



# PRESS RELEASE

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**DATE: August 15, 2024**

## **SARATOGA COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS LAW & FINANCE COMMITTEE VOTES TO RECOMMEND COUNTY BUY PROPERTY FOR PERMANENT CODE BLUE SHELTER**

*The Full Board to Vote on the Resolution at its August Board Meeting*

BALLSTON SPA, NY – The Saratoga County Board of Supervisors Law & Finance Committee, on Wednesday, August 14, 2024, voted to move a resolution forward to authorize the County to purchase property for a permanent Code Blue Shelter in the City of Saratoga Springs.

The resolution now advances for a vote by the full Board of Supervisors at its August 20<sup>th</sup> Board Meeting.

Saratoga County Board of Supervisors Chairman, Phil Barrett (Clifton Park) said, “It has been a longstanding goal of Saratoga County to develop a comprehensive, sustainable solution to address homelessness within the County. The purchase of this property will provide those in need with a permanent location to seek shelter during harsh winter weather and will allow the county to more easily provide a transparent budgeting process for the costs of running the Code Blue program. I thank our Law & Finance Committee, the County Department of Social Services, the City of Saratoga Springs, and Shelters of Saratoga for working together to effectuate this plan of action, which has broad support of our local elected officials.”

The resolution authorizes the County to purchase a 1.4-acre parcel at 96 Ballston Ave in Saratoga Springs for approximately \$3 million. The County will enter a long-term lease with Shelters of Saratoga, which will build and operate the shelter. Shelters of Saratoga currently provides the County’s Code Blue services.

In the past, the County has contracted with area motels to act as Code Blue shelters with several locations being leased. Currently, the County has one location under lease for the upcoming season. Chairman Barrett has expressed concern that location options are becoming limited, and this model of operation may soon become cost-prohibitive for the County.

The proposed location is near the Saratoga County Mental Health facility and on a bus line, making it easily accessible and convenient for those who may seek services from the County’s Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services and provides the opportunity to build one space adequate for the needs of the unhoused community as well as the operational needs of the program.

(more)

Saratoga County Board of Supervisors Law & Finance Chairman, Matthew Veitch (Saratoga Springs) said, "With rising costs and fewer hotels or motels available to utilize for Code Blue shelters, this purchase is a sound investment for the County and an ideal location to help those in need. Shelters of Saratoga has been a strong partner in providing our code blue services and we look forward to continuing our long-standing work with Duane and his team to provide these essential services to some of the most vulnerable among us. I also thank Mayor Safford and his team for working with the County and Shelters to realize our goal for a lasting Code Blue solution."

Mayor of Saratoga Springs John F. Safford said, "We are very excited to announce that, after many months of collaboration, a permanent code blue location has been secured by Saratoga County. The city has been coordinating with the county and the many service providers in Saratoga Springs to build a comprehensive approach to address the addictions, mental health and the unhoused-populations in our area. A permanent code blue shelter will be a significant step in our city/county initiative to address the needs of our unhoused-population, because it will be built to provide services that are difficult to make available in temporary locations. In particular I want to thank Supervisor Barrett, County Administrator Steve Bulger, Commissioner Maxwell, Supervisor Veitch, and Supervisor Madigan, RISE, SOS and the Prevention Council for helping to make this happen."

Executive Director of Shelters of Saratoga Duane J. Vaughn said, "Shelters of Saratoga is proud to continue the wonderful relationship with Saratoga County in working towards solving the complex issue of homelessness for our county's most vulnerable populations. With this collaboration, Shelters of Saratoga will be better equipped to serve homeless individuals during the most brutal conditions of Upstate NY winters with a safe, and secure Code Blue center."

New York State law 18 NYCRR § 304.1 states a Code Blue alert must be called when temperatures are expected to fall below 32 ° F with wind chill for at least two consecutive hours, based on the local forecast issued by the National Weather Service for the city, town or village within the district that is known to have the largest population of unsheltered homeless persons.

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