

Minutes
Administrative Services Committee
November 6, 2023, 5:00 p.m., Legislative Chambers
Livestreamed on YouTube
Gerace Office Building, Mayville, NY

Members Present: Scudder, Vanstrom, Davis, Muldowney and Parker

Others: Lee, Chagnon, Slagle, Swan, Gould, Wendel, Hernandez, Ihrig, Nelson

Complete video of meeting can be viewed on YouTube

Legislator Scudder called the meeting to order at 5:05 p.m.

Approval of Minutes (10/16/23)

MOVED by Legislator Parker, SECONDED by Legislator Muldowney.

Unanimously Carried

Privilege of the Floor

Good Evening, Mr. Chairman and the members of the committee. I am Tom Nelson, I represent Legislative District 13 in Jamestown. We all know that Chautauqua County has an ongoing well documented drug crisis with extreme rates of opioid use, substance use disorder, overdoses and overdose deaths. We know that Strong Starts Chautauqua is an initiative begun in the summer of 2019 to address the growing crisis in prenatal substance exposure in Chautauqua County. We know that Strong Starts is a program that uses evidence based strategies to assist some of the most vulnerable infants and young children in the County. These are children affected by prenatal trauma including exposure to alcohol, tobacco, marijuana, and illicit drugs that can harm their health, development, intellectual functioning, decision making and behavioral capacities throughout their entire life span. We know that Strong Starts is a resource available to County residents that explicitly works to prevent, identify and treat prenatal substance abuse exposure or PSE. We know that PSE is at a catastrophic level in Chautauqua County, 5 times the State rate. We know that the program is available and working for a lot of people. More than 5,000 children and 587 pregnant woman have directly received at least 1 service from Strong Starts. The Strong Starts resource manager funded in part by the ARPA grant had 1,263 interactions with community members needing resources referrals and services. 2,790 parents and caregivers were actively engaged in prevention, education through the soft initiated use of Strong Starts social media and texting platforms. So we know that the program has been affective and used by many. However, we also know that 2 weeks ago, County Executive Wendel, cancelled an ARPA funded contract with the Healthy Communities Alliance which will impact the Strong Starts initiative. We don't know why. Stopping the funding for the program that has been this successful raises many questions. What was the rationale for the termination of

Strong Starts ARPA contract? What, if anything will take its place? Why was there no notification to Strong Starts prior to at the time of or after the termination of the contract? There are questions about the process. This was a contract that was approved by the ARPA committee and then unanimously approved by the County Legislature so why wasn't the committee or the members of the Legislature involved in the termination of the contract? We were told the money was paused, what does that mean? Where is the money now? Will the money be returned to the ARPA funds and if so, what will they be used for? I think the people of Chautauqua County, the women and the children that are affected by this program deserve answers to these questions. I think that we can still have a good outcome here. I'm hopeful that we can get beyond the impasse and consider reversing the termination of the funding. I think if we involve Strong Starts, the County Executive, the ARPA advisory group and other leaders, we can do this. This is a good program, it makes a difference. Isn't that why we're here? Thank you.

Chairman Scudder: Thank you. Is there anyone else? Seeing no one else, we have 2 letters to read and being the Chairman, I get to start so I'm going to read the first one. This first letter is from Ann Battaglia, Chief Executive Officer Healthy Community Alliance. This is to the Chautauqua County Legislature and the Administrative Services Committee Meeting.

Dear Administrative Services Committee Chairman Scudder and Members of the Committee,

I, Ann Battaglia, Chief Executive Officer of the community-based organization, Healthy Community Alliance, provide the following statement to the Chautauqua County Legislature Administrative Services Committee in follow up to the termination of the ARPA contract supporting Strong Starts Chautauqua. Healthy Community Alliance is a New York State Rural Health Network, one of 31 rural health networks across the state funded by the New York State Department of Health Charles D. Cook Office of Rural Health. As a 501(c)3 nonprofit, Healthy Community Alliance's mission is to improve the quality of life of rural communities in Western New York through broad-based, inclusive partnerships that focus on wellness, disease prevention, and health promotion. In Chautauqua County, our organization offers many services to residents. We are the New York State of Health navigator agency with health insurance navigators assisting county residents with enrollment into affordable health coverage. Additionally, we hold the New York State Department of Health Perinatal Infant Community Health Collaborative grant providing nonclinical home visiting services that promote healthy behaviors and healthy outcomes for pregnant and postpartum women and their young children. We work with the county's Office for Aging and connect family caregivers of older adults to much-needed respite, and we participate in many collaboratives that work to leverage additional funding and resources to meet the needs of county residents. Another core competency of Healthy Community Alliance is prudent grant management. We have been and continue to be the fiscal sponsor for many grants that support rural health initiatives. We are selected because of our reputation as a trusted community-based organization and for our responsible fiscal stewardship. Over the past three years, we have served as fiscal sponsor for many grants and contracts that support the Strong Starts Chautauqua Coalition and its system building initiative. Up until November 5th, Healthy Community Alliance served as fiscal sponsor, at the request of the Chautauqua County Department of Health and Human Services, for the public health ARPA project that supported Strong Starts Chautauqua activities, including awareness and prevention

education and capacity building for universal screening and referral. While that 3-year contract was unexpectedly and prematurely terminated by the county, it has been Healthy Community Alliance's privilege to provide prudent fiscal management and spend the funds totally in accordance with the ARPA contract amendment and budget modification signed by the County Executive on May 8, 2023. The budget modification was collaboratively developed with CCDHHS to effectively allocate the funds to meet the public health ARPA project's intentions as well as the Strong Starts Coalition's documented and stated priorities. We regret that the county has since terminated the contract and paused these critical activities which support community and partner engagement toward the prevention and early identification of prenatal substance exposure. Healthy Community Alliance remains committed to good stewardship of the resources entrusted to us to address the health and wellbeing of our rural communities, and we look forward to ongoing partnerships to meet the needs of Chautauqua County residents.

*Respectfully submitted,
Ann Battaglia, Chief Executive Officer
Healthy Community Alliance*

Legislator Parker: This letter is from November 6th to the Chautauqua County Legislature Administrative Services Committee regarding privilege of the floor statement from Strong Starts Chautauqua Prenatal-Early Childhood Advisory Council.

Dear Administrative Services Committee Chairman Scudder and Members of the Committee,

The co-chairs of the Strong Starts Chautauqua (SSC) Prenatal-Early Childhood Advisory Council (PECAC) are providing the following statement to the Chautauqua County Legislature's Administrative Services Committee to address the discussion topic for the November 6, 2023, committee meeting. The PECAC of the SSC Coalition was formed in 2022 to help address workforce challenges and transition from consultant-based guidance to a locally sustainable leadership of clinical infrastructure and operations. Strong, healthy children are the foundation for our county's future. Yet there is reason to believe we can all work together to do better for our youngest community members—particularly the considerable number being born exposed to potentially harmful substances and toxic stressors that can impact them across the span of their lives, resulting in health and behavior problems, neurocognitive issues, sensory and adaptive complications, poor educational outcomes, and higher risk of child abuse and neglect. At five times the New York State rate, prenatal substance exposure to alcohol, tobacco, marijuana, and illegal drugs among the county's newborns and young children must be addressed through innovative prevention, education, risk identification, and specialized treatment strategies. This situation is described in the Chautauqua County Community Health Assessment, which notes that the rate of newborns affected by maternal use of drugs of addiction continues to be a grave concern in Chautauqua County. The impact of prenatal substance exposure puts a significant strain on families, education systems, and system-wide finances for generations. Without proper screening, early intervention and treatment, children experiencing adverse effects of prenatal substance exposure and related life trauma are not likely to succeed in preschool, let alone successfully complete high school or college. In response to this crisis in Chautauqua County, the SSC Coalition was formed in 2019 by local stakeholders and community leaders who sought to use an evidence-based, proven system approach to fill gaps in prevention, education, risk

identification, and specialized treatment approaches that meet the unique needs of communities plagued by prenatal substance exposure. As a result, the evidence-based, 4-tiered Screening, Assessment, Referral & Treatment (SART) Model© developed by internationally renowned expert Ira Chasnoff, M.D. was selected as the optimal choice to guide and train partners in building and implementing a local SSC-SART system, the only SART system in New York State. Since 2020, more than 5,000 children and over 580 pregnant women have directly received at least one service from the SSC initiative. The SSC community initiative uses multi-system strategies that leverage and enhance the ability of existing programs, organizations, and systems of care to effectively prevent and mitigate prenatal substance exposure and its adverse effects on children, families, and the community. This collaborative seeks to complement and strengthen—not duplicate or compete with—local providers and partners. Included in the SSC Coalition and its PECAC are County Departments of Health, Social Services and Mental Hygiene, various health and mental health care providers, UPMC Chautauqua Hospital, Jamestown Community College (JCC), Jamestown Public Schools and other districts, childcare and preschool providers, community-based and social care organizations, and philanthropic foundations.

Over the past four years, despite challenges and interruptions caused by COVID-19, SSC partners forged ahead to pilot its SART system. Throughout this time:

- Through 10/2/23, 8,727 child developmental screenings were performed. Results indicate that 16% (1,352) screenings show indications of concern, which is higher than population norms for their peers elsewhere.*
- 1,343 child regulatory behavior screens were performed. 53% (712) screenings show reason for concern, which is significantly higher than norms for other communities in which the screener is used.*
- 63% of 587 pregnant women screened in the county across socio-economic levels and ages have used a substance potentially harmful to their children just prior to or during pregnancy.*
- The SSC Resource Manager, funded in part by the County ARPA contract, had 1,163 interactions with community members needing resources, referrals, and services since her hire in April 2021.*
- The SSC Transdisciplinary Team—which meets to review child evaluations, helps families develop treatment plans, and engages children and families in community-based treatments—was established in late 2021. The team began seeing cases regularly in late 2022, once protocols, processes, and secure data sharing had been established. As of 10/2/23, the Team had 54 current or pending cases; 33 families were on a waiting list, while 21 had been engaged in assessment, treatment planning, or treatment and therapy.*
- More than 700 professionals and community members have attended training, networking, and continuing education events sponsored by the SSC Coalition since its inception.*
- Thus far in 2023, more than 500 hours of training, technical assistance, and expert advisement have been provided for SSC partners and key stakeholders. The express purpose of these efforts is to increase local capacity and expertise to implement and sustain the evidence-based SART Model instituted by SSC without extensive reliance on external consultants.*
- A fully implemented developmental screening and secure, multi-sector service coordination and communications hub has been created using software customized for local needs and co-designed by SSC partners. This allows partnering organizations from different*

fields to work more seamlessly together on referrals and follow-up with one another to help families get connected with the right services at the right times.

- *SSC has launched Bright by Text, a national texting program customized with local content for parents and caregivers that is proven to build nurturing caregiver-child relationships, and positively impact a child's healthy development and school readiness.*
- *To ensure that prevention-focused, educational information provided to community members is research-backed, cost-effective, and tested for use with our target population, SSC engaged with a nationally recognized social media company which specializes in providing content for prenatal-early childhood systems and communities with high levels of alcohol and substance misuse and prenatal exposure.*
 - *As a result of the social media and Bright by Text campaigns, more than 2,790 parents and caregivers have elected to receive information and messages on pregnancy, parenting, early childhood topics, and local resources, and have tapped into content more than 44,000 times.*

In the spring of 2023, PECAC endorsed JCC to coordinate the SSC-SART clinical administration and leadership under the college's emerging Center of Excellence in Wellness. Aligned with college and community priorities and with the support of JCC administration and the PECAC, JCC has embarked on providing neutral leadership for SSC clinical functions, fostering collaboration, effectively coordinating and convening partners, providing administrative support and structure, and developing critically needed related workforce and academic offerings. Recognizing the need to build, maintain, and sustain the proven piloted SSC-SART system, the PECAC fully supported JCC's successful application to the Ralph C. Sheldon Foundation in September 2023 for a Business and Implementation Plan for the local SSC-SART System.

- *The plan will identify how local expertise can be leveraged, enhanced, and expanded to operate a local Neurodevelopmental Center and to specify the conditions, protocols, and resources needed to support its sustainability. The business plan is projected to be vetted, completed, and disseminated by August 31, 2024.*

Because of the apparent need for greater understanding of the intent and collaborative work of the SSC-SART System, the SSC Coalition and its PECAC members welcome the opportunity to engage the community in a public informational session. This session will be held on Monday, November 13, 2023, at 5:00 p.m. in the theater of the Carnahan Building on the Jamestown Campus of JCC.

Sincerely,

*Co-chairs, Chautauqua County Prenatal Early Childhood
Advisory Council of the Strong Starts Coalition*

Andrea Walsh, M.D.

Christine Schuyler, R.N., B.S.N., M.H.A.

Michelle Godfrey, COTA/L

Local Law Intro 11-23 – A Local Law Amending Local Law 13-22 Providing for a Management Salary Plan for County Officers and Employees (re: Training and Development Coordinator in the Department of Human Resources) – *Presented by Debbie Makowski, Director of Human Resources*

Proposed Resolution – Amend 2023 Budget Office of the County Executive – *Presented by Justin Gould, Media Information Officer and Paul M. Wendel Jr., County Executive*

Unanimously Carried

Discussion– Strong Starts Program/Healthy Communities Alliance – *Presented by Patrick Slagle, County Attorney*

MOVED by Legislator Vanstrom, SECONDED by Legislator Scudder to enter into Executive Session for discussions regarding pending litigation as well as discussing the medical, financial, credit or employment history of a particular person or corporation – Unanimously Carried

Entered into Executive Session – 5:33 p.m.

MOVED by Legislator Vanstrom, SECONDED by Legislator Parker to end Executive Session – Unanimously Carried

Executive Session ended – 6:40 p.m.

MOVED by Legislator Muldowney, SECONDED by Legislator Parker to adjourn

Unanimously Carried (6:41 p.m.)

Respectfully submitted and transcribed,
Olivia Lee, Clerk of the Legislature/Kristi R. Zink, Deputy Clerk