

The Chronicle-Express

Yates County targets big pharma

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Yates County has joined other New York State municipalities in engaging a legal firm for representation for a potential lawsuit against big pharmaceutical companies for aggressive marketing of opioids. The firm, Napoli Shkolnik is in the process of filing lawsuits on behalf of cities and counties against the manufacturers and distributors of opioid pain medications.

Those lawsuits allege that the drug manufacturers and distributors have used deceptive and unfair marketing strategies since the late 1990s. As a result, counties, cities, and states have been saddled with costs related to addiction such as health care, criminal justice, and victimization costs and lost productivity.

The legislature unanimously agreed Nov. 13 to enter into a legal services agreement with the firm.

Information found on the firm's website indicates there are no upfront fees and the firm only recovers funds if they win the county's case. The firm is helping about 50 other city and county governments recover funds from pharmaceutical companies to cover the costs of Narcan training, overdose antidotes, additional staffing and law enforcement.

Other business on the legislature's agenda Nov. 13 included:

– **Yates Transit Service:** Daniele Lyman, of Yates Transit Service, gave a quarterly report on the system. She said Route 3 Limited, which was launched in September has been a big success with more riders than any of the other routes that have been operating since the beginning of the year. The service received four new buses in October. The new buses are equipped with bike racks and electronic destination signs. The service took in almost \$87,000 in federal funding during the first three quarters of the year. That funding is based on ridership.

– **Seneca Gaming Funds:** The legislators approved a resolution calling on Gov. Andrew Cuomo to take action to restore payments of slot revenues from the Seneca Nation Casino. Yates County previously received a portion of the funds, but the Seneca Nation suspended payments in February.

– **Second Amendment:** The legislature approved, by a vote of 10-3, with District 4 Legislator Bill Holgate absent, a resolution urging Congress to approve the Second Amendment Guarantee Act. The act, introduced by U.S. Rep Chris Collins of Clarence, would prohibit states or local governments from enacting restrictions on any part of a rifle or shotgun. It would also void the New York SAFE Act and any other current or future state or local law that exceeds federal law for rifles and shotguns. Chairman Timothy Dennis, Leslie Church, and Taylor Fitch cast the three no votes.

– **Public Comment:** Ten members of the public spoke about their concerns about the Second Amendment Guarantee act and the legislature's lack of action on preserving the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) they say is used by about 470 Yates County children. Dennis asked Church to consider further discussion of potential action at a future Public Health Committee meeting.

– **Budget:** Dennis announced the legislature will hold a public hearing on the tentative 2018 budget at 7 p.m. Nov. 16 in the legislative chambers.



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