

# Proposed ordinance amendment may further delay Marshfield Clinic project

By Nick Sabato  
RIVER NEWS REPORTER

Public hearings and Marshfield Clinic’s proposed hospital addition in Woodruff dominated the Oneida County Planning and Development Committee meeting Thursday at the Oneida County Courthouse.

At a previous meeting, it was mentioned that the zoning ordinance might cause Marshfield Clinic some issues in securing a conditional use permit (CUP) for its proposed 72,000 square-foot, 12-bed hospital to be located just blocks from Howard Young Medical Center in the town of Woodruff.

On Thursday, the county’s zoning director Karl Jennrich proposed an amendment change to Business B-1, giving it all the administrative review uses and conditional uses of District 3 Multiple Family Residential.

“This would actually piggyback all of the conditional uses of District 3 Multi-Family Residential and incorporate that into Business B-1,” Jennrich said. “Therefore, because Business B-2 piggybacks on Business B-1, all those uses of District 3 Multi-Family Residential would be allowed. Also, because multi-family has a conditional use permit, we are also looking at hospitals.”

Jennrich said he also believes heliports should be approved via separate conditional use permits.

When Howard Young Medical Center added a heliport it was



Nick Sabato/River News

*Marshfield Clinic assistant general counsel Dan Kirschnik speaks in front of the Oneida County Planning and Development Committee during a public hearing at the Oneida County Courthouse on Thursday, April 6.*

required to have a CUP, he noted.

The committee approved the new language and supervisor Jack Sorensen also proposed an amendment that would require a heliport to be placed 1,320 feet away from a single-family residential areas and one mile from another heliport.

Committee chairman Scott Holewinski said he believes Sorensen’s proposal would be a major change that would require a public hearing.

“There’s nothing wrong with that. We hold them all the time,” Sorensen responded. “There’s nobody at this particular time saying, ‘We want to build a helicopter

pad.’ So, what’s the big difference of a delay? As far as these stipulations would come in under a CUP, I think these are fundamental to the building of a helipad. Absolutely fundamental. They go beyond the questions of adding them to or not adding them to a CUP.”

The committee voted not to add Sorensen’s proposed language prior to a public hearing, so Sorensen is likely to present the proposal when it appears in front of the county board later this month.

Marshfield Clinic assistant general counsel Dan Kirschnik expressed concern about the motion.

“The proposed motion is totally contrary to what we’re pursuing as part of our CUP application,” Kirschnik said. “We would insist on a public hearing. We didn’t have an opportunity to respond. We want an opportunity to respond. It would clearly prohibit what we’re trying to do at our location. I don’t know what this means relative to Howard Young’s existing operation of their heliport.”

Howard Young’s heliport is pre-existing so it would be legal, which also did not please Kirschnik to hear.

“Isn’t the point to correct and clarify all of this?” Kirschnik asked.

Sorensen had an answer for him immediately.

“There’s legal, nonconforming

*See Delay... page 21*

# From school to productive lives: Autism foundation connects the dots

By Richard Moore  
OF THE LAKELAND TIMES

Second in a series

In 1994, when a group of determined parents came together to form the Foundation for Educating Children with Autism (FECA), they did so because they realized their school-bound children with ASD (autism spectrum disorder) were not so much heading toward a safe and appropriate educational environment as they were heading off an educational cliff.

For the most part, even stellar public schools in affluent New York City suburbs could not provide adequate services for children with autism.

So eight New York families set out to establish a specialized school for their children on the spectrum in a day and age when autism services were few and specialized schools serving an autistic population were almost unheard of.

Partnering with Devereux New York, part of a national organization serving a wide range of developmentally disabled individuals, the foundation created a new school with an autism-specific mission, the Devereux Millwood Learning Center, now

*See Autism... page 28*





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# Notice

From page 1

“Our readers should also be thanked for the hundreds of calls that were placed into legislative offices over the past several weeks — reader support made a big impact on the success of our effort to preserve public notice,” Bennett wrote in a memo to WNA members.

The provisions were among 83 non-fiscal items identified by the Legislative Fiscal Bureau in the governor’s proposed 2017-19 budget and removed from consideration by Sen. Alberta Darling (R-River Hills) and Rep. John Nygren (R-Marinette), the co-chairpersons of the Joint Finance Committee.

“Accordingly, they will be drafted as individual bills for introduction into the Legislature,” Nygren and Darling wrote in a memo to JFC members.

That, of course, means the Legislature could still pass those bills later in the session, but they would have to stand and survive on their own policy merits rather than as part of a broader budget bill many legislators might support overall despite being opposed to the specific provisions.

According to Nygren and Darling, the committee will use as its starting point the governor’s recommendations minus the 83 non-fiscal items. The committee will also exclude the governor’s transportation budget.

“Thus the committee will vote to amend the governor’s bill,” they wrote. “A proposed change to the bill will require a majority vote.”

For the DOT budget, the lawmakers wrote, the committee will entertain motions to amend the adjusted base of the budget, rather than the recommendations of the governor.

“Although the governor’s recommendations will be before the committee, it will take a majority vote for them (or any proposal related to transportation) to be adopted,” they wrote.

Sen. Robert Cowles (R-Green Bay), a long-time opponent of including non-fiscal policy items in the budget, praised the removal of the items.

“I strongly applaud the move made by the Joint Finance Committee chairs to remove all of the non-fiscal policy items from the state budget,” Cowles said. “I have long been an opponent of non-fiscal policy items in the state budget. I have said, for several budgets, that these items should all be stripped out and discussed through the committee process with public input, as separate legislation. I commend my colleagues on the finance committee for this move and I too, wholeheartedly, agree that the state budget is no place for policy items. I look ahead to working with my colleagues on a much cleaner budget.”

Democrats on the budget-writing committee applauded the move as well, observing that other items kicked out of the budget include unfunded mandates on the UW, including new degree and transfer requirements, faculty workload policies, and a student allocable segregated fee opt-out provision; repeal of the prevailing wage and project labor agreements; creation of an Occupational License Review Council and the elimination of certain state boards and councils; and a study on the transfer of CAFO oversight from the

DNR to DATCP.

“As members of the budget committee, we’ve heard from people across Wisconsin who have concerns about the drastic licensing changes, repeal of important worker protections, and unfunded mandates on our schools and universities in the budget,” Rep. Katrina Shankland (D-Stevens Point) said. “Never underestimate the power of people’s voices — I encourage everyone to keep the pressure up.”

Sen. Jon Erpenbach (D-Middleton) said Walker has lots of friends in the Legislature and should work non-budget items through the Legislature in the correct way, with public input and vetting in committee in stand-alone legislation.

“I am glad the co-chairs are responding to pressure to remove many policy items — it is the right thing to do,” Erpenbach said.

With the non-fiscal policy items out, Sen. Lena Taylor (D-Milwaukee) said she was shifting her concern to the transportation fund.

“I worry that Republicans plan to balance the transportation fund on the backs of our children’s school funding increase,” she said.

**Public notice requirements**

The governor’s public notice provisions would have allowed all governmental units with printing, publishing, and mailing requirements the option to make most materials available electronically. Election documents and legal notices would have been excluded.

“The governor also recommends giving the Department of Administration secretary the authority to waive particular printing, publishing and mailing requirements for state agencies in part or in whole or to waive electronic distribution,” the DOA budget summary stated.

In general, the budget bill provided that a statute requiring a governmental body to publish a document must be construed to allow that body to publish it electronically on its Internet site; and that interpretation would have been allowed even if the statute required publication in a newspaper in a specified location.

In addition, if a statute required publication both on the Internet and in another form, the budget bill required the statute to be construed as allowing publication only on the government’s website.

This bill also allowed the secretary of administration to waive in whole or in part any statutory requirement for an executive branch agency to mail, print, or publish any nonexempt document, but that waiver power was deleted from the budget, too.

While the governor’s proposal excluded certain legal and election notices, the impacts on transparency could have been far-reaching, especially given the new waiver power the DOA would have had.

This bill also provided that the requirement that the sale of timber cut from a state, county, or community forest be advertised in a local newspaper could have been satisfied by posting notice on certain official Internet sites.

The governor’s proposal came after a legislative study committee last year concluded that such sweeping changes were at least premature.

*Richard Moore is the author of The New Bossism of the American Left and can be reached at [www.rmmoore1.com](http://www.rmmoore1.com).*

# Autism

From page 3

Devereux CARES (Center for Autism Research and Educational Services).

By all accounts, some 21 years later, those determined pioneers not only blazed a new trail in special education, they built a superhighway into the future. Today, Devereux CARES still successfully prepares autistic children for productive lives through the use of applied behavior analysis (ABA) as well as by providing an intensive educational setting that stresses vocational training and community integration.

Many would consider that to be a job well done, a mission completed. The thanks of thousands would surely grow exponentially and echo over time.

But the FECA parents didn’t see it that way. They understood they had more to do. They realized that the school, as successful as it was and is, was only part of the vision — only the front end of the mission that was needed if any of it could really be called truly successful in the end.

For while the parents were hard at work developing and supporting a sustainable and appropriate educational and therapeutic environment at the school, unlocking the great potential of children with autism to learn, they weren’t happy at all with the path they saw for those children after their school days were over.

Living productive lives as adults, using what they learned in school — that was the back end of the mission.

But instead of having challenging mountains to scale and to conquer in the outside world, the parents saw only more cliffs for their children to tumble from, says Melanie Schaffran, one of the original parental founders and the long-time president of FECA.

“In New York, children with developmental disabilities can stay in the schools until age 21,” Schaffran told *The Times* in a recent interview. “My son and one of my colleagues on the board were part of the first wave age-wise, and there was nothing out there that took what they had achieved in school so that they could apply it productively.”

A good educational environment and learning with the use of the right therapy, in their case ABA, was inadequate if no opportunities existed for them to use those skills productively, Schaffran said.

So, fully embracing the foundation’s vision to develop and provide vocational training, employment opportunities, and community outreach and integration in addition to education, the organization set out to do something about the lack of those opportunities, with parents for the most part leading the charge.

“It was a 5 through 21 school, so right at the point when these first kids, my son included, started reaching 14 — at 14 in New York State they have to have a vocational plan in place if they are not going to get what is called a regent’s diploma — we helped to locate and hire the first vocational director,” she said.

The idea, Schaffran says, was to appropriately maintain the ABA model as the children grew older, and so, among other things, they taught the children various skills and established volunteer sites in the community where they could put those skills to good use.

“These were places where they could practice skills because, when they turned 21, they basically would fall off the cliff again because the services in the adult world are not there, either,” she said.

To emphasize the new focus on its mission to include adults with autism as they transitioned from school, FECA changed its name several years ago, from the Foundation for Educating Children with

Autism to the Foundation for Empowering Citizens with Autism.

**Charting the course**

As the younger children became teens, progress at the Devereux school had continued, but the landscape for adults with autism looked pretty bleak, Schaffran recalls.

For instance, she said The ARC, a national organization serving people with intellectual and developmental disabilities, was a wonderful program, but its approach in the area was a more sheltered one, where individuals with disabilities are employed in separate settings.

“When the first group of kids started graduating, there was nothing out there,” Schaffran said. “There were some nice programs for the developmentally disabled, but they were kind of sheltered workshops, and our kids had really learned skills, and so we felt that they could be out there in the community as productive citizens.”

As so as the school population grew older, vocational training and community inclusion programming became more important. A day habilitation program was developed, and that led FECA to again partner with Devereux to start the Devereux Adult Program.

That program begat another FECA initiative — the Opportunity Network for Employers and Employees — when it became clear, Schaffran says, that area day habilitation programs needed help in finding new volunteer and potential employment sites for adults.

“It required constant oversight because like any agency that is not fully funded, they (day habilitation programs) are not in a position to go out and actually find new opportunities, so left alone, my son would be going to the same volunteer sites until he was 80,” she said.

And so, Schaffran says, they began to knock on doors in Westchester County to find and develop new opportunities for adults with autism. In so doing, FECA hired a consultant to reach out to businesses and nonprofit organizations to match various opportunities with the skills, interests, and experiences of adults with autism, and the result, she says, was an array of community inclusion, employment, and volunteer endeavors.

“My son and 17 others go out into the community every day, five days a week,” Schaffran said. “They are picked up in their driveway in the van at 8 o’clock and they go out until about 2 o’clock to the volunteer sites, which were largely created because of the Opportunity Network for Employers and Employees.”

Schaffran says their consultant has moved on to other things, but he helped FECA establish a way to create new opportunities in the world, at a time when the world was just not ready to welcome an adult autistic population.

For example, Westchester Medical Center officials recently extended their personal congratulations to the program team at its volunteer appreciation breakfast. WMC was one of the first Opportunity Network for Employees and Employers sites matching community need with volunteer ability, FECA states.

Other examples abound, but whether it is shredding documents or polishing cars at Mount Kisco Honda or setting the tables at Bethel Nursing Home, or putting their skills to use at other sites, the FECA Opportunity Network’s partnership with Devereux has successfully moved citizens with autism from a school setting into community settings where they productively use what they have learned and live successful lives within their communities.

Other day habilitation programs, as they are called, are operating, too, Schaf-



# Autism

From page 28

fran said, and FECA has made additional strides in helping to transition and integrate individuals with ASD into their communities.

FECA provides financial support for various programs, for instance, purchasing eight vans for the schools and the Devereux Adult Program. A grant to SPARC, a local non-profit organization that sponsors high quality therapeutic recreational activities for the developmentally disabled, enabled adult participants to learn to cook and play basketball, among other skills.

FECA has also supported an innovative Center for Discovery farm-based program, and a FECA grant made it possible for Cardinal McCloskey — a non-profit social services agency that, among things, helps the developmentally disabled — purchase an ABA curriculum that Schaffran says is used in its day-habilitation programs and also in its residential facilities.

Even with all this work for adults, Schaffran points out that the foundation is still involved in the Devereux CARES school.

“We still support the school,” she said. “We did some support of the construction on the school and we are helping to reinstitute the vocational program at the school.”

The school moved to a new location last September as it began its 20th year — moving from Chappaqua to Mount Kisco — and Schaffran said it was heartening to see its current leadership give a nod to the determination and work of the original founding families, which she said underscores the continuity of the mission.

“I was visiting last September and there were packing boxes still all over, but I was very moved to see that they had taken the time to bring the plaque of the eight families, the founding families, over from the old school and put it up in the main office,” she said. “That was very sweet to see.”

## Extraordinary Ventures

Schaffran and her FECA colleagues are not ones to rest on their laurels.



Contributed photograph

Extraordinary Ventures president Melanie Schaffran gives Brian his first paycheck from EV.

On top of all the other activities, a year-and-a-half ago, FECA took the idea of employment to a new and now entrepreneurial level by providing the seed money for a new enterprise, a non-profit organization that creates small businesses to employ adults with autism and other developmental disabilities.

“We just started Extraordinary Ventures in New York, which is creating micro-businesses for adults so that we both have them out in the community volunteering, but also they can earn a paycheck doing and creating things or doing service-oriented kinds of things that are built around the skill sets and the interests of adults with autism,” said Schaffran, who also serves as the president of EVNY.

Schaffran says EVNY is modeled after a successful Extraordinary Ventures enterprise that has been operating in Chapel Hill, North Carolina, for 10 years. “We mentored with the group in North Carolina,” she said. “We started with a candle-making business, which was in my basement on my ping pong table. We started that last year. We made a

small investment because I didn’t even know if our kids would like to do that kind of thing, and so I bought a little kit and I learned how to make candles. I still melt the wax — we haven’t found somebody to do that piece of it — but my son and a couple of his friends get paid to set up the candles.”

Schaffran says she pours the candle wax, and after it sets her son and his companions with ASD do all the packaging.

“The packaging is all seasonal and we started last year to sell them at craft fairs and gift fairs and it’s been extraordinarily successful,” she said. “We hired a director for the program, Elizabeth Oliveto, who really knows our population. She worked at our school years ago. She is absolutely terrific.”

The days of the basement-based business may be numbered, however. Schaffran says EVNY has signed a lease for a facility in Mount Kisco.

“We can expand that business and start others,” she said. “We have an office solutions business that we’ve started and we’re going to start a laundry business as soon as we get our space up and running. They are small, but we have the mentoring from North Carolina and I am happy to say they are just going gangbusters. So now we just need to continue to grow and hopefully add on new busi-

nesses that will also be successful.”

## Community integration

In all these enterprises, Schaffran says, community integration is vital.

“That was particularly important to us,” she said. “I didn’t come up with the candle-making idea. That was the North Carolina group’s first business, but they sold on the Internet, and I decided that our kids really needed to be out in the community as much as possible.”

In so doing, everybody’s strengths are discovered and put to their best use, Schaffran said.

“There’s a group, like my son, that is really good at the production end and then there’s a group that is really good at selling, so it has created another level or type of employment,” she said. “We just had another fair, and to see a young man who probably 10 or 15 years ago was very insulated from the world because of his autism, well he’s out there approaching people and asking them if they want to buy a candle, and they do. So it’s been very rewarding.”

Again, though, Schaffran says you can’t overemphasize that the people who are most affected are the ones who are the most motivated to do the work.

“Even if there is funding, there is still going to be a need for parent oversight of how that money is spent,” she said.

Ultimately, Schaffran says, new business models like Extraordinary Ventures can tap into the strengths of what is so far a largely ignored, disenfranchised group in society. The expansion of those new models is critical, she says, given that unemployment for adults on the autism spectrum remains at between 80 and 90 percent.

“Government is an important employer in our economy, but by far the largest source of jobs is the private sector made up of hundreds of thousands of small, medium, and large businesses,” Schaffran and Gregg Ireland, the founder of EV North Carolina, wrote for *Autism Spectrum News* in 2016. “But neither government nor private enterprise has done a very good job incorporating the skills and talents of adults with autism and other intellectual challenges into the American mainstream economy.”

Turning the situation around is not easy, they wrote.

“It requires new ways of thinking and renewed focus and commitment of the parties involved —government, business, families, individuals,” Schaffran and Ireland wrote. “It will take risk taking, and who is better for that task than the American small business community or the great American entrepreneur?”

It’s a win-win situation, for the talents and skills adults with autism bring to a work place can and do boost productivity and business success, while simultaneously giving adults with autism one of the most valuable components of a rewarding life: work.

“As adults, work inevitably defines us,” Schaffran and Ireland wrote. “It’s a statement to the world of what we, as individuals, are capable of, where we fit in society and how we are recognized and valued. The Extraordinary Ventures model provides the opportunity to explore and experiment with a range of skills within a supportive environment that provides training toward future independence; all, while valuing time and effort with the simple but profoundly important earning of a paycheck.”

Simple and profound might be the words to describe FECA and Extraordinary Ventures, both in New York and in its North Carolina birthplace. For as the pioneering Devereux CARES school continues to show others what can be accomplished educationally, this new community inclusion and entrepreneurial model is taking another simple and straightforward notion — that adults with autism can and must lead productive lives — and once again producing a profound model for others to follow.

Richard Moore is the author of *The New Bossism of the American Left* and can be reached at [www.rmmoore1.com](http://www.rmmoore1.com).