assisted with the construction of the current Public Safety garage.

I want to thank Tom for his many years of dedicated service to our city and wish him the very best with all his future endeavors. I often think that the people that work in our traffic department get overlooked for their contributions to the city. And so I just want to especially thank Tom for his incredible service in our department and for all he's done for the City of Saratoga Springs and wish him well in his retirement.

MAYOR KELLY: Thank you, Commissioner Dalton. I wish them both well.

Mark and Tom, enjoy retirement. I'm jealous. So --

COMMISSIONER DALTON: Thank you for
MAYOR KELLY: Yeah. Okay. Anything else, Commissioner?

COMMISSIONER DALTON: That's it.

Thank you very much.

MAYOR KELLY: Okay. Thank you.

On to supervisors. Supervisor Veitch?

SUPERVISOR VEITCH: Thank you, Mayor. First on my agenda and the only thing on my agenda is just a quick review of the buildings and grounds committee at the county. We had a meeting yesterday at the county, and we're going to have another meeting next Monday at the county as well.

So first is just a report that we are planning on renewing our lease with the Gateway House of Peace in Milton. They provide end of life services for folks who need a quiet, peaceful place. And we rent a house from them for a nominal fee for that purpose, and it's a five-year lease and with a five-year renewal. It's actually replacing the
current lease that we have with them, which was five years with a five-year renewal as well. So we're glad to have them as our tenant, and we appreciate all the great work that they do. So hopefully, we will pass that at our next board meeting.

And actually it's just a quick report that we did just send out some bids for our building at Woodlawn Avenue for an online auctioneer to sell the building, and our bids were returned. We are reviewing those bids, and we're hoping to be able to hire somebody by our next board meeting in a couple of weeks. That is the reason for our special board meeting -- our special buildings and grounds meeting on Monday to propose our auctioneer.

The other things that we talked about at our first meeting for this year really is reviewing our onsite signage at the county. The committee is looking at changing our lighting to LED lighting around the county, looking at solar both
onsite and at the county farm, and lots
of other things on the agenda for 2020
(sic) for buildings and grounds, so it
should be a busy year for us.

But I just wanted to do a quick
report, and that's it for my agenda.

Thank you.

MAYOR KELLY: Thank you, Supervisor.

SUPERVISOR GASTON: Thank you. The
first item on my agenda is a COVID-19
update. Our dashboard is up. We are
going to be replacing it with a new, more
compact version soon that's going to
provide all of the same information. But
for right now it shows that our seven-day
rolling positivity rate for the county is
at 4.1 percent, which is incredible.
We've, I think, forty percent dropped now
in the past week and a half, two weeks,
which goes to show that once we get over
that holiday hump as people are engaging
in the appropriate behaviors, masking,
distancing, staying home when they're
ill, we're really making a difference.
And that's fantastic, and I appreciate all the people who are working to make that happen.

Unfortunately, we are now at 121 deaths of Saratoga County residents as a result of COVID-19-related illness. I don't have information on all of them yet. A number of them are coming from facilities that are first reported to the state, and then it comes down to the county. So we don't have all of that information, although the latest one was an individual from the town of Providence.

We're also at fifty-eight hospitalizations with COVID-related illness, which if everyone remembers about a week ago we were about twice that. So slowly but surely, we're getting there. Our vaccination rate in the county, we're at 22,000 county residents that have received at least one vaccine and five and a half thousand that have completed the series. These are county residents who have been vaccinated
not necessarily by Saratoga County public health services. As we've said a number of times our vaccines from the State are extremely limited. So this does count individuals who reside in the county but who travel to other locations within the state, including the state-run facilities to get vaccinated. However, we're getting pretty far along there, and that's good. We're hoping to keep it up and get more vaccines from the county.

I do want to make it clear. I continue to get a lot of questions about the city center. The county's agreement with the city center is for the purpose of holding it so that we can use it when sufficient vaccines have been obtained. At this time, we do not have a date when it will be activated for use as a mass vaccination center. However, we are exploring all options, including partnering with the State of New York to use it as a facility, which would both increase the number of vaccines in our community but also expand the
eligibility. That's very important to our public health personnel. We obviously want to make sure that those who are at highest risk are vaccinated as soon as possible.

To that end, we did hold -- we did get an allocation of 400 vaccines very unexpectedly. We were informed of this last Sunday, and they all went to a population age sixty-five and older, although I would say the vast majority were seventy-five and older. Those individuals were pulled from special needs registries and lists across the county, and we enlisted the assistance of supervisors in the city. We enlisted the assistance of the police department and fire department to provide the names of individuals, in addition to the county list, of who would be -- who would have the most barriers to accessing the vaccine.

Given this was a one-time allocation, that's why the decision was made to first aim towards those who would
have the most barriers to accessing the
vaccine on their own. That was completed
on Saturday. Approximately 200 seniors
were vaccinated at Public Health Services
in (indiscernible) and approximately 200
received vaccines in their home because
they were indicated as home-bound and
unable to leave their home. And so EMS,
our own public safety personnel,
supported that as well as EMS across the
county.

There were a couple of news articles
on it, and it was actually the first
unplanned, quick-developed, mass
vaccination in homes in the state. There
was a similar delivery in Albany County,
but that was actually planned over a
significant period of time. This is the
first one as a result of an unexpected
allotment, and I think our public health
staff and EMS across the county performed
admirably, and I appreciate them getting
that out.

There were a lot of tears and a lot
of happy faces on Saturday. And it is my
sincere hope that New York State sees what we've been able to do and expands our availability because that's the work that public health is really good at, and that's what they were doing, and they want to keep doing that.

So today the governor did make some additional announcements regarding vaccines, expanding eligibility to include restaurant workers and taxi drivers. Unfortunately, this was another announcement that was made prior to the distribution of written guidance. At this time, Public Health does not have any guidance indicating whether we or another facility is to be vaccinating this population, in addition to what qualifies under these particular populations.

In general, essential workers have had to prove their employment, sometimes by a pay stub. Obviously with hospitality, restaurant workers and taxi drivers, whether that include Uber or Lyft drivers or other groups, is unclear
at this time. Because of the memorandum of understanding we had to sign with New York State to get any vaccines, we do require that written guidance before we can expand our own availability. So the commissioner has already reached out to the Department of Health and requested clarification on that in writing so that we know who we are allowed to vaccinate. His goal is to vaccinate whoever we're allowed to. So, we want to make sure that we have that as quickly as possible.

The last real announcement with regards to vaccination and COVID is I've also received a number of questions about a clinic held at Prestwood Chase. At this time, Saratoga County Public Health Services has not engaged in any clinics onsite. The distribution clinic that was held at Prestwood Chase was not handled through the county, nor did the vaccines come through the county. In fact, our commissioner found out about it the same time as many of us, which was through Facebook posts and through the news. I
believe that they arranged their own
developing of the distribution and
obtaining the vaccines, but it did not
take part through us.

It is the intention of Public Health
that there are no -- you can't get a
priority or increased access depending on
who you are or who you know or money, and
all of our senior living facilities, all
of our persons in general in the county
should be treated with regards to their
public health risk and not who they know
or what access. So I just want to make
that clear. I obviously have no problem
with seniors being vaccinated but do want
to make it clear that that is not the
county itself engaging in that
distribution, although again as soon as
we get those vaccines we are happy to do
that throughout the county.

Are there any COVID-specific
questions before I move on to my next
agenda items?

MAYOR KELLY: No, I'm good. Thank
you.
SUPERVISOR GASTON: Thank you.

The second item on my agenda is a report from the health committee. Again, I chair the health and social services committee this year. A lot of our work is going to be focused on COVID-19, but there are also some concerns sort of tangential to COVID-19. Over the year 2020, from 2019 to 2020, our suicide rate in the county dropped twenty-five percent. That includes the time period covered by COVID. That is excellent news. Unfortunately, our rate of overdose deaths nearly doubled. This is a problem that the Director of Mental Health is looking into and that we are hoping to engage in some programs and additional supports for our county. This has been a very difficult time for individuals, whether they have substance use disorders or not. And we are hoping to expand our programs in that regard to assist people as we recover from COVID-19. Obviously even right now with the shortage of vaccines, it's taken a toll.
on a lot of individuals, and we want to
make sure to help support people through
this as best we can.

The other major item that we're
going to be handling in the near future
is the Emergency Rental Assistance
Program. Due to the leadership of
Commissioner of Social Services Tina
Potter, the county was awarded 6.8
million dollars from the U.S. Treasury to
provide support for renters who have
suffered financial hardships as a result
of COVID-19. New York State has
indicated that they are developing an
application portal right now. We are
awaiting the completion of that to make
sure that it adequately serves the
residents of Saratoga County. And as
soon as we know that, we will be
utilizing that, hopefully, or our own
program to make sure that we can provide
quick access to applications. There are
some concerns. You can't duplicate
federal funds that have been received
from other places, other forms of rental
insurance -- sorry, rental assistance, and we want to be able to check for things. Unemployment benefits are an automatic qualifier for this program, so we want to be able to tie into that and move things along as quickly as possible, and that's going to require connecting with the New York State program so that we can get that done and not put additional barriers in the way of persons.

The primary focus is going to be on renters who are under a fifty-percent of the average income in Saratoga County. And it can go up to eighty percent, but at least the first pass-through is going to be a fifty percent and below. As soon as we have more information on that program, I will release that. We do have to spend at least sixty-five percent of the money by the end of September, and all hundred percent of it needs to be sent by the end of 2021. So I can assure you that we are looking -- also our county treasurer wants to get it out as
quickly as possible well, so we will be
looking to get this out as soon as
possible. And I appreciate Commissioner
Potter for all of her work in very
quickly finding out about this, applying,
even if it shocked the county treasurer
that federal monies were put into our
account that quickly, which does not
normally happen.

COMMISSIONER DALTON: That's
awesome.

SUPERVISOR GASTON: Yes. I think it
will be a great help. One of the big
things is landlords and renters both can
apply, and so it can also assist some of
our landlords, particularly the smaller
ones that have had a couple of units
they're renting and they want to assist
their renters. They've been taking some
of the hit as well. This will be able to
benefit both renters and our landlords in
that.

COMMISSIONER DALTON: Do you know
offhand if that applies to commercial and
residential? Or would it just be -- it
doesn't apply to businesses who are 
(indiscernible). It would just apply to 
residential renters.

SUPERVISOR GASTON: At this time, my 
understanding is it's just residential.

COMMISSIONER DALTON: Okay. Just 
clarifying. Thank you.

SUPERVISOR GASTON: It is also 
available to cover utility costs during 
those times as well for persons who 
otherwise meet the eligibility 
requirements. Utility is pretty narrowly 
defined. Like, we would think of gas, 
oil, power. It's not internet and phone 
and those sorts of things that are often 
considered utilities by people. That is 
not how they're defined, unfortunately, 
in the guidance that we have.

And on a related note, this Thursday 
at 5 p.m. there will be a special board 
meeting to contemplate the 
recommendations of the Commissioner of 
Public Health with regards to high-risk 
sports. It's a full special board 
meeting, not just of the health
committee. We will be looking at the recommendations the commissioner has put forward for engaging in those sports, which allow them under certain criteria.
The Board of Supervisors also serves as the Board of Health as the health authority for the county, so we can also place additional guidelines or request additional items be included as well.
And that's what the purpose of the meeting will be, to discuss that, and whether we want to make any amendments to the recommendations as put forward by the commissioner.
Are there any other questions regarding that? Okay.
The third item on my agenda is an update from the technology and resiliency committee. Much like Commissioner Madigan discussed updating the city's website, the county has needed some technology refreshers for a little bit. As a fun first item coming out of this brand new committee that I chair, we are looking at a significant upgrade of our
technology, servers, storage, security, and supporting a remote work system. This will be an approximately $600,000 outlay. However, there have been significant demands placed on our IT department throughout COVID supporting remote work, additional technology needed by departments to run requirements through COVID, including the Public Health Department. And these upgrades, we're originally hoping to take place in the next two or so years. They're sorely needed now, and so it actually moved forward with unanimous support of the technology committee, and we'll see what the full board views. It is a significant outlay. This is a very difficult time to put forward that sort of money, but I think it's really important for us to both improve the support of the technology the county needs to run, but it's also going to allow us to make some additional changes. The website was a discussion that we had, in addition to some other items, and --
COMMISSIONER DALTON: Well, I was just going to say I did notice one thing that I was really, really grateful for. I watch all the sheriff's department police policy review meetings, and the last two were on Zoom. And it just -- I was so excited. I was, like, jumping up and down. So just even little changes like that are very appreciated on my end as a resident and as a member of the city government here. So yay, thank you for that.

SUPERVISOR GASTON: Well, I'm very fortunate that despite the fact that this is a new committee, Supervisor Veitch has been working on some of those upgrades through the buildings and grounds committee. And so those two departments will be working closely together to do things like livestreaming our own meetings, especially a number of ours take place during the work day. It can be difficult to attend, and I think that's a necessary upgrade that hasn't been around for a while.
The other part of the committee is a resiliency part, and we're going to be looking at how the county can better react to the stressors that can be placed on us. We've obviously learned some lessons through COVID-19, but there's also a lot that we can learn and a lot of recommendations we can put forward for all of our county departments with regards to climate chaos, man-made disasters, and just general growth. So those are all things that we are looking at at the county. Through that committee, we're hoping to come up with a resiliency plan, and we're going to meet with each department ideally in coordination with the Government Review and Efficiency Committee that Supervisor Veitch chairs to talk about how we can work better as a board of supervisors and each of our departments together to respond to stressors and better engage with the public.

So two heavy lifting committees, but we've got a lot of work going and really
excited to move both of those forward
and, obviously, especially with
technology and resiliency, there will be
a lot of public outreach and engagement
with that in particular.

Are there any questions about that?
Okay. Then that concludes my agenda.

MAYOR KELLY: Thank you, Supervisor.

Any other business from the council?
Then we are adjourned. Thank you. Have
a nice night.

COMMISSIONER DALTON: Thank you.

(Meeting adjourned)
CERTIFICATION

I, Amanda G. Stockton, certify that the foregoing transcript is a true and accurate record of the proceedings.

Amanda G. Stockton

eScribers
352 Seventh Avenue, Suite #604
New York, NY 10001

Date: February 15, 2021

Approved: 3/2/2021

Vote: 4 - 0