

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25

CITY OF SARATOGA SPRINGS COUNCIL MEETING

January 5, 2021

Held at

MEETING HELD VIA ZOOM

PRESENT:

- Meg Kelly, Mayor
- Lisa Shields, Deputy Mayor
- Michele Madigan, Commissioner
- John P. Franck, Commissioner
- Anthony Scirocco, Commissioner
- Robin Dalton, Commissioner
- Matthew Veitch, Supervisor
- Tara Gaston, Supervisor
- Aaron Dyer, Assistant Fire Chief



1 MAYOR KELLY: Welcome to Tuesday,
2 January 5th city council meeting. I
3 could just make one announcement before
4 we start. Could I have everybody muted
5 except for council? So with -- if you're
6 not on the council or the supervisors
7 please turn off your video, which I think
8 everybody is off. So I need Mr. Millis
9 (ph.) to mute, please. Thank you.

10 Mr. Millis, can you hear me?

11 DEPUTY MAYOR SHIELDS: I think he is
12 muted.

13 MAYOR KELLY: Okay. It's not
14 showing as muted to me.

15 DEPUTY MAYOR SHIELDS: Okay.

16 MAYOR KELLY: Okay.

17 DEPUTY MAYOR SHIELDS: It's not
18 showing that he's on, either.

19 MAYOR KELLY: Okay. So let's get
20 going.

21 We have no public hearings this
22 evening, so let's get started with roll
23 call, please.

24 SECRETARY TO City Council:
25 Commissioner Franck?



1 COMMISSIONER FRANCK: Present.

2 SECRETARY TO City Council:

3 Commissioner Madigan?

4 COMMISSIONER MADIGAN: Present.

5 SECRETARY TO City Council:

6 Commissioner Scirocco?

7 COMMISSIONER SCIROCCO: Here.

8 SECRETARY TO City Council:

9 Commissioner Dalton?

10 COMMISSIONER DALTON: Present.

11 SECRETARY TO City Council: Mayor

12 Kelly?

13 MAYOR KELLY: Here.

14 SECRETARY TO City Council:

15 Supervisor Veitch?

16 SUPERVISOR VEITCH: Here.

17 SECRETARY TO City Council: And

18 Supervisor Gaston?

19 SUPERVISOR GASTON: Here.

20 MAYOR KELLY: Please rise for the

21 Pledge of Allegiance.

22 IN UNISON: I pledge allegiance to
23 the flag of the United States of America
24 and to republic for which it stands, one
25 nation, under God, indivisible, with



1 liberty and justice for all.

2 MAYOR KELLY: Thank you. Next on
3 the agenda is our public comment period.
4 We will keep the comments up to two
5 minutes each. There will be a bell to
6 signify your time. Public comment period
7 will continue up to fifteen minutes. We
8 will be respectful to speakers while
9 addressing the council as a whole.
10 Please do not interrupt the person
11 speaking or engage with members of the
12 public. As a reminder, public comment is
13 not a dialogue. It's a discussion with
14 council members. However, at the end of
15 the public comment period, the council
16 may respond to any comment. Anyone who
17 wishes to address the council on any
18 issue will now do so by raising your hand
19 in Zoom.

20 So we have a couple people on here.
21 I'm going to ask if Mr. Millis, Anna
22 Plant (ph.), want to speak.

23 DEPUTY MAYOR SHIELDS: It doesn't
24 look like it or Louise Kerr (ph.) also is
25 on. But it doesn't -- no one is raising



1 their hand, so I would say that there's
2 nobody for public comment. There is one
3 person coming in, Mayor.

4 MAYOR KELLY: All right.

5 DEPUTY MAYOR SHIELDS: Steve Gordon
6 (ph.) just walked in but, again --(audio
7 interference).

8 MAYOR KELLY: Okay. So is there
9 anybody in the -- on the Zoom call that
10 wants to public comment? Please speak
11 up.

12 Okay. So I don't see anybody
13 speaking up or raising their hand, so I'm
14 going to close the public comment period.
15 We have no executive sessions this
16 evening, so we'll move right on to the
17 consent agenda.

18 I move that the city council approve
19 the consent agenda as included with this
20 agenda. This is a motion. Is there a
21 second?

22 COMMISSIONER DALTON: Second.

23 MAYOR KELLY: Any discussion?

24 All those in favor say aye.

25 IN UNISON: Aye.



1 MAYOR KELLY: All those opposed say
2 no.

3 The matter passes.

4 On to the Mayor's Department. My
5 first item is an announcement. The 2021
6 Community Development Block Grant sub-
7 grantee application period opens 1/15/21.
8 The Community Development Department will
9 be opening up the sub-grantee application
10 period for the Community Development
11 Block Grant 2021 program year starting
12 January 15. Application guidance and
13 forms and the program year schedule will
14 be made available on the city website
15 very soon.

16 My next item is discussion and vote,
17 approval to hire a senior planner in the
18 Planning Department.

19 As the council is aware, the
20 administrator of Planning and Economic
21 Development has retired. My
22 recommendation is for the Deputy Mayor to
23 fulfill the department head's duties for
24 now and to hire a senior planner for the
25 essential planner's duties, which include



1 managing the Design Review Commission.

2 This retirement is an opportunity to
3 take a fresh look at our staffing plan
4 and adjust the organizational structure
5 where necessary.

6 Hiring a senior planner at a lower
7 salary is fiscally responsible now,
8 especially with the budget constraints
9 while we evaluate the department needs.

10 Funds to cover this position are
11 readily available in our 2021 approved
12 budget. The senior planner is an
13 established title in the CSEA contract.
14 The Civil Service Commission met on
15 12/29/20 and approved the second
16 planner -- senior planner position. A
17 budget transfer of 61,912, grade 14, step
18 1, will be submitted for the next council
19 meeting.

20 So I move that the city council
21 approve the hiring of the senior planner
22 in the Planning Department. This is a
23 motion. Is there a second?

24 COMMISSIONER FRANCK: Second.

25 MAYOR KELLY: Any discussion?



1 COMMISSIONER MADIGAN: So I'm going
2 to vote no tonight on this position.
3 Because on my agenda, there is an update
4 about city finances. It'll be a sobering
5 update for the beginning of the fiscal
6 year 2021. And at this time, I think we
7 need to enforce our hiring freeze, and
8 especially a hiring freeze for those
9 positions in which employees have just
10 retired.

11 The best way to save money is to
12 delay replacing retired employees. And I
13 appreciate that it will save some money
14 since the entire salary has been budgeted
15 for this position. And it was
16 significant because it was a significant
17 senior level position that we had
18 retiring. But if these type of
19 positions, I'm hoping people will retire
20 and we can go a long while until we have
21 a better idea of what the future will
22 hold for us before we move forward and
23 replace them.

24 I do appreciate that the Planning
25 Department is quite busy, I guess. I



1 don't know, really, much about how busy
2 they are with COVID still being with us.
3 I did look through some old agendas.
4 There's definitely some activity in DRC.
5 But primarily, DRC seems to be our least
6 busy of the three planning units. So
7 it's not personal but I -- I'm very
8 concerned about city finances right now.
9 Thanks.

10 COMMISSIONER DALTON: Can I ask what
11 the approximate differential was between
12 what the one was prior to this (audio
13 interference).

14 MAYOR KELLY: I believe it was
15 around 150.

16 COMMISSIONER DALTON: So it's a
17 fairly significant (audio
18 interference) --

19 MAYOR KELLY: Yes.

20 COMMISSIONER DALTON: -- but wasn't.

21 MAYOR KELLY: Yes.

22 COMMISSIONER DALTON: Okay.

23 COMMISSIONER SCIROCCO:
24 Unfortunately, she -- you might be right,
25 but progress, as far as the DRC and the



1 planning board and all that stuff, it
2 doesn't -- it just doesn't stop in the
3 city. And my understanding is the
4 workload is there. It's not like it's
5 not there. Obviously, the planner has
6 retired and somebody has to take over
7 that part of it. It just makes -- it
8 makes sense to put another senior planner
9 in there at roughly, probably less than
10 what the -- what the total salary would
11 be. And then as far as -- done the road,
12 then we could just evaluate the position
13 down the road. But I think it makes a
14 lot of sense then. And it's financially,
15 and both financially and
16 administratively, it makes sense.

17 So again, I'm going to support it
18 under those conditions.

19 MAYOR KELLY: Any other comments?

20 Okay, all those in favor say aye.

21 IN UNISON: Aye.

22 MAYOR KELLY: Those opposed say no.

23 COMMISSIONER MADIGAN: No.

24 MAYOR KELLY: Any abstentions?

25 The matter passes.



1 My third item is discussion and
2 vote, Saratoga Springs Recreation
3 Department Part-Time/Seasonal Personnel
4 Referee Proposal.

5 Any part-time/seasonal hourly
6 employee will be paid the approved 2021
7 starting hourly rate effective 1/30/21.
8 Please note, if any employee current or
9 returning rates exceeds the proposed
10 rate, the employee will be frozen at the
11 issued rate received within the last
12 twenty-four months.

13 I move that the city council approve
14 the Saratoga Springs Recreation
15 Department Part-Time/Seasonal Personnel
16 Referee Proposal as included -- or it
17 wasn't included with the agenda. I sent
18 it to the council just before the
19 meeting. This is a motion. Is there a
20 second?

21 COMMISSIONER FRANCK: Second.

22 MAYOR KELLY: Any discussion?

23 All those in favor say aye.

24 IN UNISON: Aye.

25 MAYOR KELLY: Any opposed say no.



1 The matter passes.

2 And I'll turn it over. That
3 concludes my agenda. I will turn it over
4 to Commissioner Franck from Accounts.

5 COMMISSIONER FRANCK: Thank you,
6 Mayor. We just have one item this
7 evening. It's an announcement that the
8 state has passed legislation to address
9 senior and disabled homeowner exemptions.

10 The New York State Legislature held
11 a special session and Governor Cuomo
12 signed into law the COVID-19 Emergency
13 Eviction and Foreclosure Prevention Act.
14 This legislation includes a provision
15 that covers senior citizens and persons
16 with disability exemption for the 2021
17 assessment roll.

18 The legislation, one, requires local
19 governments to carry over senior citizen
20 homeowner exemption and disabled
21 homeowner exemptions from 2020 assessment
22 roll to the 2021 assessment roll at the
23 same levels; two, it requires local
24 governments to provide renewal
25 applications via electronic or postal



1 mail for individuals who may be eligible
2 for a larger exemption in 2021; three, it
3 allows local governments to specify
4 procedures where the local assessor may
5 require renewal applications from
6 residence who they no longer believe
7 qualify for the exemption. And it also
8 bars any requirement that a recipient be
9 required to appear in person to file a
10 renewal if one is required.

11 So I had Tony Popolizio briefly go
12 over that with you yesterday. As we talk
13 to more local governments, we'll probably
14 address this at the next meeting also.

15 Thank you, Mayor. That concludes my
16 agenda.

17 MAYOR KELLY: Thank you,
18 Commissioner. On to Commissioner Madigan
19 of Finance, please.

20 COMMISSIONER MADIGAN: Thank you,
21 Mayor.

22 So my first item is an update on
23 city finances. This will be a recurring
24 topic at most 2021 council meetings.

25 Yesterday, I distributed an updated



1 cash flow worksheet to the council. In
2 the future, I'll try to have those
3 uploaded, but we didn't have it quite
4 completed by the time I wanted to get the
5 agenda out but I knew I wanted to give an
6 update.

7 The cash flow is the money that we
8 have in the bank. And mostly what we
9 have in the bank right now is what we
10 just recently borrowed from Adirondack
11 Trust. You will see a lot more money
12 coming into the bank as we get into
13 February with our first quarter property
14 taxes.

15 So that's money that we expect to
16 be -- money in our bank account, money
17 that we expect to be coming into the bank
18 and money going out of our bank account.

19 Budgets what we plan to do with the
20 money. In years past, prior to COVID-19,
21 the budget has been a bit less than the
22 money that we've had in the bank, which
23 is good. We can outlay cash to cover
24 grants and other things, and we can wait
25 for that reimbursement.



1 Right now, our cash flow is not
2 great and we keep running into this
3 problem. We ran into it last June and
4 last December, and we're going to run
5 into it again this June.

6 In 2020, we planned on spending a
7 certain amount. However, money coming in
8 was much lower than expected, and we used
9 that money as you know, we've been
10 through 2020.

11 So I want to make sure that the
12 council and the public hears this
13 message. 2021 is looking very similar.
14 And unless there are significant revenue
15 breakthroughs, our financial situation
16 will be similar to 2020.

17 As of June 2021, we will require
18 approximately seven million dollars. We
19 will be seven million dollars in the red.
20 We will have less than what we planned
21 for. We will have additional cash flow
22 coming in throughout the year. But in
23 June, we have large disbursements. And
24 that's what that cash flow shows you.
25 And we will not have the cash to cover



1 those disbursements that will come in.

2 So making the council aware of
3 amounts of actual cash on hand at all
4 times is key and is outlined in the
5 charter that I am supposed to be doing
6 this. I -- we have borrowed already 11.3
7 million dollars. We have sufficiently
8 burdened future administrations and
9 generations with pandemic-related
10 financial choices, and we are going to
11 require some discipline now to enter into
12 2022 and beyond.

13 So again, in June, the city will
14 experience a substantial dip in cash
15 flow, a 7.3 million-dollar cash deficit.
16 This is up for change all the time. If
17 we can get some federal fiscal aid in,
18 the cash flow will change.

19 I am going to be looking at sales
20 tax for January, February, March, and
21 April. I think those numbers are a bit
22 low. But I don't know yet. I don't know
23 what the impact of COVID and the variant
24 strain is going to be on our city
25 revenues in the first quarter of the



1 year.

2 So while we can hope for increased
3 revenue, pursue federal and/or state
4 bailout aid, and any other resources that
5 have not been included here, we must plan
6 for those figures that we have before us
7 in black and white and in the red, which
8 is the 7,306,349 dollars.

9 I also requested in the email
10 questions and comments to be emailed to
11 me so that I can prepare and be
12 responsive to the council and the public.
13 I'm also looking for your suggestions as
14 to how we might meet the challenge of the
15 projected cash flow projections through
16 June 2021, in which, again, we will be
17 negative 7,306,349 dollars. That's it.

18 Item number 2 is a discussion and
19 vote, refunding for the bond resolution.

20 The Finance Department has --

21 COMMISSIONER DALTON:

22 (Indiscernible)

23 COMMISSIONER MADIGAN: Yes?

24 COMMISSIONER DALTON: Sorry. Can I
25 ask you a quick question on your first



1 item?

2 COMMISSIONER MADIGAN: Yes.

3 COMMISSIONER DALTON: Do we have
4 any -- does the real property sale and
5 stuff you're looking into and the (audio
6 interference)?

7 COMMISSIONER MADIGAN: I don't have
8 an update on that. But that's another
9 thing that could bring revenue in and
10 will change our projections. So I
11 appreciate you bringing that up because I
12 meant to mention that. Some of the
13 things that are on the horizon where,
14 potentially, we budgeted for five million
15 dollars in fiscal aid which we don't have
16 yet. That will be helpful.

17 Selling property will be helpful and
18 bring in new revenue. We also have about
19 1.6 million dollars still outstanding in
20 grant reimbursement for the Geyser Road
21 Trail with DOT. So that will change cash
22 flow projections. But I want to make
23 sure that you had an update as to where
24 we are right now with cash flow.

25 So as those reimbursements or funds



1 come in, I will make the council aware.

2 And as sales tax projections perhaps

3 change, I will make you aware.

4 COMMISSIONER DALTON: Thank you.

5 COMMISSIONER MADIGAN: Any other

6 questions?

7 All right. So my item number 2 is

8 discussion and vote, refunding bond

9 resolution.

10 The Finance Department has initiated

11 a bond refunding, a refinancing in the

12 amount of three million dollars for bonds

13 dated June 15, 2013, due to mature on

14 June 15, 2033. The action will result in

15 present value savings and debt service as

16 required by local finance law. Exact

17 amounts to be announced after the public

18 sale. I think this is my fourth bond

19 refinancing, which is saving us fairly

20 significantly on debt service and our

21 ability to issue further debt.

22 So I move that the city council

23 approve the refunding bond resolution as

24 included with the agenda. The matter

25 requires a four-fifths vote, and I ask



1 for a roll call vote as well, please.

2 SECRETARY TO City Council: We
3 needed a second.

4 MAYOR KELLY: Oh, I'm sorry. Is
5 there a second?

6 COMMISSIONER DALTON: Second.

7 MAYOR KELLY: Any discussion?

8 COMMISSIONER FRANCK:

9 (Indiscernible)

10 SECRETARY TO City Council:
11 Commissioner Franck?

12 COMMISSIONER FRANCK: Aye.

13 SECRETARY TO City Council:
14 Commissioner Madigan?

15 COMMISSIONER MADIGAN: Aye.

16 SECRETARY TO City Council:
17 Commissioner Scirocco?

18 COMMISSIONER SCIROCCO: Aye.

19 SECRETARY TO City Council:
20 Commissioner Dalton?

21 COMMISSIONER DALTON: Aye.

22 SECRETARY TO City Council: Mayor
23 Kelly?

24 MAYOR KELLY: Aye.

25 The matter passes.



1 COMMISSIONER MADIGAN: Item number 3
2 is a discussion and vote, Budget
3 Transfers - Payroll.

4 These transfers are to make expected
5 adjustments to the 2021 budget. This was
6 discussed at the 11/30/20 city council
7 meeting and at budget workshops prior.
8 The budget was completed and passed
9 swiftly. Review and adjustments will be
10 required throughout the next couple of
11 months.

12 Budget transfers neither increase or
13 decrease the 2021 budget. They
14 reallocate expenses from one
15 appropriation to another.

16 Lines 1 through 2 move funds from
17 amounts budgeted for the discount issued
18 for 2021 annual tax payments completed by
19 March 1 to the line for part-time senior
20 clerk approved last year to assist the
21 Finance Department during short staffing
22 and increased tasks.

23 This is actually a position that
24 fits in the Accounts Department. It's
25 the records manager position.



1 Lines -- and they are also helping
2 the Building and Planning Department with
3 their records and documents that are
4 stored.

5 Lines 3 through 4 move funds from
6 the Fire Department battalion chief to
7 the assistant chief to accommodate a
8 reorganization decided after the 2020
9 budget was approved. This is a
10 reallocation of funds budgeted in the
11 2021 Fire Department budget for the
12 battalion chief.

13 After the budget vote, the Public
14 Safety Department decided its preference
15 was to have an assistant fire chief
16 instead of a battalion chief. This does
17 not change the plans included in the 2021
18 budget since the comprehensive budget
19 plan to reduce the number of Fire
20 Department chiefs from three to two.
21 Only the title is different.

22 I move that the city council approve
23 the Budget Transfers - Payroll as
24 included with the agenda. This is a
25 motion.



1 MAYOR KELLY: Is there a second?

2 COMMISSIONER DALTON: Second.

3 MAYOR KELLY: Any discussion?

4 All those in favor say aye.

5 IN UNISON: Aye.

6 MAYOR KELLY: Any opposed?

7 The matter passes.

8 COMMISSIONER MADIGAN: Thank you.

9 That completes my agenda.

10 MAYOR KELLY: Thank you,
11 Commissioner. On to Public Works.

12 COMMISSIONER SCIROCCO: Thank you,
13 Mayor. I don't have anything on the
14 agenda right now, but I do -- I think I
15 want to add one item. And it's to add to
16 the decorative lights on Broadway. And
17 it's just an announcement.

18 MAYOR KELLY: Okay. Okay. Is there
19 a second?

20 COMMISSIONER FRANCK: Second.

21 MAYOR KELLY: Any discussion?

22 All those in favor say aye.

23 IN UNISON: Aye.

24 MAYOR KELLY: Any opposed?

25 The matter passes. Go ahead,



1 Commissioner.

2 COMMISSIONER SCIROCCO: Thank you.

3 This is just an announcement. This
4 is in regards to the decorative lights
5 that we put up every year on Broadway. I
6 thought that it would be a good idea this
7 year to leave them up a little bit
8 longer. I know in the past we've taken
9 them down. Like this week, we were ready
10 to take them down.

11 I think it's -- it kind of keeps the
12 Christmas spirit, the holiday spirit for
13 residents and visitors that come into the
14 city alike. It makes a lot of sense to
15 do that right now, given the fact that
16 COVID is kind of like on everybody's
17 mind. I think we need something to kind
18 of calm the waters a little bit. And
19 people really appreciate the lights and
20 they appreciate that part of it.

21 So I think what we're going to do is
22 DPW will keep those, at least the wreaths
23 and the lights that are strung across the
24 side street, I think (indiscernible)
25 Street. We're going to keep those --



1 keep those lights up, at least till the
2 end of the year -- end of the month.

3 MAYOR KELLY: That's great,
4 Commissioner. I think that's a great
5 idea. I love that. So I think -- it
6 just brings some kind of joy into the
7 city. So I appreciate that.

8 COMMISSIONER SCIROCCO: You're
9 welcome.

10 MAYOR KELLY: Anything else, sir?

11 COMMISSIONER SCIROCCO: That's it.

12 MAYOR KELLY: Okay. Thank you. On
13 to Public Safety, Commissioner Dalton.

14 COMMISSIONER DALTON: Thank you,
15 Mayor. The first item on my agenda is a
16 COVID-19 update, which is rather lengthy.

17 So first, I wanted to go through
18 some of the numbers and where we're at.
19 I know we just get numbers thrown at us
20 all the time when it comes to COVID-19,
21 so I thought it would be helpful to
22 compare where we were two weeks ago as to
23 where we are now.

24 On December 18th, we had in Saratoga
25 County 1,457 active COVID-19 cases.



1 Today on January 5th, we have 2,770
2 active cases, which is, you know, a huge
3 increase.

4 In the city of Saratoga Springs on
5 December 18th, we had 175 active cases.
6 Today, we have 343 active cases in the
7 city of Saratoga Springs. The county had
8 a seven-day rolling average positivity
9 rate of 6.75 on December 18th. Today,
10 our positivity rate is eleven percent.
11 So almost double.

12 On December 18th, we had thirty-
13 three people hospitalized. Today, we
14 have fifty-two people hospitalized. On
15 December 18th, we had twenty-nine deaths.
16 Today, we have thirty-five deaths.

17 So as you can see, the numbers are
18 just so deep with the continued surge.
19 And so I would advise every Saratogian to
20 be as mindful as possible about where
21 they're going and what they're doing.
22 And, of course, always wear your masks,
23 social distance, do all the things that
24 you know you need to do. But really be
25 cautious about where you're going and



1 what you're doing, because this is, as
2 you know, community-spread.

3 We don't -- people who are getting
4 infected don't know how they're getting
5 infected or where it came from. Often
6 times, we're making all the right
7 choices, and so I really encourage people
8 to be safe, stay home, order in. You can
9 support our local businesses without
10 having to go in and physically be in the
11 places and be in contact with them.

12 Secondly, schools are open for in-
13 person learning. They opened yesterday
14 after winter break. I applaud all the
15 protocols and their diligence. They've
16 done a spectacular job. And if that
17 changes at all, I will keep the community
18 apprised. But as of now, all Saratoga
19 Springs city schools are open for in-
20 person learning.

21 Thirdly, I just wanted to make
22 people aware again, that we have three
23 locations within the city where you can
24 pick up free face masks at any time. One
25 is just inside the entrance of the Police



1 Department. You literally open the door
2 and there's a big box right there of
3 disposable masks that are available to
4 anyone. We also have them at the
5 entrance to the Recreation Department on
6 Vanderbilt as well as at the Franklin
7 Community Center. So if you or your
8 family are in need of masks, please feel
9 free to come and take as many as you
10 need. It is just on an honor system.
11 Take whatever is necessary.

12 Then, I wanted to talk about the
13 emergency room at the hospital. Just a
14 reminder to people that, obviously, if
15 you are feeling ill or have an injury of
16 any kind, do not hesitate to seek out the
17 prevalent need, but please remember that
18 we have twenty urgent care centers in the
19 area, (audio interference), Wilton
20 Medical Arts, and then, also, in
21 (indiscernible) Adirondack Urgent Care.
22 And then also, Saratoga Hospital has
23 terrific telemedicine. And so if you're
24 experiencing a condition that's minor and
25 you feel it could be initially rest at



1 home medicine, that would be a terrific
2 first step so we could take some of the
3 pressure off of the emergency department
4 that they're experiencing right now.

5 Next, I would like to talk about --
6 we have entered the first stage of
7 vaccinations. The first group of people
8 being vaccinated are in phase 1-A. These
9 are our frontline high-risk workers.
10 These are people who are working in a
11 hospital. They're doctors or nurses.
12 Our Fire Department, as you all know, are
13 also EMS and paramedics. They have begun
14 getting vaccinated, but the appeal that
15 we're putting out there from -- to the
16 public is that we are very much in need
17 of people to help facilitate these
18 vaccinations. So if you're a former
19 doctor, a former nurse, medical student,
20 so on and so forth, there's a whole list
21 online. If you want to volunteer to help
22 facilitate these vaccinations, that would
23 be tremendous. That is what we need
24 right now.

25 The city and the county are also



1 working together to identify points of
2 distribution, PODs is what they're
3 called, for people to go and get
4 vaccinated. We're in the very early
5 stages of doing that. One of the places
6 that has been suggested and looked at is
7 the City Center for residents of Saratoga
8 Springs. Again, in the early stages,
9 there are a lot of requirements from the
10 state that you have to meet to become a
11 point of distribution for -- to be a
12 point of distribution for vaccinations.

13 Aside from that, lastly, I wanted to
14 just add a lot of people have continued
15 to ask if we have been designated a
16 micro-cluster zone. We have not. If
17 anything changes in that regard, I will
18 let you know. The emphasis really seems
19 to be, though, on hospitalization rates
20 and how many beds we have available,
21 which has remained relatively stable in
22 our area, and that's a very good thing as
23 opposed to the positivity rate, which
24 has -- I just mentioned, gone over it
25 directly.



1 Does anyone have any questions on
2 any of those?

3 MAYOR KELLY: I do -- I do,
4 Commissioner, thanks. And I know you and
5 I have spoken today, but I don't know if
6 there's any update at all on the county's
7 program and their rollout for this
8 vaccine.

9 I have not heard anything. I'm the
10 mayor of the biggest city in the county.
11 I've had no communication with the
12 county. And I talked to the hospital
13 today who has had no communication with
14 the county. I talked to Carrie Warner
15 (ph.) who has had no communication with
16 the county.

17 So I'm a little perplexed at what
18 this plan is. I'm talking to any
19 services who went to Warren County, Glens
20 Falls Hospital, to get their clients
21 vaccinated. Where there's living
22 resources in Saratoga Springs is trying
23 to get into Albany and they're having
24 difficulty doing that.

25 So why are we sending people living



1 here outside of the county? That's my
2 question. And I just don't know. People
3 are asking me as a mayor how is this
4 happening. I have no clue and I don't
5 get any answers.

6 So I don't know if you can help me
7 out. I don't think you can because I
8 know we discussed it. But I wanted to
9 put it on the record that I have no idea.
10 People ask me every day. I get as many
11 emails as all of you commissioners. And
12 I'm going to tell you, I don't have any
13 answers and I don't get anything from the
14 county.

15 COMMISSIONER DALTON: I appreciate
16 your frustration very much. As you know,
17 we don't have a public health department.
18 So we are reliant on the county health
19 department for information, whether it's
20 about vaccinations or metrics.

21 I don't have an answer for you. I
22 would definitely defer to the public
23 supervisor who I'm aware we're going to
24 have an update at the end of this
25 meeting. I'll refer the question to



1 them. I think they will have the
2 information that you're looking for. But
3 I do not have it at this time.

4 MAYOR KELLY: Okay, thanks.

5 COMMISSIONER DALTON: Sorry I can't
6 be more helpful there.

7 Anyhow, that concludes the COVID-19
8 updates. The second item on my agenda is
9 pre-foreclosure and foreclosure
10 prevention announcements. Which is in
11 March of 2017, we received a grant from
12 the Local Initiatives Support Corporation
13 for the (indiscernible) property
14 mitigation and prevention initiatives.

15 Over the past two years with the
16 money from this grant, our department has
17 been able to create a vacant structural
18 ordinance and registry, hold community
19 outreach informational meetings, create a
20 database, help to reform code enforcement
21 costs, and mail postcards and letters
22 that can help proactively address
23 foreclosure or pre-foreclosure
24 prevention.

25 I just wanted to make the council



1 and the public aware that the last
2 requirement of this grant is to send out
3 informational letters on foreclosure
4 prevention. If you receive this letter,
5 it does not mean you are in foreclosure
6 or pre-foreclosure. It is simply a
7 letter that we send out to residents of
8 the city that has resources and
9 information if indeed they are in that
10 position.

11 So the letter is attached to the
12 agenda. People can read it. But I just
13 wanted to stress to the public and also
14 make the council aware that if you get
15 this in the mail, do not immediately
16 panic and assume that for some reason
17 your property is in foreclosure or pre-
18 foreclosure. This is simply
19 informational to help people who may or
20 may not be in that situation.

21 Then finally and third, a very happy
22 announcement, and I think he is on our
23 call, is regarding Chief Dyer. Are
24 you -- has he got there yet? Hello.

25 So I'm delighted, delighted to



1 announce that Battalion Chief Aaron Dyer
2 has been promoted to the position of
3 Assistant Fire Chief, effectively
4 December 26th, 2020.

5 So I just wanted to applaud him on
6 this promotion. He has been an
7 incredible asset to us, especially
8 throughout this pandemic. He has managed
9 COVID enforcement and every element of
10 this pandemic in front of making sure
11 businesses stay compliant to just
12 everything, truly, as it comes from the
13 state and it's delivered to the city
14 about COVID-19. Chief Dyer has been on
15 top of all of it and managing it with our
16 very small (indiscernible) COVID
17 enforcement staff. And we have some
18 terrific candidates who applied for this.
19 But I feel that Chief Dyer is very
20 deserving of the position. I just wanted
21 to briefly also read the announcement
22 from our fire chief, Joe Dolan (ph.).

23 (Indiscernible), it is a privilege
24 to announce Battalion Chief Aaron Dyer's
25 promotion to assistant chief. Battalion



1 Chief Dyer's promotion to assistant chief
2 is effective on December 26th. He has
3 been with the department for over twenty-
4 two years. His presence on the
5 administration has been positive and
6 supportive and (indiscernible) role.
7 Chief Dyer has reflected a calm demeanor
8 and positive attitude throughout his
9 tenure with the Saratoga Springs Fire
10 Department. He has repeatedly
11 demonstrated leadership, knowledge, and
12 abilities throughout his career, most
13 recently during this pandemic, as he was
14 responsible for the safe reopening of
15 businesses in Saratoga Springs.

16 He has elevated the Fire Prevention
17 Office to higher levels despite the loss
18 of civilian staff.

19 There were many well-qualified
20 candidates for the position of assistant
21 chief. I thank those who interviewed.
22 It is rewarding to see how many people
23 (indiscernible) who have who are willing
24 to interview for such an important
25 promotion. I will ask you to join me in



1 wishing Battalion Chief Aaron Dyer
2 sincere congratulations of his promotion
3 to assistant chief. Congratulations, Joe
4 Dolan. So congratulations, Chief Dyer.
5 Well deserved.

6 CHIEF DYER: Thank you.

7 MAYOR KELLY: Can I say a few words?

8 COMMISSIONER DALTON: Absolutely.

9 MAYOR KELLY: Chief, I think it's
10 great. It's great news. It's not just
11 COVID. We went through the fire with
12 you, too. So you have been there through
13 everything with us. And I think
14 Commissioner Dalton said it best. Your
15 calm demeanor, you don't get excited
16 about anything. And that's good when
17 you're dealing with Meg Kelly. So that's
18 great, right? But I do appreciate the
19 responsiveness that you had given me
20 personally is truly amazing. It could be
21 10 o'clock at night, it could be 2 a.m.,
22 and you will always answer me. It's
23 really, really amazing. And I appreciate
24 that as someone who needs answers
25 rapidly, you're always right there. But



1 more than anything, I think that the
2 choice was well-deserved, and I wish you
3 many, many years. So congratulations.

4 CHIEF DYER: Thank you. I'll do my
5 best.

6 COMMISSIONER MADIGAN: I'd like to
7 say congratulations. I'd like to say
8 congratulations to you also. And of
9 course, I always put my Commissioner of
10 Finance hat on, and just so the public
11 knows that we are not going to be
12 replacing the battalion chief position.
13 We're going to leave that unfunded, as if
14 we did actually have a retiree and left
15 it unfunded. But congratulations to you.

16 CHIEF DYER: Thank you,
17 Commissioner.

18 COMMISSIONER MADIGAN: It's well
19 deserved.

20 COMMISSIONER DALTON: I'm glad you
21 said that, Commissioner Madigan, because
22 Chief Dyer is going to continue to be
23 overseeing the COVID Enforcement
24 Department as well as take on the
25 responsibilities of the assistant chief,



1 which is just unprecedented. He already
2 has incredibly just an enormous work
3 load. I know he's capable of doing that,
4 but for him to make this sacrifice really
5 reflects how seriously he takes the
6 situation we're in financially. So I
7 thank him so much for that.

8 CHIEF DYER: Thank you.

9 COMMISSIONER DALTON: All right.
10 Thank you. That concludes my agenda.

11 SUPERVISOR VEITCH: Congratulations.

12 MAYOR KELLY: Okay, thank you. On
13 to the supervisors, Supervisor Veitch.

14 SUPERVISOR VEITCH: Thank you.
15 Happy new year, everybody. I haven't
16 seen any of you, I don't think, since
17 January 1st. So happy new year, city
18 council. Good to see you.

19 My first agenda item is just to
20 review quickly the 2020 budget from our
21 Saratoga County that was approved on
22 December 9th of 2020. Just a couple of
23 quick highlights that are in the budget.
24 The first is that we did find -- did
25 actually approve the 350,000 dollars for



1 IT improvements to our county
2 supervisors' boardroom. It's going to
3 include a lot of different things like
4 integrating our audiovisual system with
5 conferencing software, upgrading all the
6 microphones in the AV system, upgrading
7 our boardroom and our committee room with
8 better screens and things for when we
9 maybe finally have people back in our
10 room so that we can see what's going on
11 in the meeting, and also allowing for
12 video and streaming of our meetings, and
13 also adding some public Wi-Fi in some of
14 the areas where the public will be at the
15 county, such as the treasurer's office,
16 the clerk's office, Board of Supervisors,
17 and the Social Services Department. We
18 don't have any public Wi-Fi at the county
19 right now, so it would be good to have
20 that upgraded.

21 I am really excited that we're going
22 to finally be video streaming our
23 meetings. I can't believe I'm saying
24 that in 2021 that that's a big deal
25 because everybody does it, as well as



1 getting our meetings so that people could
2 hear what's going on in the room because
3 right now, when you call into the county,
4 it's really awful and you can't hear
5 anything. I feel bad for the public and
6 for anybody else who calls in for our
7 meetings right now who can't really
8 determine what's going on.

9 It's a big boardroom. There's
10 twenty-three supervisors. And the way
11 that we handle it right now does not meet
12 the needs for what we want to do.

13 So it's going to take a little while
14 to get it all installed because it's a
15 large expense, but I'm glad that we're
16 moving forward with that this year in our
17 budget.

18 We also added 75,000 dollars to our
19 budget to add a public information
20 officer. I think part of the problem
21 with what's going on with the current
22 pandemic among other things is sometimes
23 a lack of communication as the mayor had
24 stated. So we need some better
25 communication, and I think this will help



1 a little bit to get the message from the
2 Board of Supervisors to the public as to
3 what's going on, number one, with what
4 we're doing at the county but on other
5 matters as well.

6 And then we also did several other
7 personnel changes in addition to the
8 various departments to hopefully serve
9 the public more efficiently in the
10 departments.

11 We did really scrutinize all those
12 justifications for those positions that
13 the department heads wanted because I
14 think its good for us to understand what
15 they need and to meet those needs.
16 Because really our job is to serve the
17 public of Saratoga County from our
18 departments.

19 And that's it for the budget.
20 Again, it did pass -- did pass at the
21 meeting, so I'm glad that we're moving
22 forward with that.

23 Next on the agenda is just a quick
24 update on the Buildings and Grounds end-
25 of-year report for 2020. I do serve as



1 the chair. I did serve as the chair of
2 the Buildings and Grounds Committee for
3 the last two years. I just wanted to
4 notate a couple of things that are going
5 on at the county with Buildings and
6 Grounds.

7 The first thing I just want to
8 mention is that we are constructing a new
9 airport perimeter fence up at Saratoga
10 County Airport, which should be done this
11 year. We completed the construction of
12 the new public safety building this year
13 as well. We rehabilitated our County
14 Farm Road water tower which supplies
15 water to the jail, which should be
16 complete a little bit later on this year.
17 We remodeled the Fire Training Center
18 after it was used as a Code Blue shelter
19 early last year. Generator replacements
20 for the Operation Center in Milton,
21 Providence, McGregor, and Spruce Mountain
22 cell sites. We set up the COVID call
23 center this year. We had to do that from
24 scratch. We also prepared and worked on
25 getting the Woodlawn Avenue building



1 ready for Shelters of Saratoga, who is
2 currently using it.

3 And just as a quick statistics here,
4 the Buildings and Grounds Department at
5 Saratoga County maintains 609,000 square
6 feet of county building space. They also
7 maintain exterior grounds and they do
8 lots of maintenance requests throughout
9 the year. So I just want to say, as the
10 committee chair, I want to thank our
11 Public Works Department at the county and
12 the Buildings and Grounds staff for doing
13 all the tasks that we asked of them last
14 year, and we appreciate that very much.

15 We also -- I also want to thank them
16 a little bit when we had our offices put
17 in here in city hall, the county
18 Buildings and Grounds as well as the city
19 Buildings and Grounds and DPW helped us
20 get in here, so I want to just thank both
21 of those departments for that as well
22 this year. So thank you for that. And
23 that's that item.

24 Next item is, just quickly, an
25 announcement. Again, I apologize for not



1 being at the last meeting. Saratoga
2 County had a marathon seven-hour-long
3 board meeting on the 15th of December.
4 So we were still in the meeting when the
5 city council was meeting. I don't think
6 that's ever happened in my whole career
7 as a supervisor. I've come late to city
8 council meetings but not where I've
9 missed the entire meeting. So again, I
10 just apologize for that and just want to
11 let the public know that that's where I
12 was at the last meeting when it came time
13 to do my agenda.

14 And again, last -- I think that's
15 it, right? Oh, no. And last on the
16 agenda is just to announce that tomorrow
17 at 4 o'clock, the county will have it's
18 organizational meeting for 2021 at the
19 boardrooms in Saratoga County where we
20 will choose a new chairman. We will make
21 board and chairman appointments to all of
22 our committees. It's going to be a very
23 interesting meeting I think this year. I
24 do foresee some changes in how we do
25 business this year going forward. And



1 after 2020, I hope that we can do a
2 better job and work hard to serve the
3 community, be responsible, open, and
4 transparent, and work better, function
5 better as a county, eliminate some old,
6 outdated processes, and do better for
7 everybody.

8 So again, I'm looking forward to
9 tomorrow's meeting. It should be
10 interesting. And with that, that is my
11 agenda. So thank you.

12 MAYOR KELLY: Thank you.

13 On to Supervisor Gaston.

14 SUPERVISOR GASTON: Thank you.

15 Mayor, with your permission, do you mind
16 if I move my first item to the last? I
17 think the other two will be quicker, and
18 that leads -- knowing -- okay, thank you.

19 So currently, number 2 is just a
20 2020 board year-end. As Supervisor
21 Veitch said, a lot was learned at the
22 county over the course of this year and I
23 hope that we take these lessons learned
24 and make changes.

25 One of the things I'm super excited



1 about, at least on the draft rules that I
2 hope to vote in tomorrow, is we will be
3 removing the twenty-four-hour notice for
4 county public comment. That's been a
5 concern of mine since I took office, and
6 I'm delighted to be able to say that
7 we're going to be able to remove that so
8 that individuals, even if they find out
9 at the last minute, can come, share their
10 concerns.

11 As I've done in previous years, I
12 will be releasing a survey on tomorrow
13 asking for any feedback concerns over the
14 past year and any priorities for 2021.
15 It's open to any resident of the county.
16 I do ask that you put in your residence
17 just so that I can consider that and
18 share as needed with other supervisors.
19 So please look forward to that.

20 What is currently listed as my third
21 item is the public forum. I will be
22 having that on January 21st from 6 to 8
23 p.m. on Facebook Live. I will be
24 reviewing the results of those surveys
25 and discussing the events of the



1 organizational meeting tomorrow and what
2 it looks like the direction of the board
3 may be in 2021, which, hopefully, we'll
4 know by this time tomorrow evening.

5 So on that note, I will go back up
6 to what was my first item, which is a
7 COVID-19 update. Commissioner Dalton
8 discussed the numbers in our community.
9 Those numbers --

10 COMMISSIONER DALTON: I'm sorry,
11 Tara -- Supervisor Gaston. I just -- I
12 did forget to mention this new strain
13 which (indiscernible). So I think you
14 have it included in your agenda.

15 SUPERVISOR GASTON: I do. But if
16 there is any particular question or
17 concern about anything I discuss, any
18 commissioner is welcome to ask any
19 questions. And if I don't have the
20 answer here, I will reach out and make
21 sure I have it.

22 So our numbers do continue to
23 increase. Whether they are a result of
24 any particular new variant or just
25 community spread is undetermined at this



1 time. That's not through any action or
2 inaction of the county. That is because
3 the rate of transmission is so
4 significant.

5 Additionally, the commissioner did
6 note that we have announced thirty-five
7 deaths. That's an increase of four from
8 our previous number. Those four are
9 nursing home deaths that were previously
10 took place within the county, were
11 notified to the state, but were not
12 provided to the Public Health Department.

13 That is an area of concern between
14 the state and the county where the state
15 responds specifically to nursing homes
16 and we're -- we have cleared up that
17 mirror of communication to make sure that
18 there is no longer communication
19 differences between the county dashboard
20 in communication and the state dashboard
21 in communication.

22 As the commissioner indicated,
23 yesterday, the governor announced -- with
24 about five minutes prior notice to the
25 Public Health Department, that a sampling



1 of the UK variant or B117 variant of the
2 COVID strain was found in Saratoga
3 Springs. This is solely a response to
4 the close relationship between Saratoga
5 Hospital and the state lab at Wadsworth.
6 Any tests that have went through
7 Wadsworth they are monitoring regularly
8 doing surveillance testing. And so this
9 happened to pop up.

10 The investigation is ongoing as to
11 how the strain arrived. Was it community
12 spread? Was it transmitted through
13 travel? And as that information is
14 discovered and cleared for release to the
15 public, because private health
16 information should not be released, we
17 will provide additional information.

18 While this variant is believed to be
19 much more transmissible, it is not
20 believed to cause any increase in
21 morbidity or mortality. So this means
22 more people are likely to get it, but the
23 rate of potential consequences -- sorry,
24 the word just left my head -- the
25 increase in issues of serious illness,



1 hospitalization, and death do not
2 increase for a particular individual.

3 Now, if more people have it, that
4 may mean that we are seeing more
5 hospitalizations. But that is a result
6 of a population effect, not on an
7 individual basis.

8 We appreciate -- oh, go ahead,
9 commissioner.

10 COMMISSIONER DALTON: Interject
11 something. I've been asked how media has
12 publicized everywhere the reason that
13 they picked the strain up at, which was
14 (indiscernible). I just wanted to say,
15 and correct me if I'm wrong, that
16 (indiscernible) and their owners have
17 cooperated with the county Public Health
18 and shut down immediately when they had a
19 positive test of one of their employees
20 and had shut down for twelve days, and
21 were following all the protocols.
22 There's no way they could have ever been
23 aware that this was a new strain. No one
24 would have known that. And so they
25 really were doing everything right, as



1 far as I can tell.

2 And so I just hope people are being
3 compassionate about the situation then
4 and not placing blame. This is just not
5 a situation where I'm placing blame.
6 This is something I really -- it could
7 have happened at any restaurant, any
8 business, any place in the state. And so
9 I just wanted to point that out.

10 SUPERVISOR GASTON: Yes, County
11 Public Health is currently working with
12 the business and with the state in the
13 investigation. They are cooperating.
14 Commissioner Kuhles has reached out to
15 the CDC for additional information to
16 make sure if there are any other steps
17 that should be taken. His goal is,
18 obviously, primarily public health and
19 safety. But he also wants to make sure
20 that the business is able to reopen as
21 soon as possible, as soon as it is safe.
22 And as soon as that information is
23 available, he will be working on that.
24 And he's working closely with the state
25 on that.



1 They did do some testing of
2 individuals today who are associated with
3 the business. Four individuals have come
4 up as positive. I've seen news reports
5 that indicate that those individuals do
6 have the strain. That is an inaccurate
7 statement at this time. The way that it
8 works, including the testing that's
9 currently taking place at the state park,
10 it's an ordinary COVID test that any
11 individual gets. Now, as I talked to
12 Commissioner Dalton about earlier, it is
13 the ordinary in that it's the deep Q-Tip
14 one, it's not the tip of the nose. But
15 it is a standard one did -- I guess,
16 COVID test. The sample is run through.
17 If it tests positive for COVID, each of
18 these samples are then sequenced. Or
19 they're an attempted sequence, depending
20 on where an individual is in the illness
21 cycle or the method of testing. Whether
22 it was deep enough or got enough of the
23 sample, it may not be able to be
24 sequenced. But the goal is to sequence
25 it, determine the strain. And that's



1 where these four positive cases are right
2 now.

3 All of the tests that are being
4 performed at the state park of
5 individuals who are concerned about
6 potential exposure, they are also
7 undergoing the same process. They will
8 have a regular COVID test. If they turn
9 positive, then that test will be sent and
10 will be sequenced to determine whether
11 there is any known prevalence of this
12 B117 strain in our community.

13 COMMISSIONER DALTON: Do you have
14 the times for people who might want to be
15 tested? New York State has said that
16 anyone who thought that they could have
17 had exposure to and thought -- or they're
18 employees between the dates of December
19 18th and December 24th, are encouraged to
20 participate in this testing. And it went
21 on today. It will happen tomorrow from
22 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., Thursday from 10 a.m.
23 to 6 p.m., and Friday from 10 a.m. to 6
24 p.m. And if you go online, there's a
25 link. You can register, you can reserve



1 a spot, and get your test done. So there
2 are lots of available -- there's lots of
3 availability for the remainder of the
4 week if you think you may have been
5 exposed in this particular instance.

6 SUPERVISOR GASTON: Yes, it does
7 require pre-registration. It does not
8 require any other medical evaluation. We
9 do ask that it be limited to individuals
10 who are concerned about their potential
11 exposure in this case because the purpose
12 is to determine potential prevalence
13 through surveillance testing.

14 Are there any other questions about
15 the particular variant?

16 The next biggest concern in our
17 community is vaccination, as the mayor
18 indicated earlier.

19 As the commissioner said, any
20 individual who may meet the
21 qualifications to administer vaccines,
22 which has been broadened by the governor
23 to include individuals such as dentists,
24 EMTs, nurses who wouldn't ordinarily do
25 it, they may register to volunteer at



1 capitalregionvax.com. This is the site
2 that has been put up by Albany Med, which
3 is leading -- well, what has been
4 assigned, the role of leading vaccination
5 in the capital region. Any individual
6 who is ready, willing, and able to
7 volunteer can go there, put in their
8 license information, it is secure, and
9 they will be provided access when
10 available.

11 There is training that is required
12 by the state under the governor's order,
13 prior to issuing vaccines if you do not
14 ordinarily do so. Regrettably, the state
15 has only issued part of that training for
16 those who are certified EMTs. We are
17 pushing very hard for them to release the
18 rest so that that gets done and we have
19 those people available to vaccinate as we
20 can.

21 It is important to note that
22 vaccination is being solely controlled by
23 the State of New York. Early in the
24 COVID-19 pandemic, the state requested
25 that each county develop a vaccination



1 plan to vaccinate and get each of their
2 communities to herd immunity.

3 Saratoga County did this. We
4 developed a plan. In fact, we engaged in
5 pilot programs so that we could make sure
6 that vaccines could be put out quickly
7 and efficiently. However, the chamber
8 and the Department of Health changed
9 directions on that and indicated that we
10 were going to the phased approach and it
11 was going to be led by hospitals in each
12 region.

13 As a result of that, Saratoga County
14 does not have the capacity (sic) to
15 determine who gets vaccinated, or how
16 many vaccines we have, or even when we
17 get them.

18 The vaccines, we are notified often
19 twenty-four to forty-eight hours by the
20 state that we will have any. We have
21 been notified that we will get some and
22 haven't, and we have been notified at the
23 last minute that some are going to be
24 transitioned from other federally-
25 qualified health servers to our



1 facilities.

2 Right now, we have -- all eligible
3 New Yorkers in phase 1-A were able to get
4 vaccinated last week. That includes
5 high-risk hospital workers such as
6 emergency room workers, EMS workers,
7 coroners, medical examiners, and staff
8 and residents at OPWDD, ONH, and Oasis
9 facilities.

10 Urgent care providers were also
11 available, and any individual who would
12 be administering a COVID-19 vaccine.

13 Starting yesterday, we were in the
14 expanded phase 1-A, which includes
15 additional frontline high-risk health
16 workers, anyone in direct contact with
17 patients, including intake staff, public
18 health workers who meet directly with the
19 public, anyone who collects or processes
20 COVID-19 specimens, and a myriad of
21 medical workers including those in
22 private practice.

23 A big concern that I've heard
24 recently from our community is regarding
25 dentists, and I did confirm with



1 Commissioner Kuhles that they are, in
2 fact, one of the highest risk
3 communities, and they are included in
4 this list. So as of yesterday, they are
5 able to be vaccinated.

6 Individuals who meet eligibility
7 requirements thus far should have been
8 notified through HCS, the Health Care
9 Systems, which is what all medical
10 providers with licensure get
11 communications from. Dr. Kuhles,
12 himself, sent our advisories to any
13 individual who qualifies. If you believe
14 that you are currently eligible for any
15 of these phases and you have not received
16 notification, your first recommendation
17 would be to reach out to your
18 professional association and see if they
19 have any guidance. This is true whether
20 they are -- whether you are a member of
21 them or not.

22 Commissioner Kuhles has reached out
23 to these organizations. They have the
24 information and can connect you. If you
25 are not a member, you don't know how to



1 get in touch but you do believe that you
2 are eligible, please reach out directly
3 to me at tngaston@saratogacountyny.gov,
4 or call me at (518) 934-1944.
5 Supervisors -- or Supervisor Veitch as
6 well. We are collecting this information
7 for our communities, for individuals who
8 believe that they are eligible and have
9 not yet received notification and are
10 collecting this to be forwarded to the
11 commissioner to make sure that they do
12 receive notification.

13 There is a state website to check
14 eligibility. At this time, there are
15 some problems with it, so I do not
16 recommend that you use that website.
17 However, within the next twelve to
18 eighteen hours, either that will be fixed
19 or Saratoga County will be putting up
20 their own website so that individuals can
21 determine their eligibility.

22 The next phase of vaccination is 1-B
23 and that is expected to be expanded to
24 individuals who are seventy-five and
25 older and/or who have certain pre-



1 existing conditions.

2 I understand that the information on
3 vaccination is not where the public would
4 like it, where the city would like it,
5 where I would like it, also not where the
6 commissioner would like it.

7 The state is, again, very tightly
8 controlling these phases. The
9 information that they are posting on
10 their vaccine distribution page is all
11 that has been released publicly or
12 otherwise. We are requesting additional
13 information, and as soon as we get it, we
14 will be putting it out.

15 There are currently no facilities in
16 Saratoga County that provide vaccination
17 to the public generally. So there are no
18 approved. If there are any, they are not
19 under the purview of the Public Health
20 Department and they are acting contrary
21 to the orders of the governor and the
22 Department of Health.

23 So I have not heard of any. I hope
24 that's not actually happening. I will
25 say that, despite the fact that we do not



1 have the full timeline, the county is
2 working diligently to plan for broader
3 release of this vaccine. As Commissioner
4 Dalton indicated, the county is reviewing
5 various sites throughout the city of
6 Saratoga Springs and the remainder of the
7 county so that we can institute PODs or
8 deliver vaccines with less than twenty-
9 four hours notice because that may be
10 what we have.

11 The goal of Commissioner Kuhles is
12 to vaccinate as many people as quickly as
13 possible. So the moment that there is
14 any eligibility, we will making sure that
15 people have access to that and know where
16 to go.

17 The -- okay, I've covered this
18 part -- the vaccine --

19 COMMISSIONER DALTON: Let me jump in
20 one more.

21 SUPERVISOR GASTON: Okay.

22 COMMISSIONER DALTON: I think -- I
23 just want to point to the people that I
24 am also incredibly frustrated with how
25 this is being rolled out. But I do want



1 to point out, people, that this is not as
2 easy as walking into either a Target or
3 CVS and getting your flu shot. This is
4 much, much more complicated in terms of
5 how the vaccine itself is stored at the
6 point of distribution. And then also,
7 you have get two shots for this. I know
8 there is a very specific time window that
9 you have to wait in between those two
10 doses. I believe one is twenty-eight
11 days and the other is twenty-one days.
12 So if people are coming in to get a
13 vaccine, you're going to have to make
14 sure they're scheduled to come back
15 within those twenty-one or twenty-eight
16 days, and that's going to be an ongoing
17 situation.

18 You also need people to wait at
19 least fifteen minutes after they've had
20 the vaccine in the rare occurrence that
21 they have an allergic reaction, in which
22 case, you will not have Epinephrin or
23 some kind of medical treatment on standby
24 in the event you were to have an allergic
25 reaction. And this is not -- this is not



1 as easy as walking into your local
2 pharmacy or urgent care and just getting
3 a flu shot and going on your way. And
4 so, people need to be aware of some of
5 the intricacies as we go through this
6 process and are feeling frustrated. It's
7 not as easy as it might appear.

8 MAYOR KELLY: I agree, Commissioner
9 Dalton. It's not an easy task, but this
10 has been since March. We should have a
11 plan, I think. So --

12 SUPERVISOR GASTON: We do have a
13 plan.

14 MAYOR KELLY: -- actually, I think
15 that -- to sit there and -- where is Dr.
16 Kuhles? Bring him on. Bring him on!
17 Have him meet us, at least. He's
18 unavailable to everybody. That's what I
19 hear.

20 So he needs to speak to us, the
21 public and he's not. So that's my number
22 one issue, that I have not heard from
23 him. And the public needs to hear from
24 me. He's the new guy in town that we're
25 all looking to for answers. And we get



1 more out of Tara Gaston than this new
2 doctor.

3 So this is kind of where I'm at.
4 And I am frustrated because have we
5 contacted the Navy? The Navy has staff.
6 They know how to give a shot. They have
7 facilities.

8 There's things that I'm hearing that
9 aren't being done at the county level.
10 Or maybe they are. I don't know.
11 Nobody's really telling me what's going
12 on.

13 So that's my frustration to the
14 county. The county has to deal with the
15 state. I get that. I get that piece.
16 And I get that they throw things at you
17 really fast. They did it all through
18 COVID to Commissioner Dalton and her
19 team. They threw things at her within
20 five minutes and everybody had to duck.
21 We get that.

22 But we do need as -- this is what
23 the public is waiting for. It's here.
24 And nobody is telling us anything other
25 than Tara Gaston at a council meeting



1 that how many people are watching? I can
2 probably tell you there's probably
3 nineteen people on here.

4 Where is the Commissioner of Public
5 Health? That's what I want to know. Get
6 him out and have him start making
7 announcements to the public. We want to
8 hear from him. Where is he? And I know
9 that I'm preaching to the wrong person,
10 and I don't mean to be taking it out on
11 the supervisors, but that's a message
12 that I want to get out there. Because
13 people are asking me for those answers
14 and I can't get them.

15 So have him come out. They did a
16 Facebook Live today. I don't know if
17 anybody watched it, but I did. Holy cow.
18 I really think that we need to get the
19 Commissioner to take a handle on this.

20 SUPERVISOR GASTON: The Commissioner
21 is -- and I actually have a statement I
22 was going to read at the end, but I'll
23 just -- basically, a significant portion
24 of the response to COVID, including
25 vaccination, requires his physical



1 presence, based on the requirements of
2 the state as given.

3 What that means -- so where is he
4 right now? He's on his phone with the
5 state and pushing these tests and making
6 sure that our community has the
7 information they need. I was on the
8 phone with him --

9 MAYOR KELLY: Okay, Tara, I'm just
10 going to stop you there because he can't
11 be on the phone twenty-four hours a day.
12 I'm not going to -- you can say that he's
13 on the phone right now. Is he in the
14 room with you? You know that? I mean,
15 come on. I don't want to get into this,
16 but that's a little bit of ridiculous
17 statement.

18 Let's just say that he should take
19 time for the public, he's a public
20 servant just like we all are, to come out
21 and tell us what's going on. And that's
22 all I'm -- that's all I want to say. I
23 don't need to carry this on. That's my
24 message to the county. Where is he?

25 SUPERVISOR GASTON: Mayor Kelly,



1 we -- I am aware of that. We are working
2 on that. There are -- is he on the phone
3 right now? Yes. I know this because I
4 was on the phone with him just a short
5 time ago, and he's supposed to be
6 updating me shortly.

7 Was he on the phone all day? No.
8 But I also know that he was personally
9 manning a vaccination distribution for
10 particular workers that are under the 1-A
11 eligibility because he has to be there
12 physically in person because it is his
13 medical license that they are under and
14 the state requires that.

15 I agree. We are working on
16 providing him additional personnel and
17 support so that he does not have to be in
18 certain areas at certain times.

19 Yes. I have said many times, the
20 county has not acted as fulsomely as we
21 could. This is a chronically under-
22 staffed and under-resourced department.
23 And as a result of that, we do not have
24 the communications that we need. A
25 hundred percent.



1 But I fully support Commissioner
2 Kuhles and his decision to be in
3 particular spaces in order to provide
4 support so that the vaccination is
5 happening. To be there in certain
6 meetings -- I know for at least three
7 hours today, he was in meetings with the
8 state, making sure that he had the
9 information necessary so that all local
10 businesses could respond to this variant.

11 I agree. There is another meeting
12 between myself and other emergency
13 response individuals tomorrow morning.
14 We are taking additional steps, including
15 hiring personnel if necessary to support
16 this and to make sure that we free up
17 some time so that the commissioner
18 himself can speak.

19 Regrettably, at the time that the
20 Facebook Live was scheduled today, we
21 tried to get the commissioner in and
22 schedule around him, but he was on a call
23 with the state at that time in response
24 to this. I believe Mike did -- he's not
25 the commissioner, but he provided



1 information as he could.

2 And we are -- we are continuing to
3 work on it. We -- it's a matter of
4 constant improvement, absolutely. We
5 have not at any point been perfect. And
6 I'm only one of twenty-three, but I
7 absolutely take responsibility for that
8 because there's a lot that we could do.

9 I am extraordinarily pleased with
10 Commissioner Kuhles. The response that
11 he has stood up -- he has been
12 extraordinarily responsive. I'm sorry.
13 But he has not been as responsive as you
14 would like. I am happy, or I'm sure
15 Supervisor Veitch, to discuss outside of
16 this meeting any particular concerns, and
17 to arrange communications, if that would
18 be at all helpful --

19 MAYOR KELLY: Well, communications
20 with the mayor or the council in the
21 largest city in his county and with the
22 local hospital, the only hospital in the
23 county, that he hasn't communicated with,
24 there's an issue.

25 So yeah, communicate to him, because



1 he's not communicating with us. That's
2 all I'm saying. You can say how great he
3 is. He's not great on my list.

4 SUPERVISOR GASTON: I have been in
5 direct contact with the hospital,
6 particularly in discussion with
7 vaccinations and health care workers
8 because that is part of their
9 responsibility in our county.

10 MAYOR KELLY: So I -- listen,
11 listen -- I talked to the CEO today.
12 They have not spoken. I talked to a
13 couple of doctors that lead the COVID.
14 They have not spoken. I talk to them
15 almost weekly. And I talked to them
16 today.

17 I'm just going to say that that's
18 where we're at. I don't want to belabor
19 this, Tara. This is not about you. This
20 is about a communication higher than you
21 at the doctor level. And I'm just going
22 to say, if you're going to give kudos to
23 him, I don't give kudos to him. So we
24 have a disagreement, and that's okay.

25 But I think the public's very



1 disappointed. I'm hearing it. So
2 that -- I'm relaying the message from my
3 constituents saying, we have this new
4 doctor, we haven't seen him, we haven't
5 spoken to him. Where is he?

6 COMMISSIONER DALTON: May I --

7 MAYOR KELLY: I call the hospital.
8 We don't hear from him. Sorry. That's
9 it. Please.

10 COMMISSIONER DALTON: Ma'am --

11 MAYOR KELLY: Excuse me, I'm not
12 done. So just give me a second.

13 Okay. So I'm going to end this
14 conversation. I appreciate your work.
15 But I do have to say that there's a big
16 problem here, Supervisor Gaston. And I
17 know that you're trying your best. But I
18 think that it's all about the public and
19 being transparent. And that's what we're
20 all about. And I don't see it at this
21 level. So that's my last comment. Thank
22 you.

23 SUPERVISOR GASTON: Can I -- then I
24 would request that you contact me outside
25 of this meeting as well to let me know so



1 that we can get these things handled.

2 It is unfortunate that I'm hearing
3 about it now and I wasn't able to handle
4 it earlier, but I'm happy --

5 MAYOR KELLY: I have been trying to
6 get ahold of this gentlemen. So -- I
7 don't want to go any farther. I'm done.
8 So thank you. Thank you for your time.

9 COMMISSIONER DALTON: May I make a
10 suggestion? One of the biggest
11 challenges of this pandemic has been an
12 enormous and overwhelming amount of
13 information and data that the public has
14 been asked to understand. It is
15 constantly changing. Whether it is
16 something about micro-cluster jobs,
17 whether it's positively ratios, whether
18 it's phases 1-A or 1-B of being
19 vaccinated, there's been an enormous
20 amount of information and it's wildly
21 confusing to everyone.

22 And so I think that there's a lot of
23 good things going on behind the scenes.
24 But the public, generally speaking, is
25 lost. And it's understandable. And so I



1 think that this -- what I'm hearing is
2 that perhaps we could just have some kind
3 of a special meeting, whether it's a
4 forum, a special city council meeting,
5 and invite all the necessary people,
6 including Commissioner Kuhles, to answer
7 some of the public's questions and go
8 over where we are right now. Whether
9 it's the contact tracing, a vaccination
10 rollout, testing, or what not. I just
11 think that what I'm hearing here is that
12 that's necessary. Not just for this
13 group, but for the public at large, for
14 the people that need to know.

15 MAYOR KELLY: Okay, Commissioner --
16 Supervisor Gaston, do you have anything
17 else?

18 SUPERVISOR GASTON: Yes, I would
19 like to read the statement that I had,
20 and then I will be done.

21 MAYOR KELLY: Thank you.

22 SUPERVISOR GASTON: "Saratoga County
23 Public Health Department is working hard
24 to respond to COVID vaccines, including
25 through contact tracing, emergency



1 response, and planning for vaccinations.
2 Many of these aspects of the response
3 must be lead directly by Commissioner
4 Kuhles, including through physical
5 presence at vaccine distribution. And
6 unfortunately, many aspects of public
7 communications such as today's Facebook
8 Live, have involved other individuals.
9 Much of the work of the Department right
10 now is also not as visible and out in the
11 public as it is planning, investigation,
12 and research.

13 Our Public Health Department is
14 doing their job even when it's harder to
15 see. However, we do need the public to
16 do their job as well. We ask you to wear
17 masks, consider the risk in engaging in
18 any activity outside of your home when
19 given the risk profile of your community,
20 of your household, minimize travel and
21 gatherings to only that necessary, and to
22 monitor for symptoms, and contact your
23 health care provider with any concerns
24 about symptoms or exposure.

25 When contacted by county or state



1 contact tracers, I ask that you answer
2 completely and honestly. The goal of
3 contact tracing is not punishment, but
4 prevention, so that there is no more
5 transmission or that transmission is
6 reduced.

7 Neither the Public Health Department
8 nor the community alone can overcome this
9 challenge. It requires all of us working
10 together.

11 Any individual who has any concerns
12 about what Public Health is doing or not
13 doing or any other concerns or questions,
14 can contact me at any time. I have heard
15 from many members of the public, and we
16 are responsive to that and I will
17 continue to do so as long as I hold the
18 ability to do so in this position."

19 That concludes my agenda.

20 MAYOR KELLY: Thank you, Supervisor.
21 Any other business from the council?
22 Then we are adjourned. Good night.


23
24
25



1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25

C E R T I F I C A T I O N

I, Paul T. Abramson, certify that the foregoing transcript is a true and accurate record of the proceedings.



Paul T. Abramson

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

Date: January 13, 2021

Approved: 2-2-2021

Vote: 5 - 0

