

**Operations Committee
Minutes – Approved
March 22, 2021 – 1:00 p.m.
Via Zoom Conference Call**

Present: Lisa Holmes, Tompkins County; Sunday Earle, TC3; Chris Wagner, Seneca County; Mark Emerson, Town of Mentz; Schelley Michell-Nunn, City of Ithaca; Ed Fairbrother, Town of Big Flats;
Excused: Doug Perine, Tompkins County White Collar President
Absent: Luann King, Town of Cincinnatus
Staff: Elin Dowd, Executive Director; Andrew Braman, Tompkins County Finance Department; Michelle Cocco, Clerk of the Board; Judy Drake, Town of Ithaca

Call to Order

Ms. Holmes, Chair, called the meeting to order at 1:01 p.m.

Changes to the Agenda

There were no changes to the agenda.

Approval of Minutes of

It was MOVED by Ms. Michell Nunn, seconded by Mr. Wagner, and unanimously adopted by voice vote by members present, to approve the minutes of January 25, 2021 as submitted. MINUTES APPROVED.

Executive Director's Report

Ms. Dowd highlighted the following items from her written report and asked members to provide feedback:

The Blue4U Program. Ms. Dowd reported events were held and asked how they went this year. Mr. Wagner said the Seneca County program went fine; everyone was processed and they were pleased with the outcome. Ms. Michell-Nunn will be discussing this with Ms. Moskowitz later today but received no feedback which indicates a good outcome. Mr. Braman commented that the felt the communication and materials sent to participants was improved over last year.

HCRA (Health Care Reform Act) Tax relief. At the request of the Executive Committee Ms. Dowd will be asking Mr. Barber help her research whether this Tax can be waived by appealing to State representatives. This represents a large amount of money to the Consortium and the Executive Committee feels the Consortium shouldn't be taxed twice and this is a tax that the Consortium should be exempt from paying. Mr. Barber is currently doing research on areas where there can be exemptions imposed for taxes. She noted the Consortium's legal counsel is also advising on this.

Double copay issue. Ms. Dowd reported some members were experiencing double-billing in the 2018-2020 time period that was mostly in the Tompkins County area and involved Cayuga Medical Center partners. The issue has been resolved and \$25 reimbursement checks are being mailed for each identified visit that should not have been double-billed.

Ms. Drake reported at its last meeting the Executive Committee also performed the Executive Director's performance evaluation.

Ms. Dowd referenced her 2021 goals and objectives that were presented to the Executive Committee and said she will need additional help from Committee members throughout the year. She spoke of the large move of members from traditional Indemnity plans to Metal Level plans and said it will result in less income from premiums. Tompkins County also made a large move of members to the Medicare Supplement plan for retirees over 65. Since Medicare is a single provider plan this resulted in plans being split into two and the total number of plans increased. As a result of this Ms. Dowd said she is looking into what the impact will be of the number of contracts going up.

Effective outreach to labor representatives and State Legislators. Ms. Dowd said an idea was suggested that the Consortium to not only market to potential members but to individuals who can help support potential members become a part of the Consortium. This includes those who are represented by labor unions and those who are a part of collective bargaining units, such as CSEA and labor unions. She said more education is needed to help members understand the value of the Consortium and the value of Metal Level plans.

This will be discussed at the next meeting of the Joint Committee on Plan Structure and Design and members will be asked who the Consortium should be building a relationship with. They will be invited to attend presentations with the goal of helping to advise them and help them in making informed decisions.

Ms. Dowd said the Consortium also needs State Legislative support and will be doing some marketing and communication to let them know areas where the Consortium has found both success and challenges they can help with going forward. There are a lot of Article 47 consortiums throughout the State and although the Consortium wants to identify with others there are areas where it is different. She said there are specific areas that need to be pointed out to State representatives along with an explanation of why the Consortium feels it should be exempt from those areas within the general legislation.

COVID-19. This will impact everyone in the long-run; looking at premiums and coverage will be a part of regular business and a priority going forward.

Strategic Planning. We need to identify our growth, what the Consortium should look like in the long-run, and how to include membership in planning.

RFP (Request for Proposals) for a Prescription Benefit Manager. The RFP was launched and is currently active. Ms. Dowd said this will be the end of the third year for the Investment Management Services contract. An RFP for this service will move forward once a Finance Manager comes on board.

Ms. Dowd questioned the status of the Policy on Anti-racism and Equity. Ms. Dowd said this is not included on the list of goals but she included it on the agenda as a separate item as she is looking to this Committee for help to develop this. She said although this is not listed it should come before the Committee on a regular basis and there should be discussion of how to be more inclusive and equitable in the Consortium's actions. She asked for feedback from the Committee on how to develop this and the Consortium's commitment to it. She commented that she has had very diverse feedback from Board members, from not knowing anything about this to how can it be put into a statement of action.

Ms. Holmes asked if it would be a good place to start by forming a policy and whether that would inform how the Consortium would operationalize this. Ms. Dowd said by adopting the policy the Consortium has committed to certain practices it will follow going forward.

Ms. Michell Nunn said it is important to be clear on what you are trying to achieve and to set aside the time to talk about how to get there as it will require conversation and clarity. Ms. Drake noted the Consortium is a different type of organization and suggested getting help for this. Ms. Michell Nunn agreed and noted it is not just about representation, it is about culture and environment that also includes things such as reaching out to diverse vendors and access to care

There was consensus to include this as a standing agenda item for this Committee which will allow time for discussion.

RFP – Prescription Drug Management

Ms. Dowd reported the RFP for the Prescription Benefit Manager been posted on Bidnet and several organizations have expressed interest in participating. In response to requests for additional information the first addendum has been posted and claims data will be posted next week. Ms. Dowd will provide updates as this moves forward.

Budget Policy

Ms. Dowd explained the budget is prepared prior to the end of the year when final dollar amounts are not fully known until the end of the year. She said going forward there will be an amended budget that will reflect changes that will be made that represent things such as plan changes, Stop Loss policy amounts, and reclassification of any budget lines that are not known at the time the budget is prepared. The amended budget will go the Audit and Finance and Executive Committees and to all Board members.

Late Payment Policy

Ms. Dowd said there was a lot of discussion and it was suggested that the Consortium consider having a late payment policy to address late payments by members and how to expel a member if a need arises. As a result of the discussion she was asked to draft an expanded policy that accomplishes these two things that includes two different ways to impose interest. At the Audit and Finance Committee meeting there were questions raised about how different scenarios for calculating interest would be done and this will continue to be discussed at the next meeting. She noted that TC3 is part of Tompkins County and is not a part of this conversation; this is a policy that will outline specific details for managing late payments in the future. The Consortium will continue to follow the policy outlined in the Municipal Cooperative Agreement that is in place until a time when the policy is changed.

Mr. Braman offered to submit some language he thinks would help clarify what compounding interest is.

Code of Ethics

Ms. Cocco reported there are currently three outstanding Directors who have not returned the Code of Ethics acknowledgment. Ms. Dowd reported in the past there has been a paper process for everyone to complete and return this acknowledgment; due to a new streamlined process this has

become much more efficient. The new member process will also be improved and streamlined going forward.

Consortium Breach Incident Form

Ms. Cocco said the form included in the agenda packet was prepared by the Tompkins County Information Technology Services for posting on the Consortium's website for the purpose of individuals reporting incidents of information breaches.

Ms. Dowd gave examples of breach incidents and said the form is part of the Consortium's Cyber Security risk process to address breaches of information. Ms. Holmes spoke of her experience in this area and the value in being proactive in the reporting of breach incidents. She said encouraging people to address a breach promptly is a good way to avoid other subsequent actions that may happen. She spoke of the importance in coming forward quickly and showing steps that were taken to address the breach and said this can help eliminate other sources of action that may result afterwards. Ms. Dowd agreed and encouraged additional feedback.

Ms. Drake spoke of the Consortium's insurance policies and suggested considering whether there should be a Cyber Security policy drafted. Ms. Dowd agreed and said policies will need to be changed once the Finance Manager begins employment.

Staffing Update

Ms. Dowd reported on the process that was undertaken for the hiring of the Finance Manager position and announced Teri Apalovich has accepted an offer for the position and will begin on March 29th. She has prior experience working for the Town of Dryden and in the private sector. Ms. Dowd reported Jessica Hobart who handled the Consortium's billing, resigned her position with Tompkins County as of March 19th. Jessica Hobart has agreed to continue to work part-time to assist with training for this function; she is continuing to receive and respond to e-mail until the transition is complete.

Ms. Dowd said at the suggestion of Mr. Braman, an e-mail address will be set up for billing matters as opposed to a communication being sent to a particular individual.

Mr. Emerson referenced the late payment policy and suggested subscribers be informed when their municipality has not paid its premiums and are at risk of losing coverage. Ms. Drake thinks this matter would be better if handled internally and advised against doing this as there are many different reasons why payments are late.

Future Discussion Topics

The following items will be included in the next agenda:

- a. Contract Renewals – looking at the practice of establishing contract terms and also looking at which contracts and when to issue a Request for Proposals;
- b. Business Continuity Plan Update
- c. Policy on Anti-Racism and Equity
- d. May – Review of PBM Request for Proposal Responses

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 2:06 p.m.